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—
Chair

Mr. Colin Mayes

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•(0905)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC)): I'd like to open this meeting of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development this Tuesday, October 31.

Committee members, we have our orders of the day in front of us. We'll be dealing with post-secondary education for the first 45 minutes, with a presentation from Mr. Darren GooGoo, and then from 9:45 to 10 o'clock we'll move on to discuss some committee business as far as the witness list for Bill C-292 is concerned, and then from 10 to 11 we'll be dealing with a motion from Madam Neville.

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to welcome, from the Membertou First Nation, Darren GooGoo, director of education.

Mr. GooGoo, we invite you to make your presentation for up to ten minutes, and then we'll be asking questions. I appreciate the fact that you've taken time to be with us this morning.

Mr. Darren GooGoo (Director of Education, Membertou First Nation): Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, members of Parliament, I want to bring you greetings from my chief, Terrance Paul, of the Membertou First Nation.

As was explained earlier, my name is Darren GooGoo, and I'm the director of education for my community. I've been asked today to come to speak on the issue of post-secondary access and barriers to access.

My earlier understanding was that there were going to be three people at an earlier forum. One was going to speak as an individual; one was coming to speak as a member of a post-secondary institution; and I was going to come to discuss some of the barriers to post-secondary education from a community perspective, and also some of the pitfalls that we as a country need to avoid at some point in our future if we want to maintain a strong connection to post-secondary education for first nations.

With that being said, I think it's important for you to have a small understanding of the community I come from, and where we hope to go and what our aspirations are, because a lot of our aspirations hinge on having a workforce that is able to integrate into Canadian society.

I come from a small first nation know as Membertou. In the early 1900s we were a community located along the shores of the city of

Sydney, on the harbour. We were on some prime real estate, and there was a petition by the local member of Parliament to have us removed from that prime location. It was successful. We fought it in the court system for ten years and were eventually removed from our original reserve of Membertou and moved to a community about two and a half kilometres away. It was basically a large swamp, and from that time, in 1926, we've been trying to re-establish ourselves as an economic force within the city of Sydney.

That being said, about ten years ago we made some changes to the way in which we do business in our community; we made some changes to the thinking about first nations governance in our community. When I joined the band nine years ago, we had a budget of approximately \$5.1 million and a deficit of approximately \$1 million, which anybody who's an economist here knows is just not good business, obviously. We were 25% overexpended, and we have worked long and hard over the last ten years to turn that story around. I'm happy to say that for the last number of years, Membertou has posted surpluses, and we are no longer in a position of continuing to expend more than we take in. So we've had surpluses, and our latest revenue figures show us to be a community with revenues of over \$75 million and expenses of about \$74.99 million. I don't want to you to get the impression that we have lots of money.

We've taken our good fortune and we've been able to reinvest it in our own strategies in our own community to make a quality of life for our people. Ten years ago the overriding principle in Membertou was that we wanted to create a community in which there was a job for every single person who wanted to work. That's a very, very ambitious idea, especially in a first nation community. Anybody who comes from aboriginal Canada will tell you there are four jobs, and three of them are already taken.

I come from a community where, when I started, there were about 50 jobs at the band office. Currently we have a workforce of about 300 people, and we currently employ, as a community, 630 people. We are one of the largest employers in the local area. The first part of our dream, the first ten years of our dream, was very simple: a job for every person who wants to work—a job for every single person who wants to work.

We've accomplished that in Membertou. But the second part of our dream is a dream that I think we share with the rest of Canada. In the next ten years we want to create enough jobs so there is quality of life; we want quality-of-life jobs at this point. We have enough people who dig ditches, we have enough people who work at cash registers, and we have enough people who do general labour. We have a lot of people who are employed in those service areas. That's what we've chosen. Those are the initial jobs we were able to create.

• (0910)

When we look at post-secondary education, it will be the defining criteria for first nations communities in Canada that are successful and for those that are not successful. Access to post-secondary becomes a very important issue when you look at it from the context of developing a community.

In my community alone—I read an interesting statistic—we have eleven lawyers. We also have fifteen politicians, by the way.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Darren GooGoo: Yet we still don't have engineers, doctors, or dentists. We have some nurses, and we also have an overabundance—I don't like to say this—of teachers. I don't think that's a bad thing because I am a former high school math and science teacher. So we have an overabundance of teachers, and we continue to invest in those people...our lawyers. We continue to invest in those professional people in our community.

When we talk about the barriers to post-secondary education that exist today, we look at our community, and in the last four years we have sent an average of seventy people a year to post-secondary institutions, either universities or community colleges. We've been able to do that.

But when we talk about barriers to access, one of the biggest barriers from a community perspective—and I know you've heard this time and time again—is the issue of funding. Currently, my community receives an allocation of approximately \$12,200 to send one person to a post-secondary institution. When I started my job nine years ago, the amount of money we received—and I remember this because it was the first figure I had to deal with at a meeting—was \$11,726 per student for post-secondary education.

I remember meeting with the Canada student loans people eleven years ago. At that time, the cost of a university education was about \$12,000 to \$13,000, so we were close.

In the last nine years, since I've been a director of education in Membertou, the average university tuition cost for the community to pay for someone to go to university has been approximately \$3,600. Today the cost to send one person to university is \$6,300. So we have this huge \$2,700 increase; the cost of living has gone up, and things have risen.

Unfortunately, our funding levels have been stabilized for the last ten years. While we're still expected to send the same number of people to university, now we have to do it with a lot fewer dollars, and we haven't been as successful as we need to be.

We had this large influx of professional people into our community. It's starting to taper off, because it's becoming more

and more difficult for students to go to university and be successful. For one of the few times in our history, we have students applying for Canada students loans. I don't think that's a bad thing. I do think that as a community we need to be better attuned to making sure we give our students the tools they need to be successful.

Funding is the first issue. I think the latest report from the Canada student loans people is somewhere in the vicinity of \$17,000 for one year of university. We've done a calculation in Membertou, based on how much it would cost, given the rise in tuition. We now spend more money for utilities for people. Textbooks have increased in cost in the last nine years.

When I did an independent study, it cost our community approximately \$16,700 to send one person to post-secondary, and unfortunately we receive about \$12,200. Anybody who does the math knows that we're about 33% underfunded on a per student basis. That makes it very difficult. It means that at this point we have to begin to pick and choose which students go to university and which students don't. I don't like to be in the position where I have to tell people how to prioritize their dreams.

That's the first issue that I'd like for you to be aware of: the funding issue.

• (0915)

The second issue that I think this committee should be aware of is that, as it stands right now, when we send some first nations person to university in Canada, we are as successful as any person going to university. That to me is an amazing statistic. When we talk about gaps, there is no gap in students' success at university between first nations people and the rest of Canada.

