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—
Chair

Mr. Colin Mayes

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•(0910)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC)): I open this Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development for Thursday, September 28, 2006.

Members, you have the orders of the day. The first order of business we will be dealing with will be from 9 o'clock until 10 o'clock. We'll be listening to our witness and asking questions of him. Our witness is from Prince Albert Grand Council, Keith Frame, the research coordinator. Then we will be dealing with some committee business from 10 o'clock to 11 o'clock.

I would ask the witness, please...we'd like you to make a presentation for ten minutes, and then we'll be asking questions. We're looking forward to that.

Before I go any further, just so the committee is aware, I want to make mention that I have to leave at 11 o'clock sharp.

I should say, Mr. Lemay and Mr. Lévesque, that we have this package and it has not been translated. Are we able to receive this? It will be translated as soon as possible.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Roger Préfontaine): It's being translated, and we will have it tomorrow.

The Chair: We'll have it tomorrow. So what is your pleasure, Mr. Lemay and Mr. Lévesque?

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Obviously, Mr. Chairman, we cannot agree with this and we must insist that those documents must be translated in French before they are tabled with the Committee.

If the witness refers to the documents, we just need to take notes in order to find them in the document when it will be translated.

[English]

The Chair: I was the only one who had a document.

For the witness' information, the policy of the committee is that we have any documents presented in both official languages to committee, and it's not acceptable if they're not. You can make your presentation on your brief, and we'll just make notes. Once it's translated, we'll be getting the package.

I realize the time constraints the witness was under, because we did give you very short notice, and we do appreciate that. We're not setting any fault here that you weren't prepared. It's just a matter of

the time constraints that you were put under by the committee, and we appreciate your presence here this morning.

Mr. Gary Merasty (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, Lib.): That's all I was going to say, that it's because of the time constraints. I'm sure they would have had a translation.

The Chair: Thank you.

So we'll begin, Mr. Frame.

Mr. Keith Frame (Research Coordinator, Prince Albert Grand Council): First of all, good morning, and thank you for the invitation. It's nice to be here. It's nice to talk about a subject that's so close to my work and to some of my passion in my work.

On behalf of Grand Chief Michel, Vice-Chiefs Henderson and Deranger, and the Prince Albert Grand Council, I'd like to say we appreciate being invited to the table on such a topic.

I'd like to start by saying I wish I had the documents in French and English, but it was a short time. I was dealing with schools and their reading programs, and this came up, and I tried to get a jump on it as fast as I could. I wish I could have had it here, but time was tight.

I'm not sure what part of the document is going to be looked at, so maybe just out of courtesy we could stick with the charts, if that would be fine.

I'd like to start by saying that the work you see in front of you is part of a larger project. Three to four years ago at the Prince Albert Grand Council we started taking a look at what we were doing in our schools and making solid decisions and policies and setting direction. To do that, it was important for us to gather data that was reliable from a number of sources: Canada-wide, province-wide, northern Saskatchewan-wide, and then right from our communities themselves.

From that point we looked at K to 12 education, because that's where we were primarily focused at the time and that's where a lot of exciting things are taking place.

As we did that project and we looked at the indicators—the first document—we realized it's very difficult to talk about K to 12 education without that bleeding into post-secondary and into the labour market, because they're all tied together so tightly. When we did this project...we now have three documents. What I'd like to do is go through some of the charts.

When I was given a call the other day, they asked if I could talk about post-secondary education and about some of the factors that are taking place, particularly in our world, in the grand council. What I'd like to do, if it's possible, is just jump to those, because I know I have a short time, and then if you have questions, I'll be more than happy.

So if you would, please, on page 3...oh, we don't have the document.

The Chair: We don't have the document.

Mr. Keith Frame: Okay, I'll talk through my charts. When we started taking a look at education, first of all, we had to have reliable information about population in those demographics. We gathered population demographics all the way back from 1911 to 2001. In that period of time we found that the Canadian general population grew by 450% and the aboriginal population grew by 930%. From 1991 to 2002 the aboriginal population in Canada grew by 230%. So now we're looking at a significantly large population growth.

More particularly in Saskatchewan, in the last number of years we've seen what's called a boom, bust, and echo. The baby boomers came through and there was a peak in population. It was larger in Canada and slightly smaller in Saskatchewan. That trend reversed about ten to fifteen years later. What we have now is the youth in Saskatchewan between one and fourteen...that peak in population is far surpassing the general Canadian population. Statistics Canada also estimates that in the next eight to ten years there's going to be another boom, and it's going to be particularly in the aboriginal first nations population in northern Saskatchewan communities and in other areas where there are those populations.

I think that was important for us because we had to start taking a look at schools, the capacities, what's needed. When I talk to my chiefs and councils I say, we have students who are fourteen and fifteen years old, and we'll blink our eyes and they're going to be eighteen and nineteen and looking for post-secondary education.

Another interesting demographic in northern Saskatchewan is the changing population. A lot of the population right now between 44 to 65-plus years are the folks who are finishing their careers, deciding what they're going to do when retiring, and some of them are leaving their careers. That's the non-reserve northern population. The Grand Council population is the opposite. On one side, you have the general population that is aging and leaving careers; they've finished their schooling. On the other, we have this large population of aboriginal first nations youth, and there's going to be a need to switch spots in terms of education, in terms of careers. It's a very predominant demographic.

In the Prince Albert Grand Council, probably a little over 30,000 individuals presently make up the membership. From 1994 to 2003, that membership grew by 33%. We're talking about a very large growth in population. Today it's a very young population.

From that point, I'm looking at demographics and population, at how they relate to Canada and to the individuals in the Grand Council. We took a look at educational attainment itself, and again we looked from Canada to Saskatchewan, but I thought I would focus on Saskatchewan while I'm here. What we have today is that 71% of aboriginal individuals have less than a secondary school

education, less than a high school education. So we're talking about a large part of that population.

In terms of post-secondary graduates, diplomas, or degrees, that represents 8% of the aboriginal population; 19% have some...which means they're involved in some type of post-secondary program. So we see a large number of individuals with less than a high school education. There is some representation in technical schools, some representation in universities, but those numbers are quite small. Within our own high schools, as we started to focus down, because high school leads into post-secondary education, we found that in 1998-99 we had approximately 42 individuals who graduated from our schools. We have 28 schools in the grand council. You'll be able to see some of that information in the document when it's available. By 2003-04 that number of graduates rose to 184, which indicates there are significant increases taking place.

