

*Oral Questions*

concern and his government's concern about human rights abuses in China. I will ask another question of the same minister.

[Translation]

It is reported that Chinese students who are waiting for an immigration permit are subject to intimidation by representatives of the Chinese government. Could the minister allay the fears of these students and give them the assurance that they will not be forced to return to China?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, we are aware there is a possibility that Chinese students may have been subject to a kind of pressure that is not acceptable, and we have indicated to Chinese officials that Canada will not tolerate this kind of pressure being put on Chinese students. There is a dilemma here and I believe parties on all sides of the House will appreciate the problem. We want to keep putting pressure on the system in China. However, we also want to keep certain avenues open so that the West, including Canada, can have a positive impact on events in China. It is clear that one of the factors that helped liberalize the situation in China, and which contributes and can contribute to improving the situation, is contacts with the West. We have to strike a balance between our determination to show the Chinese that their actions on Tiananmen Square are not acceptable and keeping certain avenues open so that we can have a constructive influence on the situation.

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[English]

## IMMIGRATION

**Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration and deals with the same subject of China.

Last year the minister assured us that Chinese citizens in Canada as visitors and as students "need have no fear that they will be asked to leave Canada as long as the situation in China remains threatening for them."

Will the minister today renew this commitment by providing the necessary visa extensions and work permits for Chinese visitors and students in order to be assured that no one will be forced to return to China until we are absolutely sure of their safety?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member raises this issue because it is something that we have been following very carefully ever since we announced the suspension of removals, which was our initial announcement on June 16 last year.

The vast majority of Chinese nationals who were in the country at the time did apply not just for an extension of their visas that was intended to give them some time in which to determine what they wanted to do permanently for their futures, but also to ensure that if they decided they wanted to stay in Canada they would be permitted to do so.

We have had 8,700 applications from Chinese who were in the country at the time to remain permanently. Some 8,175 of them have had interviews and there have been 7,666 positive decisions. There are still some cases pending, but I think it is a record that all Canadians can be proud of.

**Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

Although the record in the past year may be sufficient and may please the minister, there is still an ongoing concern. My question was not about what has taken place in the past year. I will ask the minister directly in the House whether or not she will provide the same guarantees into the future since we are not yet sure of the safety of these people.

• (1430)

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, since the numbers I spoke about did incorporate virtually all of the Chinese nationals who were in Canada at the time, people who came in since then would come in through the normal way, applying for refugee determination and so on. They are in a slightly different position than the people who were in Canada at the time of those very sad events in Tiananmen Square.

It is very difficult for me to make the kind of commitment the hon. member is asking for because people are in different situations. I do think that Chinese nationals who have found themselves in these difficult situations have been treated with great sensitivity. They will continue to be treated with great sensitivity, but it will be on a case-by-case basis since they are in a different position than the others.