The gap is in our ability to get to university. We are not getting to university in the same numbers, we are not getting to university at the same time, and we are certainly not getting there at the same stages of our life. I think the majority of first nations students in Canada who go to university go as mature students. They're not going out of high school, because we're not finishing high school in the same numbers as the rest of Canada.

That's the second issue that we as a country need to be concerned with. How do we find solutions to get our young people through high school? How do we prepare them to become students at the post-secondary level? That's the second thing I wanted to raise.

The third thing I wanted to raise was the need for a true partnership to exist between first nations and institutions of higher learning. I'm going to give you another example quickly.

I come from a community that has a financial position that allows us to be viewed by the universities as a true partner, because we can bring more to the table than just tuition dollars. We no longer just pay the bills and that's it. We have the ability to go to the universities to say we want to buy programs.

In our community, one of the things we have done successfully—and we're doing it again right now—is sign a memorandum of understanding with a Nova Scotia community college a few years ago. When I first started my job in 1997, we had no students attending community college from our community. Last year we sent over forty. Signing that MOU with the community college and asking them to invest in our people, to invest in a first nations counsellor, to invest in different things, and to come to do some public education in our community around the need for post-secondary education has paid dividends in a very big way for our community.

We are now going through that process with the Cape Breton University and are preparing to sign an MOU with them. It's because they now view us as equal partners in this process. We've gone to them and have said, we'd like you to sign an MOU with us. So we're signing an MOU with the Cape Breton University, and part of that MOU says we want not just access to getting in the door and being successful, but we want Cape Breton University to begin to invest in our people.

Give us an opportunity to bid on contracts within the university environment and make a commitment to hire some first nations people in the institution—not just as professors, although I think that would be great, because I see myself at some point working in a university as a professor, I hope, if I can eventually get there, but also to work in the cafeteria, the secretarial pool, the gymnasium, the sports field, and to do all of those other jobs outside of the professorships in the university. I think they come to the point of saying, we'll hire some faculty. That's good; we want that. But we represent a significant percentage of Canadian society and we need to be reflected within the halls of post-secondary institutions, not just as faculty but as regular staff members.

We've asked them for a commitment on that front, and they've responded in kind and have said they're going to set some targets and work towards this in the future.

That being said, we don't want them to hire people just because they're first nation; we want them to hire people because they're good, qualified candidates. In order for that to happen, our students need to get to post-secondary education. They need to get to those doors and be successful and move through them. That's the third thing I wanted to say.

● (0920)

The fourth thing I wanted to talk about was the moral responsibility of Canada to ensure that first nations communities do not get left behind. I was talking to Jean earlier, and I had an opportunity in the past to listen to Dr. Janice Stein. Some of the things she talked about struck me as being pertinent to aboriginal society in Canada today. When we look over the last year, we see all of the different conflicts that have exploded around this world. If we look at the riots that occurred in France last year, or the London bombings, we see that these acts were carried out by French and British citizens who felt disenfranchised by the greater society.

I love Canada, by the way. I think it's the most wonderful country in the world to live in. We practise a form of government here. By the way, did you know that democracy is a first nations idea? Did anybody know that? Democracy was first practised in North

America. But more important, it has been allowed to grow and blossom on this continent. It has happened in such a way that we now have a segment of society that believes in values—the individual freedoms, the roles and responsibilities of our citizens. When I look around the world, I keep thinking I come from a community where there are 630 jobs and only 300 people who are looking for work. We are an anomaly. We are a first nations anomaly.

I know that because I live in a community called Membertou. Thirty miles away is a sister community called Eskasoni. I love Eskasoni with all my heart. I worked ten years of my life teaching in a high school and working in a drug rehab centre. I like to tell people I spent six years in rehab. I spent ten years of my adult life working in that community. But I also know that they have a big challenge ahead of them in the next twenty years. As first nations are the fastest-growing demographic in Canada, we have the ability to solve Canada's labour woes in the future. We have the numbers. We don't need to go and look elsewhere. We need to look inside and invest in that pool of people.

The CEO for Eskasoni happens to be my first cousin, and we were talking one day about all of the challenges that this community is going to face. He says to me, “You know, the biggest challenge we're going to have twenty years from now is that we are going to have 2,000 people looking for work and they will be between the ages of twenty and forty.” I'm sitting there thinking, “Wow, man, that's a big problem.” Right now there are maybe sixty, eighty jobs in Eskasoni. How are they going to generate another 1,920 to 1,940 in the next twenty years? I said to him, “Good luck, man. I can't help you there. But I'll support you. Whatever you want to do, we'll support you as best we can. And we'll provide our experience in Membertou to help your community find some answers.”

● (0925)

The Chair: Mr. GooGoo, we've gone over your time significantly, and I'd like to have an opportunity for the committee members to—

Mr. Darren GooGoo: I have no watch, man. I don't wear a watch, sorry!

The Chair: Do you want to summarize?

Mr. Darren GooGoo: Yes. The points I want to make are: first, we need to commit to funding first nations post-secondary activities in this country; second, we need to increase the grade 12 graduates; third, we need to allow partnerships to exist between aboriginal Canada and institutions of higher learning; and fourth, we need to ensure that as a country we commit to making sure that Canadian aboriginal youth don't feel disenfranchised in this system.

I want to thank you for your time. If you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them.

The Chair: Committee, I'm going to turn to the second round, five minutes apiece, because we won't have time for everyone to have an opportunity to speak.

Mr. Russell, five minutes, please.

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. GooGoo, thank you very much.

In terms of your speed of speech, it brings me back home, being from the east coast. It's a welcome treat this morning.

I come from Labrador. I'm part of the Métis community there, but I represent the Innu and Inuit in Labrador as well.

That was a phenomenal presentation.

• (0930)

Mr. Darren GooGoo: Thank you.

Mr. Todd Russell: You speak with such confidence. I would say it was almost one of those motivational-type approaches. I can see how that would spill over into your community and how even your persona can have positive influences for youth and others in our particular communities.

You say it's an anomaly. What is it about Membertou that makes it an anomaly? What would some of those characteristics be?

And I want to ask a follow-up question. Even though there's a general sense from all of our witnesses that the PSE program is federally underfunded, how instrumental has it been to have that funding in terms of achieving some of your goals? For instance, I believe you said that last year there were seventy people going into post-secondary institutions, both university and colleges, and the trades system.

I'm asking because there are many aboriginal communities and individuals around Canada who don't get enough funding. There are aboriginal communities and individuals who don't get any access to post-secondary education, such as the Métis community itself. There are some real discrepancies when you talk about Inuit communities as well.