● (0915)

But it's important to understand that those numbers—although they are positive and show that good things are happening and that students are trying to stay in school to get their grade 12 education—represent a small amount. That year that 184 graduated represented only 19% of the high school young adults—they don't like to be called children.

Our grade 12 classes are small, but once we got them to grade 12, I believe there was a 92% chance of them going on. In 1998, when there were 42 graduates, 34% of the grade 12 class went on. That 34% increased to 92% a number of years later. Once our students get there, they do go on.

As an aside, what is very interesting is that one of the biggest demographics of graduates right now is for females over 21 who have kids. I think it's exciting stuff. You can tell I could talk about this for hours.

We've now started to focus on post-secondary and look at the numbers and programs they were going into. What we found is that from 1977 to 2002-03, there were significant increases in the number of students who received INAC funding. What was also interesting was that those who received funding, I believe it was in 1996-97, actually started to drop off. It decreased by 8%, which is 2,108 individuals. So there were large increases as post-secondary opened up and students started to be involved. From 1977 to 1995, I believe, there was an increase of 415% in post-secondary students receiving INAC funding.

What I find interesting is that we're talking sometimes about small percentages. There is one chart that talks about a decline in student population of I believe 1% or 2%, but that 1% or 2% represents 87 students who struggled with a lot of barriers in the community. They graduated, went up to the band office, and they asked to go to school. They said no. As a teacher and as someone who still works in schools, small percentages represent people. To me, and I know for you as well, it's very disheartening at times.

Another chart in the document takes a look between academic years at the post-secondary level. How did the enrolments increase? How many more went to school or didn't go to school? At its highest point, in 1985, the number of students who went to post-secondary education and received INAC funding increased by 29.6%. The largest decline was minus 4.5% in 2001-02. What's more interesting is that from 1977 to 1995—with the exception of one year where there was what I call a little bleeder, where there was a negative number—there has always been a positive number of enrolments, although they've started to decline.

What we have now at the grand council is a chart that shows that for the last five to six years those numbers have actually started to decline. This means, for example, in some communities, when they get their budget for post-secondary education, it hasn't increased, but the desire to go to post-secondary has. The money is limited, and the opportunity has become limited for our youth.

Within the grand council we also took a look at the graduates—those who have gone on and finished their post-secondary degrees. We also took a look at enrolments. What we found was that in a very short period of time, from 1998 to 2002, there was an increase of 34.5% in enrolment in post-secondary education. Yet within that time, from 2000 to 2002, that same enrolment percentage dropped by 7.2% or 65 students.

● (0920)

Our graduates—they're in the programs—are graduating at a very slow rate, and there are a number of issues that have some influence on that.

When we took a look at post-secondary students and we did surveys with them, we found that one of the critical factors in their world was the price index and how that relates to the cost of living. Generally, the costs of living are 29% higher now than they were in 1990. Also, as we talked about the costs of living, we talked about tuition. What we found was that in Canada, western Canada, and then again particularly in Saskatchewan, tuitions have increased on average by 8.1% a year, while inflation has increased by 1.9%. So the pot of money, the budget that's accessible to our students, has remained the same for a fair number of years. And within that post-secondary support you do get, things cost a lot more today than they did a number of years ago. That's what's also a factor for our students.

There's an interesting piece of information that came from the surveys we did with our post-secondary students. As I said before, one of the largest demographics is females with kids coming back and finishing their grade 12. When we surveyed the post-secondary students, I thought I was going to see concerns mostly around money, books, and tuition. But one of the biggest factors was finding a house—finding a place where they could live, finding a place that was comfortable, clean, safe for their kids, a place with recreation for their kids, a nice school—which I didn't expect. That's some of the information I find as I do this type of research. Sometimes you come across things you never expected would turn up.

But I digress.

As we looked at post-secondary education, we also asked how this relates to the labour market. Hopefully, when you finish your

education you have a chance to use it and have a career. So we started to take a look at our communities, and that's the latest document—the labour market—which we did just this summer. What we found is that in our communities there are a fair number of folks who are unemployed. There's a range from location to location. The employment rate on average in our communities is 28%. At the time we did this survey it went as low as 21% and as high as 42%. Most communities, at a 42% employment rate...even that's quite low, I think.

What we found more interesting was some of the work that was shared with us by the *Sask Trends Monitor*. In our on-reserve communities, as I mentioned before, employment can range from 19% to 21%, depending on whether people commute on and off the reserve to their job site. But what was more alarming for us is that approximately 58% are not in the labour force. They're not working; they're not employed. I'd feel comfortable saying that those are the folks who probably don't have a grade 12. They're the ones who...remember, I said a few minutes ago, they're 18; they blink their eyes and they're 25 now.

I was talking with my director and our coordinators of education. I oversee a principals' group where we bring our 28 principals into our community for a meeting four times a year. During our last meeting there was a conversation that started to take place around the coffee pot. What I found interesting was that the principals were talking about the large number of youth who are 15, 16, 17 years old who are starting to not go to school. There is no employment, and what's the plan? They were talking not necessarily from a focus, as you folks might be today, but about how do we get them back to school, what courses do they have, what courses do they need, and if they're not bound for university, how do we get them into the trades, so that they don't have seasonal work but can have a career?

● (0925)

I've told people a number of times that I wished I had a secret camera because it was such a casual conversation that developed. I found the things they talked about very interesting, especially about doing the work that we have...and in thinking about that young demographic.

The last point I'd like to make is that when we looked at on-reserve in the north, the first nations reserve and the grand council, we took a look at those individuals who had a post-secondary education. We found that among non-reserve in northern Saskatchewan, approximately 40% have post-secondary education, and on the grand council on reserve, it's less than 25%. Again, once the document arrives, there will be more information.

I included the introductions to our post-secondary indicators and to our labour market report from our grand chief. I think those words speak very close to the situation and close to the grand council. What I also did was include the conclusion from our post-secondary report, because it makes a few recommendations at the end. It talks about the situation as it is today, and it also talks about what might be some of the considerations in the future.

