



Canadian Association of Professional Immigration Consultants
L'Association Canadienne des Conseillers Professionnels en Immigration

From the Bottom Up

A Newsletter for CSIC members about their issues.

Issue #252

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*Welcome to our Newsletter **From the Bottom Up**. Our articles and postings will cover immigration matters that affect your business and lives.*

In this issue:

Standing Up for Members

Standing Up for Members

CAPIC would like to comment on recent news releases and activities of the Canadian Migration Institute Inc (CMI) in the last few weeks since the Minister's announcement and the Gazette Notice seeking input on the selection criteria for a new regulator.

We will also use this opportunity to stand up for an individual member who has recently been a victim of CMI practices, David LeBlanc.

We believe that CMI Inc has lowered the bar for what we would like to see in professional discussion surrounding the government's move towards a better regulator, both in the way in which it has dealt with Mr LeBlanc and by sending out misleading messages regarding CAPIC.

We will stand up for both.

First, CAPIC will stand up for its organization and membership, as a voluntary non-profit organization of hundreds of CCICs working hard to achieve a better profession on many levels. We will proudly place our volunteer record for helping immigration consultants, and tackling unauthorized agents, against any CMI achievements even with the millions of dollars of our funds at their disposal.

And CAPIC will continue to fight for individual members who have been mistreated by CSIC or its wholly owned subsidiary, CMI Inc.

The Situation of Member David LeBlanc

This leads us to an alarming development which just occurred. CSIC member David LeBlanc recently sent a letter to CIC with his comments about the process to choose the next regulator for consultants. David is a very experienced practitioner in Toronto. In his submission, he was critical of CMI, stating that he felt he was forced to join it, or else he would have had to pay more than \$1,000 to purchase materials CSIC said he had to

have to keep his membership.

In the past year, a few members have in fact resisted joining CMI. They said "*I don't care about the money, I will not join CMI*". That is their right, but they pay for it monetarily. If CMI membership were truly voluntary, there would be no financial penalty associated with not joining. Many members are stretched to the limit financially. So all members would be forgiven if they were to state "*I do not agree with anything about the way CMI is set up or run, but I feel forced into joining just because of the money*".

So what did David LeBlanc get? CMI demanded he apologize for saying he was "forced to join". They demanded he forward a draft letter of apology to them for approval, then send his retraction to CIC. When he refused, they revoked his CMI membership!

Now he must pay for the books, as well as organize a subscription to Quicklaw or purchase six publications, which CMI members get "for free". But of course, we as CSIC members have paid for these once already through subsidiaries given to CMI.

It should also be stated that his submission to CIC was confidential, just like CSIC's (which members have not yet seen). But he shared parts of his submission on the *Immigration Consultants' Listserv*, a private forum of CSIC members not open to CSIC directors and staff. In a chilling development, CMI appears to have obtained his posting from someone on the Listserv who violated the Listserv rules of participation. Those terms require participants to sign a declaration that they will not pass on Listserv postings without the author's permission. This could well be considered an offense under the CSIC Rules of Professional Conduct, but of course the individual will not come forward.

Nevertheless, CMI should have refused to accept the information based on this apparent violation of Listserv and CSIC Rules. We therefore call on CMI to reverse its decision and do the right thing now - either show they obtained this information in some legitimate way, or report the offender to the Complaints and Discipline Department.

CAPIC's Questions

Several other questions remain. How does CMI justify this apparent gross violation of Mr. LeBlanc's *Charter* Rights? All Canadians have the right to freely express themselves under section 2. We understand that David has already brought this reprisal to the attention of the Minister and CIC. How will this look to those officials who requested input from all members? How can public confidence be claimed by an organization that muzzles its own members? Or undermines its own members and their efforts to better the profession?

CAPIC therefore calls on the CSIC Board to hold CMI accountable for its actions, both in bulletins maligning the many CSIC members who belong to CAPIC, and in its shoddy treatment of Mr LeBlanc.

Finally, CAPIC demands that the CSIC Board make the mandatory reference library available to all CSIC members for free. We are all paying for it by subsidizing CMI losses, which are more than \$1.5 million to date, or about \$700 per member in 2009. Our projections indicate that CMI will lose even more money this year. On what basis can it possibly be justified that a member like Mr LeBlanc must pay the losses of CMI Inc, without getting the materials? At the very least, he and all CSIC members who do not join CMI should be refunded \$700.

In closing, we regret the leadership of CMI has engaged in such conduct.

We wish to thank our own members for your continued support, which is very much appreciated. Those of us who volunteer at CAPIC work hard for benefit of immigration consultants and hope to continue serving you as best we can in the coming transition.



There will be much more work on the road ahead once the process gets rolling when the

selection criteria are announced. We expect that will be within the month, and will keep you posted!

Best Regards,
CAPIC

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