I'm trying to get a handle on what characteristics you would say makes you an anomaly—in a good way—and number two, what we can bring to this study. As well, how fundamental has the PSE program been, maybe in partnership with other types of fundings or institutions or whatever, in terms of achieving some of your goals?

I'm trying to get at a value issue. It's not just about money. It's about how it fits into your community development plans. I'm trying to not only look for more funding—and this is my bias, but I'll certainly bring it to this committee—but also to expand the program to other aboriginal peoples as well.

I just want to get a sense of that from you.

Mr. Darren GooGoo: In answer to your first question about how we are an anomaly, we're able to invest. We have other source revenues in our community. Some of them come from gaming. Some of them come from corporate activities. We have a geomatics company, which employs four people, that has generated profits in the hundreds of thousands of dollars every year for our community. That is money that is reinvested into social programming in our community.

Some years, we put an extra \$100,000 into post-secondary education; some years, \$200,000. I know one particular year it cost us \$410,000 over and above the funding we received from INAC.

We as a community have made a decision that post-secondary education is of utmost importance.

The next part of our challenge, in the next ten years, is no longer about a job for everyone; it's a quality-of-life job for everyone. For a lot of people, that means having access to post-secondary education.

If I understand you correctly, that's one of the things you're looking for. It's about communities making that a priority. I think most communities in Canada would make it the top priority within their community if they had the funding.

With respect to the issue I gave you about Eskasoni, it has funding for approximately eighty students per year. Routinely, they get applications of 120 to 150. They have to turn away forty to seventy students per year. That's a difficult situation for that community.

I'm lucky. I'm in a community where every single student who applies for post-secondary education is going to be funded. If it means that we as a community dig into our own coffers to make that a reality, we know as a community that this is a worthwhile investment.

Mr. Todd Russell: I have a follow-up question.

The Chair: Very quickly, Mr. Russell.

Mr. Darren GooGoo: We are seeing more success. Last year we graduated fourteen out of sixteen high school students. This year we have seventeen potential graduates, and we expect to graduate all seventeen, but I think we'll be happy with fifteen of them graduating.

We have high expectations for our students. We also support them. We support them at the high school level. We get \$42,000 a year for secondary school support for students, and our budget in our community for supporting students in the secondary system is \$130,000. We invest our own money to make sure they graduate from high school.

Mr. Todd Russell: So PSE is fundamental.

The Chair: I have to interrupt, because we're out of time, Mr. Russell.

One of the things that most studies have said about successful first nations communities is their leadership. If they have the right leadership in place, they move; it doesn't matter what the economic conditions are. Leadership is a key component.

Mr. Darren GooGoo: May I just quickly address that, because that's important?

The Chair: I saw your expression. You'll be cutting into Mr. Lemay's time, but....

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): No, no, put it on my time.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Darren GooGoo: It's important for citizens within communities to have confidence in the people they elect to do the job they elect them to do. Growing up, in my life, I didn't believe I'd ever work for our community. I come from one of the smallest families in my community, and for a long time I saw jobs going to people in our community based not on merit, but on other reasons in our community. When we hired our CEO, when we started making all these changes and hiring people in our community based on merit, I then had the confidence to say I could go to work in my community.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lemay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: You speak very fast.

• (0935)

[*English*]

Mr. Darren GooGoo: How does this work? Is it supposed to work?

Mr. Marc Lemay: Yes, it's supposed to work.

[*Translation*]

Let's try it. Is it OK? You turn the knob until you hear the discussion in the language of your choice.

[*English*]

Mr. Darren GooGoo: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: You can choose English or French.

Mr. Darren GooGoo: When I speak French, everybody laughs.

Mr. Marc Lemay: I will not laugh; on the opposite, I will be pleased. I am happy to notice that you speak French. We'll get along very well.

I have a very specific question for you. You said earlier that there are several lawyers in your community, but no dentist or medical doctor. It costs more to train a medical doctor, a dentist or an engineer than to train a lawyer.

Have you set aside funds for a student who would like to study medicine and who will spend the next seven years at university? Have you recurring budgets to assist such a student through his/her studies?

I have another important question. You asked us to help prepare young people to make the transition from high school to post-secondary education.

What are the conditions required to enable you to send at least 80 of your students to post-secondary institutions?

[*English*]

In four minutes, please.

Mr. Darren GooGoo: In four minutes? Okay.

Going back to the first question you asked me, one of our current issues is that we need to identify areas in which we want specializations to occur. To that end, one of the components of the MOU we're signing with Cape Breton University is the development

of a bachelor of arts in community studies that looks at four specific strands. We've initially identified those four as the areas in which there's a need to develop people.

We're looking at a policing stream, because we need more police officers. We're looking at a social work stream, because we believe we need to get a handle on some of the social issues in our community. We have a teaching stream, because we believe we need more teachers and we need more people to be role models in our community. The fourth stream is a sports option, because we want to develop activities to keep our youth out of harm's way, I guess, and to give them better alternatives when they're growing up.

We also support activities that allow for the development of a professional aboriginal person. We consistently send people to conferences. Our education staff promotes engineers. That's a big thing.

By the way, I have a math degree. I always wanted to be an engineer, but growing up, I didn't see any jobs. I never had an aboriginal engineer role model. I just didn't have those role models.

Why are there so many teachers in first nations Canada? Because these are the only jobs that exist on reserve. We have schools, but we don't have engineering companies and so on—yet. I say “yet” because I'm an optimist. We're going to have them. They're going to come. We're going to train our young people.

If a student wants to become a doctor, or wants to become an engineer, or wants some other type of learning, we will find in our community.... Under the current post-secondary program, you can support that student up to becoming that. Unfortunately, the rates and allowances that are there make it very difficult for someone to study to become a doctor. When all you can provide them with is \$625 a month to live in a place like Toronto, Ottawa, or Montreal, it becomes a disincentive at some point for them to stay a student for very long. So we need to find other ways to support them and to allow them to meet those life goals.

That was the first question. The second question was in terms of the graduation rates. We need to provide first nations with the resources, both fiscal and human, to be able to counsel and work with their young people so that they are able to achieve better success at the high school level.

One thing we did in our high school was hire a social worker as our student support worker. In our community we also looked at some of our jobs and said that we wanted professional people employed in our community to allow for better success for our students, and we now have social workers. Some of our student support workers are teachers. We've told them, “You have certain skills and abilities. We're not employing you as a teacher, but you're going to be able to use some of your skills in this job.”

• (0940)

The Chair: Thank you.

Madam Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. GooGoo, for coming out today.

My question is probably going to be a bit more philosophical. Up until fairly recently, first nations people actually were not permitted to get post-secondary education. In the early- to mid-1900s, if first nations persons wanted post-secondary degrees, they needed to give up their status. It wasn't until 1977 that the federal government actually formalized assistance to post-secondary students. And 1977 is pretty recent.