In closing, thank you again for the invite. I enjoyed being here. I always enjoy talking about this information. I hope you enjoy the report once it does arrive, and I'll leave it at that.

Thank you.

● (0930)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll be moving on to questions now, so we'll have you on the hot seat.

I'll turn it over first to Mr. Merasty.

Mr. Gary Merasty: Unfortunately, the handout couldn't come out, so I'm just going to try to clarify a couple of pieces of information to pinpoint some of these issues.

The first point you made was that there's a huge population growth—from my understanding, probably Canada's most significant demographic shift in 50 years. Baby boomers are retiring and vacating the labour force, and one of the source populations entering the labour force potentially is aboriginal people. You say this is happening in Saskatchewan, obviously.

Graduation rates out of grade 12 are increasing. You said 92% of the students in grade 12 in 2004 graduated, versus 34% of the students in grade 12 graduating in 1998. That's quite amazing. The flip side to that is that's only about 20% of the total high school population. I think we have to clarify that as well. What percentage of that 80% still live on the reserve? I imagine a large number of them are actually off reserve, and we can't track the other 80%—right?

Another point I think you made on post-secondary enrolment was that enrolment initially increased as funding was made available. As the population increased, the funding flatlined, so we're now starting to see a drop. You can only maintain so long before you start to see a drop in enrolment, and in large part that seems to be due to funding. That's another point perhaps you could clarify.

Another point I'm hearing is that we don't fund adults trying to come back to high school, and we're having to tell them no at the band office or elsewhere...and considering that the women with children, who are more than likely adults, or over the age of 21 in some cases, are the ones with the highest rates of success.

Those are some of the main points I heard in your presentation, as well as some additional information on post-secondary graduation rates, comparing PAGC to non-reserve northern Saskatchewan. I'd like to see those numbers as we go.

I want to put a context behind one statement you made. You said the employment rate in northern Saskatchewan is 28%. The reason you don't use "unemployment" is because in order to be unemployed you actually have to register somewhere, right? What is the employment rate in northern Saskatchewan compared to on-reserve numbers?

I'll leave it at that, those three questions. First, where do you think the other 80% of those high school students are? I'd hate to have people understand that they're all on reserve, and dropouts on reserve, because they're probably off reserve and the number is not as skewed as it looks. Second, concerning the comment on the dropping enrolments into post-secondary, is that related to funding? And third, on the employment rates, define employment versus unemployment in northern Saskatchewan.

● (0935)

Mr. Keith Frame: With respect to the 19% or 20% who graduated, we found that in the same year we had approximately 370 students enrolled in our first nations high schools. Those are also students enrolled in public schools—in Prince Albert, Saskatoon. When I talk about that large number of students, I want you to understand that not all grade 12 grand council students are on reserve, because some aren't. The other 80% are children in grade 10 or 11, children who didn't finish grade 12, or others who are returning. The other thing we find with our students is that instead of taking three years to complete to grade 12, some students take four, five, or six. For those coming back, especially, it takes longer. There is this high population, but not necessarily from grand council schools.

We looked at the drop in enrolment in post-secondary education. In the grand council, one of the first questions we considered was whether there was funding for going to school. Is it available to you? Are you on a waiting list? How long have you been on the list? We look at grad students who want to go on but don't get accepted at their community level. There are a number of factors that play into someone's success in post-secondary school, such as housing or bridging programs. When you talk about the numbers dropping, it would be easy to say it's because of just one thing. It would be so easy to blame, say, funding. Although it plays a major part, there are other factors as well. It's very difficult, and I would hate to say just one thing.

When you talked about employment-unemployment, you said you had to have employment to have unemployment. As for the data gathered in the grand council, the purpose of that chart was to focus on those not in the labour force. The number of unemployed is low because the number of employed is low. When there's seasonal work, like fishing, firefighting, or line-cutting, they grab those jobs as fast as they can because they do not come along very often. They work for three or four months and then they're unemployed. Even at that, the employment-unemployment numbers are low. We want to focus on those who aren't in the labour force and relate that to education.

The Chair: Mr. Lemay.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Thank you, Mr. Frame.

I shall make a first comment. It is wonderful to see that you kept statistics from 1911 to 2001. Did I understand correctly? You have numbers on the demographics of your population for that whole period?

[English]

Mr. Keith Frame: Yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Well done!

[English]

Mr. Keith Frame: On population growth.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: This Committee is concerned with post-secondary education. This is the focus of this Committee at this time. I understand that there are several levels to reach and that very often it becomes difficult to go off to post-secondary education. Something worries me.

Am I to understand that in your community, a male or female who wants a post-secondary education must be accepted or get the support of his or her community to be able to do so?

• (0940)

[English]

Mr. Keith Frame: Yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Why?

[English]

Mr. Keith Frame: Because at the community level, after young adults get their grade 12 they have a number of sources. If you look at the socio-economic conditions in some of our communities, mom and dad don't have a lot of money where they can say, here, I'll help you with your tuition, your books, or a place to live.

The sources for finding the funding for that young individual to go to school are very limited, and when they do go to the band office, the post-secondary fifteen new students in one year, but we also have to continue paying for the students who are already in programs.

This is off the top of my head, so the number is probably wrong, but I believe last year in one community—because I asked the post-secondary coordinators to please send me some information right from the community itself—there were 67 students who applied and who couldn't get in.

If, for example, they were able to give their fifteen...there are still students who didn't get in, but please remember that was last year. We might have twenty from the year before and ten from the year before that. What happens is you get on the waiting list and as your time comes up you might get in, but some of the waiting lists are three, four, five, six years old.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I understand perfectly what you are telling me, Mr. Frame. However, what I do not understand, is why, in the white population, there is no such restriction for someone wanting a secondary education at the college or university level. We shall have to answer to that comment

Isn't it a problem? If I am on a waiting list and I want to study medicine, for instance, my chances to get funding are better than if I want to study graphic arts. Is the program chosen one of the criteria used to fund the students on the waiting list?

[English]

Mr. Keith Frame: From my understanding, it's usually difficult for those folks who do want to go off to post-secondary education, to go into medicine or into dentistry, as you mentioned, because you have to make a long-term financial commitment from the community side, from the band office side.

