ship and Immigration faces. Further, I believe that the government must begin immediately to look at new specific goals and new hard nosed policies for this department, using as criteria the safety of Canadian society and the economic needs of our country.

At present this government is pursuing an immigration policy that will allow 250,000 newcomers into Canada this year. This represents about 1 per cent of our general population. What is the justification for this number? Where is the economic justification? The minister continues to claim that extensive consultations unprecedented in their scope and attendance has set this number. We in the Reform Party ask, what consultations? Who was in attendance? What views are being accepted?

Let me tell you about this government's method of consultation. In fact its consultations are basically centred around special interest groups, particularly those that have direct interest in the maintenance of a complicated, expensive and slow moving immigration process. In most cases this means a financial interest.

For example, it is estimated the processing of one refugee costs between $30,000 and $50,000. Do you believe that immigration lawyers who are consulted extensively during the minister's extensive consultation process are interested in streamlining determination systems? Not on your life.

What about the consultation material received from polls? What about the opinions of rank and file Canadians? We have heard these consistently. Over the last few years polls have shown that a majority of Canadians believe that there should be a decrease in immigration numbers, particularly during tough times.

However, the voices of Canadians are ignored in favour of listening to special interest groups with their own special agendas. Once again this government policy of higher immigration levels flies in the face of its infamous red book assertion that "people are irritated with governments that do not consult them or that disregard their views". The key word in that statement is people.

This is an interesting contrast to the broadsheet published by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and distributed earlier this year which asks for input to the consultations which are supposedly under way right now. It states: "It is also important for information to flow from you and your group to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration". Note the phrase you and your group. Notice how the request for written submissions to the consultations task force is not addressed to individuals but rather to groups.

What happened to the government's promise of consulting with the people on important issues? Where is the fulfilment of the red book promise? It is simply not there. It has not happened and will not happen because this government like the Tories is simply not interested in what ordinary Canadians have to say.

Of the 250,000 immigrants this year, only 18 per cent will be evaluated for their potential economic benefit to Canada. Accordingly the skill level and education level of immigrants in comparison to Canadian citizens has been declining over the years. However, the fiction of the red book refers to an immigration policy that considers economic needs and our ability to absorb and settle immigrants.

These Liberal election promises are in clear contradiction with their current policy of a 1 per cent ceiling and their current policy that only 18 per cent of immigrants will be screened for economic benefits. How does our current immigration policy deal with Canada's economic needs or our ability to settle immigrants? It does not.

In addition, after much pressure this government recently introduced a bill to partially overhaul the outdated workings of the immigration and refugee board. However, even with these partial amendments there are still fears that the IRB will continue in its fumbling ways in creating a huge backlog of cases and by putting Canadians at risk by not deporting criminals. The present Minister of Citizenship and Immigration when in opposition on June 22, 1992, commented on the system of removal. He lamented about people who get refused and then not get deported at the end of the day. He said "even the people who were denied were not deported in the end".

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In actuality very few people are removed. This limp–wristed approach to deportation has continued under the present minister's guidance. The lack of exit controls and the staying of removal orders by the IRB has resulted in a system of deportation that is inefficient, inept and creates a huge economic liability to the Canadian people.

Last year the IRB in its wisdom granted 147 conditional stays of between two to five years to those under removal orders. Most disturbing of all, 145 of the 147 had criminal records. They range from drug offences to manslaughter to sexual assault.

The operation of the immigration and refugee board is a travesty. With 250,000 immigrants arriving each year perhaps the minister should undertake to discover why the IRB believes that Canadian citizens need the company of 145 known felons.

Recently an individual with an extensive criminal record was granted a five–year stay by the IRB and was involved in the fatal shooting of a woman in Toronto in April. Just today there was a funeral in Toronto. That is because a few days ago a metropoli-