On top of that, you can layer in the residential school history, which did not really provide people an opportunity to get secondary education such that they could even think about going to post-secondary.

On top of that, in 1992 the department completed a strategic review of the post-secondary education program and found that resources were not being provided to meet first nations needs. In 1997 block funding envelopes were capped. Then we have a whole litany of studies that identify the issues and the barriers. We're talking about years and years.

So why can we not make the commitment to the resources, financial and human, that are clearly recognized and outlined? What is it that's preventing us from doing that?

Mr. Darren GooGoo: There is a lack of political will in Canada to address some of the major issues affecting first nations. The only way we're going to be able to turn that around is by having first nations be more vocal, by having first nations get into positions of power. I'm an optimist and I think that will happen. I look around the table and I know I'm not the only aboriginal person here. That's an important consideration. I look around, and where has it hampered us prior to 1977?

For those of you around the table, my mother is also a teacher, so I had a wonderful role model growing up. My mother has a Bachelor of Education, a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Education, and three days ago she received an honorary doctorate. Education has been a cornerstone in my family. But this is also a woman who graduated from high school at the age of seventeen in 1958 and never had an opportunity to go on to post-secondary study. My mother became a teacher. She went to university in 1980 at the age of 39 and graduated at 44. She became a teacher, and she has gone on to do wonderful things in our community. Unfortunately, the investment was made in my mother at a later time. Fortunately, it was made. The money would have been better spent when she was seventeen or eighteen. Of course, I might not be here, so I don't know how I feel about that—I'm still a little ambiguous on that.

That's one of the things we need.

When we look at aboriginal Canada today...there should be no people in this country who don't feel as if this is their country more than the aboriginal citizens. No people should feel that this is their country more than us. Yet some aboriginal people feel they're being left behind. That's a dangerous road for Canada to go down.

I hope this committee will be able to make positive changes and continue to move forward with the agenda started in 1977. We may have stalled, but I think we're going to continue to move forward.

• (0945)

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to turn to Mr. Bruinooge for five minutes, and then we have to move on.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would also like to echo the sentiments of the member for Labrador about your speaking style. It's very inspirational; you should get on the road and sell tickets. That would be a good revenue stream.

Mr. Darren GooGoo: I do that.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: I'm just kidding, You're a very good speaker.

I want to go back to some of your comments in relation to getting a larger number of students prepared for post-secondary. Perhaps you could talk about the methods by which your community manages both primary and secondary.

Then I'd like to ask you a bit more about the transition that your community had from a previous system of government to the current model, which you said employs a CEO. This sounds as if it has an elected administration that looks after the community through various transitions of governance.

But perhaps you could start with the first part of that question, which was on primary and secondary schooling.

Mr. Darren GooGoo: I appeared before this committee in 1997 to talk about Bill C-30, which later became the Mi'kmaq Education Act.

In our community, we set the priorities in education. We have an education constitution, and it's very simple. It sets out some very basic principles in that constitution. One of those principles is that we will not employ anyone under the age of eighteen between the hours of nine o'clock and 3:30 every single day, because those students should be in school. So even within our own education constitution, we've made education for young people the most basic priority. At the same time, since we now control the envelope of funding for education, we can choose to spend less money in some areas and more money in education, and we have done that.

I'm happy to say that when I joined the band in 1997, the single biggest expenditure in our community was for social.... It's a sad commentary, but also a very real one for first nations in this country. Currently, the largest program dollar expenditure in our community is for education. It's a sign of a healthy, forward-thinking community when they spend more money on education than they do on social issues. So that's one of our commitments. We don't receive more money for education than for social things in our community, but we prioritize our own needs in our own community and make it a priority and spend it.

We currently have an education system that spans K to three. We start our preschool at three years old, and we support students right up until university.

One of the things we don't have funding for, that we'd like to do but are unable to do at this point, is to provide some upgrading access for our students so that when we send them to university as mature students, if there are mature students out there, they have the skills. I don't want to send someone to a post-secondary institution when I'm setting them up for failure. It would be categorically wrong of me to do that. So we need funding to have pre-access programs. We need funding for upgrading so the students can be much better prepared.

At the high school level, as I said earlier, we invest the money that our community receives, and we invest some of our own money. And we have a stronger support network for our students going to elementary and secondary school. So we do that.

One of the things we've done differently is that I have three workers for 247 students on our nominal roll. I have a high school worker, because there are certain unique characteristics of a high school—I was a high school teacher. Every community needs one worker in the high school, because it's just too big a job to spread a person over six different schools. High school students are at the critical juncture in their lives when they need to have the guidance of an elder on a daily basis. We have one student support worker at the elementary level and one at the junior high level, all the way through our system.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have to move on here, and I really do appreciate, on behalf of the committee, your attendance and the information you brought to us. As I mentioned earlier about leadership, obviously you are one of the people who has provided leadership in your community. I think the key, which you just mentioned, is that the community set education as a priority, and that's something I think is testimony to where you're going.

So thank you very much on behalf of the committee for your attendance today.

● (0950)

Mr. Darren GooGoo: Thank you for allowing me to be here to present my views.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: We'll have a two-minute break, committee members.

● (0950)

(Pause)

● (0950)

The Chair: We'll resume the meeting, please.

I just want to first say to the committee that the purpose here is not to look through the list of witnesses that has been supplied by the various parties. Simply, the chair needs direction from the committee with regard to two issues, I believe.

First, how do you want to deal with the witness list? Do you want to do that with the subcommittee, or would you rather do it as a committee of the whole?

Second, on Bill C-292, what sorts of timelines do you want on the witness opportunities?

I am going to open it up.

Madam Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I was going to suggest that since we have such an extensive list, it would make sense that we have the subcommittee meet and provide direction to the entire committee. I believe people have notes about what we had suggested in terms of a format, in order to shape the discussion and set some timeframes around this, because this could go on for many weeks, and it will be incumbent upon us to actually get to the point where we're doing the clause-by-clause on the bill.

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

Yes, Mr. Bruinooge.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: My sentiment would be a little different, in the sense that I think we should have a discussion of the witness list as a committee of the whole. Perhaps in camera might be the best approach. There are obviously a lot of names here, and the committee overall would like to have input into whom it eventually invites to come to speak to us.

In terms of the timeframe, I don't see why we couldn't be moving toward the end of December in terms of being able to wrap up our discussions on Bill C-292.

The Chair: Mr. Lemay, go ahead, please.

[Translation]

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

I have a preliminary question. How many days do we want to set aside for the review of Bill C-292? My answer to this question and the answer of the Bloc Québécois would be a day or two at the most.

What is the goal? Personally, I think that Mr. Martin wants the House to vote as soon as possible on this bill and that it will be reviewed as fast as possible in committee. I may be wrong.