A lot of our students are hoping to get into four-year programs, hoping to get into two-year programs. You have to set priorities. As a person who works in that band office...you have a community and you have to set priorities as to who gets to go and who doesn't get to go, and maybe sometimes those things factor into it. Can you afford to send someone to school for seven years and two kids for no years, or could you send two for four years and leave the one behind? Those are the decisions that take place.

When you mentioned the general population and restrictions, there are some at times. I really believe that young individuals in certain parts of the country where money is tight run into the same situation at times, where they say, "Do you know what? I can't go to school. Mom and dad don't have the money. I can't get into it."

The Chair: Mr. Lemay, I'm going to move on.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I understand.

[English]

The Chair: To sum up, the opportunity is available, but the funds are not. That's what you're saying, correct?

• (0945)

Mr. Keith Frame: Yes, I believe that.

The Chair: Madam Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): I'm going to do more on the funding, so it may help illuminate things.

We've had a number of reports—"Best Practices in Increasing Aboriginal Postsecondary Enrolment Rates" is one—and we've had the minister's national working group, the Assembly of First Nations.... They've all done a significant amount of work on looking at the barriers to first nations in post-secondary education—and that includes trades, I might add. The Assembly of First Nations did a report that looked at the funding levels required for post-secondary. In 2003-04 the Government of Canada funded 22,556 full- and part-time first nations students through INAC's PSSSP, which was approximately \$12,200 per student. They looked at the demands, which included rising tuition costs, the cost of living, the demographics—and I think you pointed out the demographics. Many students are either single parents or have children. Often they are required to leave their communities, which puts additional burdens on them in terms of transportation and all kinds of other issues. They estimated that they actually needed \$23,800 per student.

Any of us who have been involved in post-secondary education knows—and you rightly pointed out the 8.1% tuition cost each year for a number of years—that students are faced with an incredibly crushing financial burden. I've heard from bands that say a number of years ago they would have been able to send two students for the money they got and now they have to send one, because for all intents and purposes there is a cap on the funding. There's also been no recognition of the increase in the numbers of students who are now graduating from grade 12 and could access post-secondary.

I wonder if you could comment. It's easy enough to just say more money. We've had all of these reports, years and years of reports, and we've had various governments who have failed to follow through on that commitment to post-secondary education. What do we need to do to get government's attention to say that not only is this a human rights issue, but it's also an economic issue? How do we get their attention?

The information is all there. Do you have any suggestions?

Mr. Keith Frame: I could speak on behalf of the Prince Albert Grand Council. I'd feel uncomfortable speaking on behalf of the AFN.

To get their attention, I believe you have to look at the numbers honestly, look at the situation of what's taking place and the needs at the community level. To get a government's attention, it would be interesting to look at the roughly 40% of students who do get there. They passed the hurdle of getting their grade 12. They passed the hurdle of getting accepted and getting financial support to go to school. Then at the school they have issues of transportation, cost of living, housing, lack of bridging programs to private counselling, and educational counselling. Putting your kids from Fond du Lac on a plane all the way down to Saskatoon, finding them a place to live and hopefully finding a good school.... As I said before, there is not one factor. To get someone's attention, the best way is to sit down and say, let's honestly take a look at what's taking place.

I don't think another letter or another few sentences I say will make a difference. But in our world, in the grand council, what we did was ask whether it's K to 12 education, post-secondary education, or the labour market? What's taking place with our membership, what is the data that will help drive policy and help drive decision-making—instead of looking at the situation in the school and asking, should we do it? How come? Because it seems like a good idea....

No, let's look at the numbers. How many students are graduating? How many students are needed? How many students are asking for post-secondary education? What are they asking for in the labour market right now?

I had a discussion with Industry Canada a couple of years ago. They said they wanted to have our aboriginal first nations youth from the Prince Albert Grand Council in their employ in SaskTel, SaskEnergy, SaskHighways, but we can't get them because they're not there.

As you said, how do you get someone to notice? Look at it honestly. I'm not saying the people aren't looking at it; I guess I see it a little differently at the grassroots than sometimes people see it from different locations.

I see the students who do graduate from different locations. I see the students who graduate, who come to me and say they want to go to school now. I had a parent phone me in my office—aside from research, I do teacher services, which is like being a superintendent at a school. A mother phoned me from B.C. She adopted a young fellow from Fond du Lac. She said he was 18 and he graduated from high school, and she asked where she would get the money. I asked what she meant. She said he was accepted and was going to school now. I had to explain to her that just because he's treaty and has his

grade 12, there is no cheque coming. There is a process of applying, and hopefully there is room for him. That depends upon how many people have applied.

When I talk about grassroots, that's what I mean. How do you get people to notice? We are sitting around talking about it today, so there is a bunch of people noticing.

• (0950)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Whether they actually do something about it is the question.

The Chair: Mr. Bruinooge.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Thank you very much, Keith, for coming. Clearly, you are very interested in your students. I can tell by your demeanour and your personality. You have a degree of optimism that I think is necessary to convince people that the right approach is to move forward with education. There's no doubt that you're right that education is the key to being able to achieve success in a career, economically speaking, and there are many factors there as well.

I'd like to get you to highlight a few more of the elements of your statistical analysis, because you also seem to have a good degree of understanding of where your students are statistically. Unfortunately, we didn't get a chance to see the graphs. I'm a bit of a visual learner and I like to see the fancy pie charts and such. But I'm sure once you get them translated we will have the pleasure of being able to look at them.

I want to go back to some of the stats. I know Gary did indicate some of his analysis of them, but perhaps we could go back to them for a few more moments. In terms of the number of students who were able to graduate in 2003 from the 28 schools, I have a number of 184 and that's in the 2003-04 session. How many total students was that based on?

Mr. Keith Frame: Of that 184 who graduated, again, that was 92% of just the grade 12 class in our grand council schools. That was just the students inside, so there were 8% of 184 who didn't—roughly a little over 200 and some.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Do you have a statistic in terms of the number of students who those individuals started grade 9 with? Do you have that breakdown?

Mr. Keith Frame: On persistence in graduation, yes, we do. In the public school numbers from Saskatchewan education indicators, we find a fairly consistent trend. If students start in year one, in approximately three years they're done.

