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—
Chair

The Honourable Judy Sgro

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• (0910)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.)): Good morning, everyone. I'm very pleased to see that we have some representatives from Stats Canada with us today, who will enlighten us and provide us with some additional information that we very much need to hear.

We welcome Rosemary Bender, director general of social and demographic statistics; Colin Lindsay, senior analyst in the social and aboriginal statistics division; and Karen Mihorean, the chief of integration, analysis and research of the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

I expect you will have a lot of information for us, and I will turn the floor over to you.

Mrs. Rosemary Bender (Director General, Social and Demographic Statistics, Statistics Canada): Thank you very much. It's a pleasure for us to be here with you this morning.

As you said, Madam Chair, I'm the director general responsible for social and demographic statistics at Statistics Canada. This includes a number of social surveys, such as the General Social Survey, from which we'll be drawing a lot of information this morning; post-censal surveys, such as the activity limitation survey; as well as the census. We're in the midst of finalizing the collection of the 2006 census, so we'll be spending some busy summer and fall months processing and analyzing the data, with a view to disseminating the first census counts next February.

This morning I have my two colleagues with me. There's Colin Lindsay, the author of *Women in Canada*. He's with our social and aboriginal statistics division, and he's here to present the major findings of the study and to answer questions. As well, I have Karen Mihorean of our Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, who will be able to talk to you about violence against women, and spousal violence in particular.

So I'll leave the floor to my colleagues.

[Translation]

I am available to answer your questions on this morning's topic. I will also be pleased to answer more general questions you may have regarding social statistics.

[English]

Mr. Colin Lindsay (Senior Analyst, Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada): *Bonjour*, good morning.

First of all, I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to present this material this morning. A great deal of very hard work

and effort went into the preparation of the *Women in Canada* report. It's very gratifying to the whole staff who was involved in the report to know that it's being well used and particularly being used in an environment such as this one.

For the record, the current edition of *Women in Canada* is actually the fifth in the series of this publication. It's been published every five years beginning in 1985. I can say with a great deal of pride that I've been the editor of the series right from the beginning.

When we were putting together our briefing notes for the release of the 2005 edition back in March, I went back to some of the earlier editions and re-read some of the material we'd written before. In particular, I went back and I looked at the introduction to the very first edition, the 1985 edition. What struck me was that the overall conclusions, consensus, that we had come to when putting together the 1985 version were very similar to the conclusions that we came to when we put together the current edition.

On the one hand, there is no question that the quality of women's lives in Canada has gotten better over the last quarter of a century; however, there are still substantial gaps in the socio-economic status of women in Canada, particularly as measured by primary social indicators. In fact, we were struck also when we were doing the latest issue that some of the trends have actually slowed. The closing of the gap has actually slowed and in some cases has stopped.

One of the very positive story lines that came out of the *Women in Canada* report this time around, though, is the fact that women continue to make very substantial gains in their levels of educational attainment. As you can see in chart 1 from our package, from the latest data we have from 2001—we had hoped to have the 2006 data, but we'll have to wait a couple of weeks for that—women are currently almost as likely as men to have a university degree. That's a major change from the early 1970s, early 1980s, when women were only about half as likely as their male counterparts to be a university graduate. In fact, it is not going to be too far into the future that women actually surpass men in terms of university graduation rates. Women make up a very substantial majority—57% from the latest data—of the Canadians who are currently enrolled in university programs.

One of the other very positive storylines to come out of the *Women in Canada* report was the very dramatic decline in the incidence of low income among senior women, and in particular, senior women who live alone. As you can see in the second chart, currently about one in five of senior women who live alone has an income below Statistics Canada low-income cut-offs. However, this is down from almost 60% as recently as the early 1980s. While senior women who live alone are currently more likely than senior men who live alone to have low incomes, in fact, today senior women who live alone actually are less likely to have low incomes than women under the age of 65 who live alone.

While there has been a very significant decline in the incidence of low income among senior women, and again, particularly senior women who live alone, there are other groups of women who remain very much at risk of being in a low income situation, in particular, lone-parent families headed by women. As you can see in the third chart, currently about 40% of all female-headed lone-parent families have incomes below the Statistics Canada low income cut-offs. This is down somewhat from the mid-1990s, when it was around 50%. However, as you can see from the chart, female-headed lone-parent families are considerably more likely than other families with children to have low incomes. Currently, about 7% of two-parent families with children have incomes below the low-income cut-offs.