If this is the case, I want some explanations. Obviously, we all know the Kelowna Accord, since a lot was said about it. I confess that I do not feel like spending a month reviewing this bill, since we agreed on another priority. I am very honest when I say this. I remind you that people around this table have decided that our next priority after post-secondary education would be housing.

You should remember that this issue was the central focus of discussions on the final day of the First Nations Socioeconomic Forum in Mashteuiatsh. We have things to say.

The Kelowna Accord is a reality. Anyway, I ask my friends from the Liberal Party: how many days do you want to spend on this review?

● (0955)

[English]

The Chair: Madam Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to advise members of the committee that our office has been receiving calls from a number of people who have asked to be included on the witness list. Also, I'm stopped in airports now by individuals who want to be included on the witness list.

I would suggest that perhaps we might work backwards, that the subcommittee have a look at the witness list in some detail, prioritize the list, and see how much time might be required to hear from the key players. I agree that the list is a long one, and it is too long. I appreciate that my colleague's comment is that we have much work to do, but in hearing from some of these people, we will hear about the issues of education, health, and housing, which will provide a foundation for moving forward on further studies and further legislation.

I don't want to define it right now. I don't want the discussion to go on for weeks and weeks, but it is important that it be significant enough that those who have a vested concern in the issue be allowed to be heard.

There is another thing that I might want to suggest to you. Madam Crowder will recall that in a previous committee that we served on we were able to hear from more witnesses by using a format, a kind of round table, which would accelerate it by bringing cohesive groups together.

My preference would be to take a look at it in the smaller committee and then make a decision on how to move forward.

The Chair: Mr. Blaney.

[*Translation*]

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

I would like to acknowledge Ms. Neville's motion. But first, I want to remind her that it would be important maybe to complete our recommendation on post-secondary education.

We also studied the possibility of bringing the Committee to make an overview of education from kindergarten to fifth grade. Those are important aspects.

Like my colleague from the other side, I attended the First Nations Socioeconomic Forum. In my view, this is a priority shared by all communities. We have to move on and be open to concrete proposals aimed at solving urgent problems that plague First Nations in the areas of housing and education.

I think we could listen to witnesses for a year or more, but we must have concrete recommendations to hand to the minister in order to induce real and concrete changes in the communities.

I would concur with Mr. Lemay's suggestion. It seems important indeed to listen to witnesses, since this is the wish of the House. However, I suggest that the Subcommittee prioritize the witnesses, since we must set aside two sessions to examine this issue in order to be able to identify priorities in terms of post-secondary education and housing.

Therefore, I propose that these two sessions would be devoted to the review of testimonies, in accordance with Ms. Neville's motion. This is my proposal.

• (1000)

[*English*]

The Chair: Speaking to that motion, Madame Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville: I'm not sure that Mr. Blaney accurately reflected my position. What I was saying is let the subcommittee meet, identify the individuals that it would be important to hear from, and then come back with a recommendation to the committee on whether it's two sessions, four sessions, eight sessions, or whatever. But let's look at the need to listen to and the need to hear, and then make a decision and look at alternative ways of accommodating the witnesses.

The Chair: Mr. Bruinooge.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: I think what Mr. Blaney was motioning or attempting to suggest was in relation to what Mr. Lemay had talked about, and that was a timeframe to discuss this before we move onto some of our other priorities. We identified a long list of priorities. Earlier this year we moved forward with the post-secondary study, which, being a new member of Parliament, I think has gone relatively well, and we're going to be transitioning into a report on that.

Mr. Lemay indicated housing—of course, that's an issue he's very close to—as being a potential next item that we look at. So I think perhaps as part of this discussion right now we do need to identify how much time we're going to be allocating to this bill. Mr. Lemay mentioned a few sessions for witnesses, and I think that's reasonable as well.

I think once we get through the November break we'll have a number of meetings there to be able to wrap this up quite reasonably before Christmas. So perhaps we could talk about a timeframe of early December in which to have our work on Bill C-292 complete.

Is that what you're thinking, Mr. Lemay?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Yes, I think that two sessions would be sufficient. And I agree that the Subcommittee should identify witnesses to be heard during these two sessions.

I know the Kelowna Accord subject inside out and everybody around this table knows exactly what Phil Fontaine and all the other witnesses are going to tell us: we need 5,2 billion dollars, why haven't you invested it already?

I respect my colleague's opinion. She is entirely right. It seems important for the Liberals to have this bill adopted in the House. It is interesting to have a debate on this in Committee; we can start the process here. However, it is in the House of Commons that the discussion and the vote are important.

So, why shouldn't we take two sessions? We'll meet as a subcommittee to select the number of persons per session, ten overall. Then, we'll make our recommendations

I leave it to the Committee to decide, but now you know our position .

[*English*]

The Chair: Might I give a little guidance to the committee?

First of all, the committee has passed a motion supporting the Kelowna Accord, and we submitted that to the House. I shouldn't use the words "Kelowna Accord", but rather the agreement that came together through the first ministers in Kelowna. A lot of work was completed in those discussions—eighteen months of setting out priorities and needs—and that was identified.

Really, we have supported the spirit of the Kelowna agreement at this committee level, so what is the reason we would carry on for months discussing more of the issues? The priorities have been set out.

Maybe it would be wise to just move on as quickly as possible, instead of holding this bill up. Let's move it on and then get on, as Mr. Lemay has stated, to the specific priorities as set out by the court. If it's the pleasure of the committee to deal with housing because that's the first priority we want to deal with, then so be it. Then we can move on in those discussions as quickly as possible.

I don't see any advantage or really any way we're going to help aboriginal people by regurgitating this agreement for weeks on end. I think we want to move on to the mechanics and see how the priorities, as set out by the accord, can be met.

Those are just some words for discussion from the chair.

Madam Crowder.

•(1005)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Just very quickly, Mr. Chair, I think the challenge we have, the reason why so many of us are getting such pressure from the communities to bring witnesses forward, is that there are so many unaddressed needs. People are seeing this bill as a mechanism to address those needs.

I'm of two minds about whether or not we need to have endless hearings, and to what end and what effect. If this is becoming a forum to air these issues that are extremely serious and extremely important, I'm not sure it's the best vehicle, given that this is a private member's bill. When it comes before the House, it will be up to the government as to whether or not they're going to do anything about it.

The intentions have been stated loudly and clearly from the communities on what the issues are, so I would argue that we should shorten the hearing times and get onto some of the other critical issues.

The Chair: Mr. Merasty, and then I have to move on here.

Mr. Gary Merasty (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, Lib.): I can understand the concern about rehashing some of the issues, whether they're around housing, post-secondary education, or economic development. These are important to talk about, and we've had a good discussion around post-secondary so far.