What we find in our schools in terms of persistence of graduation is that instead of taking three years, it might take four or five or six, because there are a lot of factors involved. But we find that once we do get a child to grade 12, they have a high rate, at least from this time, of graduating.

The other side of that coin, though, is to remember that this 18-year-old or 19-year-old has been working at the school for three, four, five years, and all of a sudden there are other factors that come into place. If you're 20 years old and you're a young man and you have a little baby girl at home, you have to put food on the table. So if you get a chance to get seasonal work, you grab it.

In one of our high schools one spring, the principal phoned me and said, "What are we doing to do? We lost all the students." I asked, "What happened?" He said, "It's May and there was a big fire and they all quit because they could get \$20-some an hour." That's bread and butter and shoes. He asked, "What are we going to do?" So I phoned the Department of Education and asked whether we could do something. I said I had to have a late writing of this exam. I coordinated when they could all be flown back and we did the exam at the last moment. That's what I mean by grassroots.

So in terms of their persistence, I think some of the students we have are pretty persistent in even going to high school, and especially post-secondary, because with some of the things they go through...I think I'd have a hard time doing it.

• (0955)

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: On the number you quoted, in terms of the individuals who have a degree—your former students—you're tracking them, I assume, after graduation through to the point where they've received an undergraduate degree or more than that. You quoted the number of 8%, and 19% I think is with some degree of post-secondary education, whether they've ceased their studies or they're in the process of getting an undergraduate degree. Is that what those numbers were?

Mr. Keith Frame: Yes. Those are some numbers that came from the *Sask Trends Monitor* in 2004. What we've started to do is get our post-secondary counsellors from the communities, and we'll start to gather some more data specific to grand council post-secondary students and those who are getting post-secondary funding.

With all of our indicators programs, we grab a baseline of data, some of which comes from Statistics Canada, *Sask Trends Monitor*, Health Canada, whatever information we can get, and from that we build on it with our own surveys that take place in the community.

We believe, in the Prince Albert Grand Council, that some of that data as it relates to us really helps us look at decision-making and policy-making. For example, we know approximately how many students get post-secondary funding because of the rollout numbers from INAC twice a year. They say, "Here's Sam. He's going to university. He has this money here."

I'm interested in those students who didn't get funding: How many were there? I'm interested in waiting lists: Who's making up that waiting list? Male, female, kids, no kids? How long have they been on that waiting list? What types of programs have you been asking for? Those are some of things we're looking at, to be able to gather some of that information.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: How much more time do I have?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: I'll try to make it as quick as I can.

For the individuals who are chosen to get the somewhat limited funding that your grand council has, what criteria are utilized? I guess my question would be, are students with a higher propensity for academic success provided with some degree of consideration?

Mr. Keith Frame: It would be wrong for me to answer that because each of our first nations has a coordinator and I'd have to look at their policies before making a comment that umbrellas everybody. I think it would be negligent of me.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: But in general, you're not sure—

Mr. Keith Frame: I feel comfortable that they would take a look at your marks, what type of program you want to go into. Also, they would have to look at the waiting list, who has been on it, those types of things. But I shouldn't say what the policies are, because although I'm sure they're similar in nature, there might be little elements to them that might be different.

The Chair: Committee, it's 10 o'clock. I'm looking for some direction. If you want to continue and go into the allotted time for committee business, the chair is open to that, but if not, we'll move on to—

• (1000)

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: It's rare that we have such a knowledgeable witness. I would recommend that we continue.

The Chair: Do you want to go another round before we turn to committee business? What is the pleasure of the committee?

Madam Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): I have no problem going another round, but I want you to ensure us that all of the committee business will be accomplished in the remaining time.

The Chair: Okay, I'll give you a guarantee: as long as we're concise and direct and to the point, everything will be fine.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Chair, I think we owe, at the very least, another ten minutes, because we were quite late starting. So I would appreciate some more time.

The Chair: Okay. We'll go a second round here, starting with the Liberal side. Who is going to speak?

Hon. Anita Neville: Dr. Bennett has a brief question, and then I'll follow up, if time allows.

The Chair: Certainly.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Keith, are there situations where a student has graduated from post-secondary education and he's not going to university because of funding? I think we have an obligation, as a government, to make sure that never happens, that somebody—

Mr. Keith Frame: Do you mean somebody from grade 12?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Yes, from grade 12. Somebody has all the qualifications to get to university but is sitting at home because of some financial problem within the band in terms of allocating money or not having the budget to be able to send that qualified student to post-secondary education.

Mr. Keith Frame: Yes.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: And what would you recommend we do about it?

Mr. Keith Frame: If I could have a magic wand, I would say I'd like them to go to school. I'd like to take a look at what are the factors that enable us to get a young adult to school.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Don't we have an obligation to make post-secondary education available to anybody who qualifies for it?

Mr. Keith Frame: My obligation is to encourage and support them as much as I can.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: We, as the Government of Canada, have the responsibility to make sure they get there, don't we?

Mr. Keith Frame: I talk to my students and I talk to my chiefs and councils. My understanding is that education is a lifelong process, and that they get their funding based on treaty agreements. So that's what we talk about in our schools. Should they get it? I've seen the wind taken out of so many sails when a kid who was excited last year comes to me and says, "I got through the school, and I'm done". A lot of factors go into getting into grade 12 in some of our communities. To go that far is pretty tough. I've been working with first nations students for over twenty years. It's tough the first couple of times you see it, but what's even tougher is that you develop a thick skin. Sometimes when I leave a community that I fly into, I think about talking with that tough skin to five or six kids. I've had a heck of a lot of long plane rides.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you for coming. I appreciate your being here. I've heard much about the work you've been doing.

What is your primary wish of us in accommodating your students better? Is it increased funding for tuition, bridging programs, housing? What can we do as a committee, as a government, to ensure that more of your students have the opportunities they need and deserve?

Mr. Keith Frame: My wish from the grand council would be to take a look at the recommendations we made in our documents and in the documents you'll see tomorrow, and to listen to the recommendations of my colleagues in first nations education. There are many good recommendations, and many good ideas to address the situation. My wish: take a look at them and act upon them, please.

• (1005)

Hon. Anita Neville: Let me ask you again—and I am pushing you a little bit—if you were to walk out of the room and we were able to say that we could do X or Y immediately, what would be your priority?

Mr. Keith Frame: It would be the funding for students to go to school. Remove the funding cap that's coming on twenty years old. Take a look at bridging programs, so that students are able to get from their communities, their close-knit families, their schools, to post-secondary. Take a look at what's taking place in K to 12 schools and strengthen them. Make it easier to work with post-secondary institutions. Find innovative ways to have students stay in school. Ask industry and organizations for ideas. Learn from what we're doing with our youth apprenticeship program, where we have counselling at the junior high, high school, and even the university level.

One thing I would do? There would be many things. But if I had to pick one, it would be to take a look at all those recommendations and find ways to make them happen.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Blaney.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank you for coming to meet with us. It is a good thing to be able to speak with someone working on the ground. I worked for Indian Affairs, but in the infrastructure field.

There was something that I found surprising in your presentation. You have explained that young people were dropping out because they had difficulty making the transition between their studies and a career or simply finding a job. It is then a question of motivation issue. You have raised a good point. One of the hurdles the students are faced with is that there are no economic opportunities for them because they are unable to find a job after their graduation.

Is culture well integrated in your curriculum? There are several languages spoken in your community: Dakota, Dene and Cree. Is culture well integrated in your curriculum from K to 12?

Then, to get back to earlier comments by Ms. Neville, how do you see the role of the federal government? Do you think that some kind of partnership between the provinces, the federal government and First Nations might improve the graduation rates?

[*English*]

Mr. Keith Frame: Thank you.

I'm just trying to write everything down so that I don't miss anything.

Mr. Steven Blaney: Yes.

Mr. Keith Frame: You made mention of studies and careers and sometimes students not completing. Again, I want to make it very clear when I speak with you folks this morning that I want to speak on behalf of our world, that of the grand council. I can't speak for everybody, but I'm thinking that they're going through the same things we are. When you talk about students who do get to post-secondary and maybe not finish, I don't think it's just motivation. I can't see too many of our students who do get past that hurdle of funding and finding that apartment and get going in school saying, "Well, I don't think I really want to be here." Most of them are pretty excited that they've got to that position. I think that's when those other factors start to come into play—the housing and the costs of living. Those are the factors that count.

You made mention of culture and family. Counselling for students at post-secondary, grade 12, and grade 11 is a very big factor in success. There's not a whole lot of it taking place. Right now—and I'm going off the top of my head—roughly 30% of our high schools in Canada don't get specific funding for a guidance counsellor. And if they have one in their school, they have to find somewhere in the budget that they can get money for that person.

At the post-secondary level, my understanding is that there's not a whole lot of counselling taking place. So for some of our students to come from small communities—away from their family and their culture and their traditions—and move to a city like Saskatoon, it's a big leap. Does it affect them? Yes, it does. I believe it does.

On curriculum, we do language and culture programs in most of our schools. We spend a fair amount of time developing language programs in Dene, Cree, and Dakota. At the grand council, with the second-level services we have, we have consultants specifically for that. And that's a very important aspect of school in our communities and for mums and dads in our communities.

At the post-secondary level there are courses they take, but I think if I were to comment, my understanding is that when students go to post-secondary school, in some way they leave that at their community, and it's a very difficult thing.

The other thing that comes across many times in the surveys we've done with our students is that they run into a fair amount of discrimination and racism. It can be as simple as knocking on a door and asking, "Can I rent this apartment?" and being told "No." "How come?" "It's for rent." Or "We want some other people because they have a couple of kids." It's a delicate subject, but I have to say it. They do run into it. There are different factors that take place in post-secondary. From the students I've taught, they run into this discrimination from time to time. So there are a fair number of hurdles.

● (1010)

Mr. Steven Blaney: Maybe you could just comment on a provincial partnership.

Mr. Keith Frame: I'm not sure about provincial partnerships right now. It would be negligent for me to talk about that.

The Prince Albert Grand Council has a very close working relationship with Saskatchewan Learning in the northern region. We try to work together as closely as possible. But they're a bit different in those systems. They don't always lend themselves.... Some of the projects they get funding for, we do anyway. For example, a number of years ago, community schools were a big concern at the provincial level, but we had been doing it for a long time because the need was there.

The Chair: We're going to move on to Mr. Lévesque.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Good morning, Mr. Frame.

I come back to your selection method for post-secondary students. I do not question it, but I only wish to remind you that even in the sports world, it may happen that a junior player is very successful at that level but not at all in the big leagues while another one who is just fair at the junior level will be very successful in the big leagues.

I have been teaching to First Nation people who had dropped out and had to take special courses to finish their high school. Once they were in those special classes, they succeeded very well.

You are saying that you have 28 K to 12 schools. Do you know what percentage of native teachers there is in the total number of schools in your territory?

I shall put all my questions at the same time because we do not have much time left.

Do you have an idea of students' persistence in reserve schools compared to students off reserve? How many post-secondary institutions are there in Saskatchewan?

I also had a question on lodging but you gave us a good presentation on that subject.

● (1015)

[English]

Mr. Keith Frame: Thank you. I'll take a look at these questions you've asked me.

In terms of demographics and the numbers we have in northern Saskatchewan, the aboriginal first nations population of youth is very large in northern Saskatchewan. I'd be remiss to give you an exact percentage. In public schools in our territory, the numbers are very high. We have students who go from reserve to the community and who live there. For example, in the Prince Albert Grand Council, if there were roughly 400 youth on reserve in one community, there'd probably be about 200 in communities like Prince Albert. The urban population is growing quite large as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Lévesque: Maybe I was not clear enough. What I would like to know is the percentage of native teachers in your 28 schools compared to the total number of teachers in your territory.

[English]

Mr. Keith Frame: Our percentage of first nations-aboriginal teachers is fairly high as more have completed programs like NORTEP and NITEP, which are educational training programs to have teachers from the north trained to work in the north. It's very difficult in some of our schools to get teachers. It's so difficult, in fact, that sometimes we're not able to offer a whole high school program because we can't find teachers. The percentage of first nations-aboriginal teachers is fairly high. It changes from year to year, because we get a lot of turnover in our schools.