What I think we're missing as part of this discussion is what the relationship was between the provincial government and the national aboriginal organizations. That relationship, government to government or nation to nation, is one of the keys that hasn't been talked about with this Kelowna Accord. That relationship will dictate how well we address housing, how well we address post-secondary education, health, and economic development.

I think we definitely need to hear that perspective as we move forward, because as I've stated, sitting at a table in Kelowna the way we did was a high-water mark in aboriginal-state relations in the history of this country. I think that's part of the focus, and it needs to be one of the highlights of this bill.

It's simply not the specific pieces. It was the relationship that outlined the objectives and the pieces, and I think we need to focus on that.

The Chair: Madam Neville, as the last speaker.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you.

My colleague pre-empted me on the relationships. Rather than being prescriptive with two sessions, I would ask the committee to please look at the witness list and make a recommendation to the committee.

I am not proposing to prolong this for months, but what my colleague just said in terms of the relationships, in terms of the individuals who are coming forward and who want to speak to this committee on the importance of Kelowna for their community, their nation, must be respected. I assure my colleagues that I don't want this to drag out for months, but I don't want to add insult to injury by saying we won't hear from them. If we can refer this to the committee to bring back a recommendation on Thursday or the following Tuesday, that would be the most respectful way of moving forward.

I'm repeating myself, but there is no intent to drag this out. The intent is to be respectful of those who have come forward and said they want to be heard and tell you what this means to them.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm just going to say that Mr. Blaney has a motion, and we're going to deal with that right now.

When you look at the list, we could be here—

•(1010)

Mr. Steven Blaney: For a year.

The Chair: —for a year. That's exactly right.

Your suggestion is that it would be disrespectful to those we would leave off the list, but you're asking the committee to deal with a situation and make a determination that is not going to make anybody happy. I'm not necessarily in favour of that as the chair.

Mr. Blaney, you have a motion that we limit this for two weeks.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven Blaney: Madam Neville, I think that Ms. Crowder explained the type of dead-end we could be facing: whether the process takes two days or one year, we are not guaranteed to be in a position to present concrete recommendations on priorities set by our minister.

This is my suggestion to you, Madam Neville. You have very important witnesses who have informations to share. However, we should concentrate our efforts on recommendations that will allow government to act. We just mentioned education and housing. These are two important priorities for several groups you identified.

Rather than inviting these groups who will be rehashing various issues that are not part of government's priorities, I suggest that we focus our efforts on government priorities which will gather the support of all committee members. Then, we'll be later in a position to present the minister with recommendations which will translate into concrete actions.

If we go the other way, the result will be totally opposite: we would be listening to witnesses for a year and we won't have any concrete recommendation to send to government. And even if we had one, we know that government has already stated its position on this.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you. I'm going to ask the clerk.

I'm going to cut off debate, because we have to get on with this. I promised you fifteen minutes, and we're now ten minutes over.

I'm just going to ask Mr. Blaney what his motion is, because we're dealing with a motion that's on the floor.

Mr. Steven Blaney: To remind you of the motion—and maybe Madam Neville can comment—it is suggested that the subcommittee decide which witnesses are the most appropriate to debate this motion, and to present a list under the schedule that was proposed by Mr. Lemay, which is two sessions. That's what I suggest.

The Chair: That's the motion. Can we deal with that motion now?

Hon. Anita Neville: May we get direction for that, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: The chair wants the direction of the majority of the committee, and I'm seeking that majority.

I need to know where the committee wants to go with this...first of all, the committee, and then the time limit as far as listening to witnesses is concerned. The committee is not going to be able to review the witness list unless we know how many witnesses are going to be allowed to present to the committee.

Hon. Anita Neville: I'm proposing that we do it the other way: look at the number of witnesses and determine how much time is needed, with a commitment not to extend that time.

The Chair: As part of that subcommittee, I don't want to take that responsibility on. They all probably have merit, and I don't want to make that decision.

Madam Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Chair, there may be a way to compromise on this. I would agree that it has to come to the committee, but I still think it would be helpful if the subcommittee met to look at the witness list. Knowing that the intent of this committee is to have briefer hearings, the subcommittee could come back with a more concrete, structured proposal for this committee, because we're all over the map right now. If we have something more specific to deal with, it would be far easier for us to make a decision.

The Chair: Okay. I'm going to split the motion.

The first part of the motion is that we refer this to the subcommittee.

All those in favour, please signify.

Mr. Gary Merasty: Is that in favour only of sending it to the committee, with no timelines?

The Chair: Yes. I'm splitting the motion.

There are two parts to this motion. The first part is that the witness list be submitted to the subcommittee to prioritize the witnesses. The second part of the motion is that we have only two sessions to discuss Bill C-292.

Mr. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, I agree with a reasonable timeframe, if it's a friendly agreement, and we can make a motion....

The Chair: To expand that to whatever.

Mr. Steven Blaney: Yes. As Ms. Neville mentioned, we don't have to drag it out. We could have a reasonable timeframe, so that we can move forward with other priorities.

The Chair: Well, I would look for an amendment for that, then.

Madam Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I'll amend it.

The Chair: To say what?

Ms. Jean Crowder: To "a reasonable timeframe", with some recommendations from the subcommittee back to this committee so that the committee has the final say.

The Chair: So you're not going to be specific, but just use the word "reasonable"?

• (1015)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Yes.

The Chair: That could mean different things to different people, but anyway, we'll work with it.

I'm going to split this first. We're changing the amendment to use the word "reasonable" instead of saying "two weeks".

All in favour of that amendment, please signify.

Mr. Todd Russell: Can we have the motion with that?

The Chair: Okay. The first part of the motion I'm dealing with is the amendment to change from "two weeks" and insert the words "reasonable time".

Hon. Anita Neville: I thought the first part was to refer it to committee.

The Chair: I'm not there yet. We have an amendment to the motion. Let's deal with that first.

Hon. Anita Neville: Okay.

The Chair: Are you all agreed to changing it from "two weeks" to "a reasonable time"?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now we're looking at the amended motion, and I'm going to split it. The first part of that motion is that it be referred to the subcommittee.

Is there discussion on that? Are you ready for the question?

All those in favour, please signify.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Is the question that you report back here for finalization or that they're going to make the final call?

The Chair: It's to report back.

Mr. Steven Blaney: When will they report?

The Chair: It will be at the next meeting, if we can get together.

All in favour?

(Motion agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: The second part of that motion, which has been amended, has given us "reasonable time".

Are you all agreed with that, that you don't want to set any time? Are we all in favour?

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Well, we need to have a definite timeframe, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Well, I do, but let's wait till we come back with a witness list, and then we'll set that after "reasonable time".

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: We'll set that after we look at the witness list. Sure.