You mentioned something about school attendance. The attendance in some communities is higher than in others. Again, even with K to 12 education, there are a lot of factors that play into a young individual going to school. In some communities attendance is very strong and in some it's not. It really depends on the situation taking place at home, in the community, and at large. When I talk about attendance, I think it's very important to mention that although some students have a rough situation, they still attend. It's very difficult sometimes—from my perspective, from what I've seen.

Where do students go for post-secondary education? Some of them go to just about anywhere they can get in. They'll go to La Ronge for programs. They'll go to Saskatoon or Regina. For a lot of our youth, it's not, "Where would you like to go?", it's "Where can I go?" There was some statistic I ran across—I have it in the document—that says if the commute to a college or university is more than 80 kilometres, the chances of a youth making that commute drop significantly. In most of our communities, you have to fly and drive for four or five hours. Those are the types of transportation things I was mentioning. It's more than a bus pass in the city; it's a whole "pick up your family and move" thing. It's a little more.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll move on to Mr. Albrecht, please.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Frame, for being here today.

I just want to clarify some of the figures you mentioned and that my colleague followed up on. You said from 1998 to 1999 there were 42 grads from 28 schools. Then I thought I heard you say from 2003 to 2004 there were 184 grads, representing only 19% of the students. There's still a large group of people who aren't graduating.

However, I want to focus on the increase for a minute. Could you identify what you think some of the factors were for that increase?

One of the questions I have is whether the parents of these students have any input into the programming decisions. Are there school boards or local school councils that would be looking at things such as job market opportunities and those kinds of things, with a view to increasing their retention rate at that level?

Then, later on you mentioned that at the end of your report you have some clear conclusions and recommendations. One of the obligations of this committee when we're through with this study will be to write a report. I would be very interested in specific recommendations. Obviously, finance is one, and we all know there's not an unlimited supply of dollars.

Are there other structural things that you see that would help us address the issues you've identified today?

• (1020)

Mr. Keith Frame: You mention the statistics, the 44 to 184 students. If you have 200 students and you get 44 grads, that's great, but you have to remember that the population in those high schools is growing significantly.

So when I talk to my chiefs and council, I say, "It's a great thing. We've got 184. Things are looking up." But we have to remember the volume that's there.

Off the top of my head, approximately 87% of our students are below grade 10. There's a great volume of students, and it's growing. So although that number looks very promising, there's lots of work to go forward with, in my opinion.

On school boards and input into programs, yes, all of our communities in the grand council have school boards. We have moms and dads from the community with kids in the school, and some of them are pretty active and some are not so. In terms of programs, a very strong element is to talk about culture, to talk about language, to have programs in the elementary schools to the high schools to deal with that. Lots of our communities have camps where students go out and understand those experiences, not necessarily to turn them into trappers and fishermen, because it's tough to make a career there, but just to have a good understanding of who they are, where they are. In the grand council, that's very important for us.

You talked about the guidance and counselling that takes place. In some of our schools it's tough because, as I said before, you might not have money in your budget to have a counsellor. You try to do the best you can because you know it's something that's needed. One of our projects is to bring all of our counsellors together to talk about careers and education with students, to try to be able to address some

of the issues they're going through in their lives, because a guidance counsellor is a very big important part of a high school, of a junior high school. And you need people who had time to be trained to be able to work with those issues, because I believe they are very special.

On the recommendations about how to address issues, tomorrow, after it's translated, you'll have those to look at.

You made reference to improving education and structure. One of the things we've stated in our documents is to improve and equip some of our schools in the communities to address education better at K to 12, at post-secondary. A lot of times when we look at adult education, what we find from our indicators, our programs, is that the adults like to come to the high school instead of going to a different building, because the high school is able to have a biology lab, a chemistry lab, and some of those storefronts don't have those types of things.

When you talk about structure, I made mention a little while ago that you might not be able to have a chemistry teacher. Well, we've developed a distance computer classroom that goes to the community. So if I have two students in Black Lake and one student in Cumberland House, I might be able to get those five or ten students with that chemistry they need to go on because they want to be a nurse. Without that, it's not uncommon for us to say, "Sorry, you can't take Math C30, we don't have a teacher." I have come across that, where we say, "We can't offer it to you." So when you talk about structure, those are the types of things we're looking at in K to 12 right now.

The Chair: Madam Crowder, do you have a question?

Ms. Jean Crowder: I do, and it's very brief.

The Chair: Okay. The only person who hasn't asked a question is Madam Karetak-Lindell.

Do you want to ask a question after?

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): I just wanted to make one comment.

The Chair: I'm going to wait until Madam Crowder speaks first.

• (1025)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Thank you.

I think much has been made about jurisdictional issues, and we talked about whose responsibility is post-secondary education. I think generally we would agree that delivery of post-secondary education is a provincial responsibility, but access and funding is a federal responsibility when we're talking about first nations and Inuit peoples. That's my comment.

One of the values of this kind of public process is that we get a chance to do some educating and awareness raising in the public venue. One of the myths that you've helped set straight today is the myth that any first nations person who wants to access a post-secondary education just gets a cheque written for them. I think it's really clear from what you've said today that there are long waiting lists, that access is a huge problem. Many bright people who would be great contributors to their communities and to Canada at large simply do not have access.

I wonder if you could comment on the graduation rates from first nations grade 12 students versus the provincial grade 12 graduation rate, and I wonder if you could comment on whether there's a difference between those two graduation rates.

Mr. Keith Frame: I'm glad you brought that up. In the work I've done, I've gone through some of the equity reports from school divisions in Saskatchewan where they're supposed to have the same percentages of staff—school board staff. I'm glad you raised that issue, because a lot of times in our schools...in the grand council you start to look at such things as student attendance and student education, and with those issues you start to feel a little heavy-hearted.

What was interesting was that I gathered information from one of the public school boards and took a look at their success rates working with aboriginal first nations students. They're having as difficult a time as we are.

In the study I do mention, regarding students who started in grade 10 and those who graduated in grade 12, they didn't know where 60% of them were. Their comment was, well, we just don't know.