The Chair: Is that all right?

(Motion as amended agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We're through that. Thank you for your patience.

Mr. Lemay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: When would the Subcommittee meet?

[*English*]

The Chair: We must do it this week.

Mr. Marc Lemay: Okay. How is Wednesday night at ten?

The Chair: I will ask the clerk to make sure he finds something that's amenable to the subcommittee.

This is a subcommittee; it is Madam Crowder and Madam Karetak-Lindell. We'll try to arrange it as quickly as possible.

Hon. Anita Neville: I'll be attending.

The Chair: So noted.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Chair, can we just clarify the schedule between now and the end of this session? My understanding was we were going to use November 7 to give our instructions to the—

The Chair: That's correct.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: To me, it's pretty obvious from today and from the last session that for our witnesses on post-secondary education we did not have adequate time. If there is any way we could extend and hear a few more witnesses on November 7, leaving November 9, which is the last day before the session ends, to give instructions for the report.... Are there others we could hear?

For example, I don't think we gave Roberta Jamieson adequate time last week. We certainly didn't give Mr. GooGoo adequate time today. I don't feel we've gotten to the bottom of this.

The Chair: We're running out of time and we've already dealt with.... That's another issue. If you could put that on the agenda for the next meeting, we'll have that discussion at the same time.

We have to move on here. We have a motion from Madam Neville that is before us and I want to deal with it.

The schedule right now is that at the next meeting we're going to have the minister here to talk about estimates. That is going to take up most of that meeting. The next meeting after that is on November 7, and we will be giving instruction to our research staff on post-secondary education.

If you wish to add more witnesses and prolong this study, then you need to communicate that at the next meeting and get it on the agenda.

We're on the motion of Madam Neville, as presented.

Mr. Bruinooge.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: I would like to make an amendment, and the amendment to the motion is as follows: that any dissenting opinions expressed by members of the committee be attached to the report submitted by the chair to the House of Commons.

The Chair: Okay. There's a motion by Mr. Bruinooge that there be an attachment to the motion, as far as any dissenting opinions are concerned.

• (1020)

Hon. Anita Neville: Can I hear that motion again? I'm sorry.

The Chair: It's a motion that any dissenting opinion be attached to the report, or this motion, and that I table it in the House.

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Chair, I wonder if the clerk could explain something to the committee. Mr. Bruinooge and I spoke yesterday, and I have no problem with a dissenting report, but my understanding is that a dissenting opinion follows your signature to the report. Am I correct? This is for the clerk.

The Clerk of the Committee: Yes.

Hon. Anita Neville: Okay. And is this the traditional manner in which a dissenting opinion is filed? Is it included?

My understanding is that it's not included in the motion, but that it's simply attached to the report, and I would like some clarification from the clerk.

The Chair: Mr. Préfontaine.

The Clerk: You're right, Madam Neville, to mention that the dissenting opinion appears after the signature of the chair, and traditionally it has been the committee's decision to allow a party to annex a dissenting opinion to the report.

Hon. Anita Neville: Is it part of the motion, or is it concurred in by the committee once the original motion is dealt with?

The Chair: I have seen on the last page of larger reports, where you'll have—

Hon. Anita Neville: Yes, but not in the motion—

The Chair: But not in the motion.

Hon. Anita Neville: —is my understanding. And that's what—

The Chair: And I really don't know.

I know what your question is, though.

Hon. Anita Neville: That was my understanding, that when....

The Chair: I'm going to suspend for five minutes to allow the clerk to research that question.

Thank you.

•(1020) _____ (Pause) _____

•(1030)

The Chair: Okay, committee. I want to thank Mr. Préfontaine.

Just for clarification, a dissenting opinion is often attached to the end of a report, and that is allowed. The way we must deal with this is that the dissenting opinion be attached, that it be part of the motion.

Mr. Bruinooge, your motion would be that we amend the existing motion to add those words, and those words are, "any dissenting opinion be attached to the report, and the report be tabled by the chair". That is the amendment we're discussing now.

Madame Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville: Could I make a friendly suggestion to say "any dissenting opinion by some members of the committee"?

The Chair: Okay. Would that be acceptable?

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): I have a technical question. I want to find out what part of the rules that was based on.

Hon. Anita Neville: Marleau and Montpetit, page 882.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: Okay.

The Chair: Does the committee want a clarification on it? Do you have that information, Madam Karetak-Lindell?

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: I just wondered why it had to be in the motion. I missed something there.

Hon. Anita Neville: It doesn't have to be; he wants it there.

The Chair: The motion is what is receivable, that will be tabled in the House, so I think it should be attached to the motion.

Any further discussion as far as the amendment adding those words?

Madam Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Can I hear the full motion now?

The Chair: Certainly. The motion is:

That the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development recommend that the Government immediately pledge its support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; that this be adopted as a report of this committee; that the chair present the report to the House; and any dissenting opinion by some members be attached to the report and the report be tabled by the chair.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Mr. Chair, we're voting on my amendment.

The Chair: I know that. It was asked for the whole motion.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I just wanted to hear the whole motion.

The Chair: Okay, now dealing with the amendment.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now, on the motion as amended, further comments?

Hon. Anita Neville: I would like a recorded vote on it.

The Chair: A recorded vote? Okay.

Mr. Russell, we're voting on the motion as amended. The amendment is that we've added the words "any dissenting opinion by some member be attached to the report and the report be tabled by the chair".

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 7; nays 3)

The Chair: Thank you, and we still have time.

Mr. Marc Lemay: We can discuss witnesses next.

We can make the subcommittee now.

The Chair: Is that the pleasure of the committee, or do you want time to think about this? Do we start discussing the committee now?

Hon. Anita Neville: I have another committee that's going on right now, Mr. Chair, that I'm supposed to be at.

The Chair: One thing we could discuss is what Mr. Albrecht mentioned about further witnesses as far as post-secondary is concerned. What is the pleasure of the committee?

Mr. Albrecht.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Chairman, I simply want to reiterate what I said earlier. We bring these witnesses in, give them ten minutes to make a presentation, and then not all of the committee members even get to ask one question. I don't think it's doing justice to the financial investment we make in bringing these witnesses here, or giving them the feeling they're being adequately heard, nor is it allowing us to be adequately informed on the issue. I don't think we've done it justice with the time we've had. If we could have one more meeting, and we have until the Remembrance Day break, I think it would be good, if there are other witnesses available, to bring them in and give them a little more time.

•(1035)

The Chair: Madam Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I'm opposed.

There are sufficient reports out there, and we could meet for months on this. Given the reports the researchers kindly put together for us and the overview we got from the witnesses, I think it's time for us to move on. I think we've got sufficient information to make some recommendations to the government on this. I'm opposed to extending the hearings on this.

The Chair: Mr. Lemay.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I'll say exactly the same thing as Ms. Crowder, but I'll add something extra and I'll say it in French.

The testimony by Mr. GooGoo we heard this morning complements perfectly what we heard in the past few weeks. I respectfully advise Mr. Albrecht that other witnesses would only confirm or reaffirm what we already know.

I think that we can ask our analysts to get ready in order to help us write this report. I can tell you frankly that I would like to send this report to the House at the end of November at the latest. We have to move on. This is pre-budget time. So if we want our friends in government to include measures in their next budget, we have no other choice than tabling this report very soon.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bruinooge.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: Speaking to Harold's point, I would like to suggest that in circumstances similar to today, where we had a witness and members of not only our side but the opposition side who weren't able to get a question in...I think perhaps we need to look at almost a speed round or something when we're against the clock.

Going to Mr. Lemay's point in putting forward this report, being a new member I'm not exactly certain as to what type of process we're going to be following on that. Is there going to be a draft report that the committee is going to take a look at and then we'll go through it and make some suggestions? Can we think about a date when we could take a look at the report?

The Chair: We're giving directions on Tuesday, which is the 7th. At that time possibly we can also discuss what we're going to do with the report from the subcommittee and give direction at that time.

Madam Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville: I wanted to comment on hearing more witnesses. I think we've certainly heard from many people and had many perspectives, and, as Madam Crowder said, there are many reports. Where I would give a little on it is if Mr. Albrecht has somebody in mind in particular who he thinks is important for his information. I have no objection to that, but I do not see the need to prolong it any further. As Ms. Crowder said, there are umpteen reports that have been written on it. One can simply go to the library and look at a few things.

The Chair: Mr. Albrecht.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: I'd like to respond to that, Mr. Chair.

I have no problem not having further witnesses. The point I'm trying to get at—I think Mr. Bruinooge supported me on this—is that I don't think we give adequate time and credit to the witnesses who do come. A ten-minute presentation and then a few questions from not even half our members? I don't think that's an adequate hearing.

The Chair: The note is so taken.

As I said last meeting, there are challenges with this number of committee members. The committee has suggested that we have a cluster of witnesses on a topic, but you have to remember, too, that some of those witnesses are not going to be asked questions or are not going to have time to respond either.

So it's not easy, but I will try to do better—

Mr. Harold Albrecht: That was no criticism of the chair.

The Chair: —in terms of making sure everybody has an opportunity to ask a question.

Madam Karetak-Lindell.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: My point was just going to be that sometimes it's because the witnesses don't stick to their ten minutes. In order to be fair to every witness, if they take up more than their ten minutes, then that just automatically means less time for questioning. I know it's very difficult.

I think we've been more than fair to the last two witnesses—this one today, and Roberta—in that they were the only witnesses. All the questions were only to them. To me, that was more fair than if you have three parties, because sometimes they don't get to answer a question.

Just having been on the government side, Mr. Bruinooge doesn't always have to be the first questioner. He can give it to the others. Our PS was always very generous with us; we got to ask questions first, and only if there was room did they get to ask questions. That's something they can work out amongst themselves.

● (1040)

The Chair: I agree. As chair, I think I gave Roberta Jamieson close to—

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: Twenty minutes.

The Chair: Yes, about twenty minutes. Mr. GooGoo went to 18 minutes.

Hon. Anita Neville: And he was good.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: Yes.

The Chair: So I think I've been more than fair. I just feel that in the information they're giving you are the answers to the questions you would have asked anyway.

But there's a balancing act here, and I'll try my best to balance it.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: I just want to clarify that I am not being critical of the chair. I am simply asking if we could analyze our system that we agreed to earlier. When we have only 45 minutes total, I think we need to adjust that. You did it this morning, and I thank you for that.

This is not a personal thing.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Madam Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I also want to express my confidence in the chair. In other committees I've sat on, not every member gets to ask a question. That's just the reality of it. Where there's more than one member in a party, there's often some agreement in advance on who's going to take the lead on it. In terms of maximizing the efficiency of the committee's time, the reality of it is that we often do have to slot people in for ten-minute hearings and rely on getting extra information from and asking those questions of witnesses outside of the committee meeting.

The Chair: I'm taking direction from the committee now that we're not going to have any more witnesses for post-secondary education.

November 7 will be instructions, so be prepared for that. Be prepared, of course, for the Thursday meeting, November 2, on the estimates. Have your questions prepared for that also. You will be getting briefing notes on the estimates and what will be coming forward from the department. That will help you out in preparing your questions.

There's one thing I want to make a statement on. I'm not influencing the committee at all with regard to this, but we have been contacted, the clerk and my office, with regard to Mr. Martin, who has put forward Bill C-292 and would like to speak on the 9th. That works for his schedule. It doesn't necessarily mean it works for our schedule.

Does the committee want to open that door, or do you want to wait until we have information from the subcommittee on the witness list?

Mr. Blaney.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, I would like to comment.

Mr. Martin is an elected member of Parliament like us. His duty is to sit in the House every day of the week as we are required to do.

Mr. Chair, I don't see why we should accommodate him when we have our own constraints as members of Parliament and when he should be present when Parliament is sitting.

This is unacceptable to me. I even think that it would be contrary to the parliamentary ethics to accommodate the requirements of a member of Parliament who cannot be present when Parliament is sitting.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Lemay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Let's proceed slowly.

Between now and Thursday, the Subcommittee will meet to review the witness list. We agree on this. On the 7th, we will give our instructions. So, on Thursday the 9th, there is no reason why Mr. Martin could not appear before the Committee.

In any case, we'll begin our review of Bill C-292. I understand perfectly that the sponsor of the Bill should appear before us. Mr. Martin is proposing a date that seems appropriate. Our Committee sits on Thursday, November the 9th, and Mr. Martin asks only to appear before us, so *pourquoi pas?* I don't see any problem.

• (1045)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Bruinooge.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: We have already instructed the subcommittee to address the witness list, so we'll see what their report is and come back—

The Chair: We will do that, but I just wanted to put that out there.

Madam Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: It's quite normal for the proponent of a private member's bill to appear before the committee. It would make sense if he were the first witness, no matter what the witness list was. I would support his coming forward on the 9th. We're going to have to hear from him, so why don't we go for it? Then we won't have to worry about scheduling the 9th.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I told you that your English was deficient. You understood « *the night* », la nuit?

[*English*]

Mr. Steven Blaney: It is the 9th.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: No, it's the Night of the Long Knives.

Ms. Jean Crowder: On the 9th.

Mr. Steven Blaney: Excuse me.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll discuss that with the committee and make a recommendation, but there is ample time to give notice anyway.

Is there anything further?

The meeting is adjourned.

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