When we talk about kindergarten to grade 12 and the close relationship I mentioned we had with the northern region in Saskatchewan, the public school, Saskatchewan Learning.... When we get on the phone and we're talking about curriculum, attendance, departmentals, and hiring and teacher retention, they say, "Welcome to the club. We're going through the same thing." The only thing that's different is the name on the door; we're all having a difficult time.

So for educators, you sometimes think that your world is the most important world, that your school is the most important thing, but everyone is going through the same thing. It's very difficult.

Ms. Jean Crowder: So in effect one could almost argue that the first nations schools, even though their graduation rates might be the same, are more successful because they face far more barriers. They have less resources.

Mr. Keith Frame: I would hate to say that's true; I don't have the information on it. All I know is a common phrase we use in the grand council in northern Saskatchewan is that we all share the same students and we're all dealing with the same issues.

The Chair: Ms. Karetak-Lindell, I'll give you a question.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: Thank you.

Mine is more of a comment. As I was listening to you—and thank you very much for your information—if I can speak for Gary and myself, we hear a lot more than what you're saying.

I always say that as a committee we should try very hard to go to the communities and see for ourselves what you're saying behind what you're saying. We can sit here and listen to a hundred witnesses, but we'd never fully understand unless we go to the communities and see for ourselves exactly what barriers the young people in our communities are facing. I'm sure you would agree with me there.

Mr. Keith Frame: Thank you for the comment.

Yes, I do agree with you. As I said before, I've had a lot of tough plane rides home after visiting schools.

I think it's very important to go see the communities and talk to some of the young individuals, to some of the moms and dads, and to the teachers in the communities, right down to the kindergarten and grade one teachers, and talk to some of the students who've gone to post-secondary school at the University of Saskatchewan and maybe dropped out—not because they weren't smart, not because they weren't motivated, but because of all these other hurdles. No sooner do you think you're by one than there's another and another, and so on.

Would it be interesting? Yes, and by all means, you're welcome. I'll drive, if you want to sit in the seat and keep me company. I think it's very important to see it and talk to those people.

• (1030)

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: At least you can drive; you can't in my region.

Mr. Keith Frame: Without taking that into consideration, it would be like trying to explain the colour red or purple to a blind person.

It's like you said, you're hearing more than what I'm saying, and I can't say enough to say what I want to.

The Chair: Mr. Stanton, and then we'll end the questioning.

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To be honest, it picks up on the same theme, and I think it might have been in response to Dr. Bennett's question, when you first mentioned the long plane ride home. I was hoping there might be an opportunity to come back to this, because you've talked in a general sense about that kind of condition, but there's obviously some detail below the surface we're really not getting to.

I wonder if you could take a minute or two to put in your own words, in real terms, what it is that actually makes this so difficult. You're obviously dealing with potential students for further education, and there are some social complications preventing them from going as far as they can. What actually is it that becomes so difficult for you, being in the position that you are, to help them get along?

I wonder if you could take a minute or two to expand on that in a bit more detail, because it was an interesting comment, but we'd like to know what's behind it.

Mr. Keith Frame: For me, taking some of those plane rides and car rides and talking to people is very tough. I guess what makes it tough is when you recognize opportunity lost, when you see potential that's gone. What I mean by opportunity lost is having young individuals with strong minds, strong bodies, and full of ambition who don't need to be motivated because they're ready to go, but it's not there for them.

When I talk with other folks, other directors and superintendents of public schools in Saskatchewan in region 5, in the northern region where I work, I tell them, as I said before, that we all share the same province and we all share the same students, because they move a fair amount, and we all share the same future. A student with a treaty number in Black Lake who gets a dental assistant diploma benefits everybody, not just the community of Black Lake. When a teacher gets a degree and starts teaching students, those students will disperse across the country. It's not the opportunity of Black Lake. It's not the opportunity of the Prince Albert Grand Council or Saskatchewan. It's the opportunity that's being lost for all of us.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: So in fact what really makes it so difficult is realizing that some of the people from these communities are just not able to get the opportunity to get into that position; they're not able to make that kind of contribution. And you have to satisfy yourself. You said you were thick-skinned. Have you had to actually tell people that this is the end of the road, that they can't likely make it any further?

Mr. Keith Frame: Boy, I hope I don't ever get to the point where I say that to somebody.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I know, but you were saying that you were thick-skinned—

Mr. Keith Frame: Have I had to have a realistic conversation with people? Yes, I have.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Okay.

Mr. Keith Frame: I mentioned the mum who phoned who thought I would just write a cheque and send the little boy she adopted to school because he was accepted. For some people, that's an easy conversation. For me, I want them to understand what's taking place, as opposed to the frustration that comes when someone has to say no to you—

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Got you.

Mr. Keith Frame: —because you have reached that point where you're ready to take the next step.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll end the questions now.

On behalf of the committee, I would really like to thank Mr. Frame for being here today and for sharing the work he has done and some of the insights.

We're looking forward to another opportunity to review the report that you have brought forward.

•(1035)

Mr. Keith Frame: I appreciate it. Thank you for inviting me.

As I said at the start, I can speak on behalf of the Prince Albert Grand Council and the work I do in northern Saskatchewan, and I'm confident that some of the issues I've talked about are taking place with my colleagues in other areas and regions of Canada. I always enjoy talking to folks about these issues. I guess this is the first time people have allowed me to talk. Usually I'm cut off.

Again, thank you for the time. I appreciate it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Voices: Hear, hear!

The Chair: Committee, we're going to move on to committee business. There is the planning of our future business. I met with the clerk and the research staff.

Does the committee want this to be in camera?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Yes, we probably should.

The Chair: I'll suspend for five minutes, until we have the room cleared.

Mr. Lemay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: If it is *in camera*, Mr. Chairman, it is customary to have one representative for each party.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is it per party or per staff?

Mr. Marc Lemay: Per staff.

The Chair: Mr. Lemay, each member can have a staff person here, not per party but per member here.

I was challenged on that at the last meeting and I checked and found out that all of the people who were here—

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Could all those people introduce themselves?

The Chair: Certainly. Could I have those staff members identify themselves and say what their connection is?

Hon. Anita Neville: I don't mind if you don't go in camera.

The Chair: We'll go in camera now.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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