• (0915)

This is a continuing concern, because female lone parents in Canada continue to make up a growing proportion of all families with children. Currently, there are about 1 million female-headed lone-parent families in Canada, and as you can see in chart 4, they account for about one in five of all families with children. That's up from 16% in 1991. That's quite a considerable change over such a short period, and it's also double the numbers in the 1960s and 1970s, when female lone-parent families accounted for only about 10% of all families with children in Canada.

Certainly one of the most significant trends, or perhaps the most significant trend that has affected women over the course of the last quarter-century—and in fact it may very well be the most significant trend in Canada, period—has been the growth of women in the paid workforce. As you can see in chart 5, currently about 60% of all women age 15 and over are part of the paid workforce. That's up from 40% in the mid-1970s. While we've had this long, steady, very continuous growth in the paid workforce participation rates of women, there has been a concomitant decline over the same period in the percentage of men who are employed. As a result, women currently make up almost half—47%—of paid workers in Canada.

Much of the growth in labour force participation rates of women has been fuelled by women with children entering the paid workforce, and as you can see in chart 6, that is even women with pre-school-aged children. Two out of three women in Canada with at least one child under the age of six are now part of the paid workforce. Again, that's double the figures from the mid-1970s. The majority of these women—75%—work full-time. There has also been a fairly significant growth in the labour force participation rates of female lone parents, particularly in the last decade or so. Looking at chart 7, currently about two out of three women who are female lone parents are now part of the workforce. Again, about three-

quarters of them work full-time. Their total participation rate is up from around 50% from as recently as the early 1990s.

However, while there has been this very significant growth in the overall labour force participation rate of women, some of the particular work experiences of women have been somewhat slower to change. For example, the majority of women are still concentrated in occupations in which women have traditionally been employed. Currently, over half, about 53%, of all employed women are working in sales and service jobs or clerical and administrative jobs, which, for the most part, are lower paying than other jobs, offer fewer benefits, and fewer career opportunities. At the same time, women also continue to be a disproportionate share of part-time workers in Canada. They are far more likely than male workers to accommodate their work schedule for family and child care needs, and even when employed, they still assume the bulk of child and family care responsibilities in the home.

Finally, women also continue to earn substantially less than their male colleagues. As you can see in chart 8, the final one, women employed on a full-time, full-year basis continue to make only about 71¢ for every dollar made by their male counterparts. After two decades of fairly consistent growth, over the course of the last decade, we have seen no change in that figure, which was one of the more surprising results of our work.

In fact, I could probably spend the whole hour and three-quarters, which I believe we have allocated this morning, reviewing highlights from the *Women in Canada* report. I think these are the ones certainly that struck us as the most important. However, we've barely touched on issues related to the family. We haven't mentioned health, and we have not discussed diversity issues related to women.

• (0920)

One area that I haven't discussed, but that is certainly a very important one, is domestic violence against women—spousal abuse and that sort of thing. I'm going to pass the mike to my colleague Karen Mihorean, who wrote our chapter on criminal justice elements, and she's going to talk about some of the specifics of domestic violence.

Mrs. Karen Mihorean (Chief, Integration, Analysis and Research, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada): Thank you, Colin.

Since my time is limited, I've decided to focus on non-lethal and lethal spousal violence. As Colin says, I could probably spend an hour talking about various issues related to violence against women, but I'll focus on these aspects.

Before getting into the data, though, I'd like to very briefly describe how Statistics Canada measures violence against women.

Estimating the prevalence of violence against women is challenging due to the very private nature of these experiences. We rely on a number of data sources, including police-reported statistics, national information we collect from our transition home survey and victims' services survey, and also our national victimization survey, which is conducted every five years, in which we randomly select a segment of the population and directly ask them about their experiences of crime and violence.

Police data, though, are limited. We know that only about a third of cases of domestic violence are reported to police, so there are many that aren't reported. Regarding information we collect from shelters and victims' services, we know that women who use these tend to be fleeing very serious forms of violence and therefore may not be representative of all abused women. Therefore, victimization surveys have become the standard for estimating the nature and extent of violence against women in Canada.

Turning to the first chart, or chart 2 on your slide, according to victimization data, there has been a decline in wife assault since 1993, when we first began measuring spousal violence in the general population. Seven per cent of women who were living in a common law or marital relationship reported in 2004 that they had been physically or sexually assaulted by a spousal partner in the past five-year period. This is a small but statistically significant drop from the 8% that was reported in 1999. These figures represent an estimated 653,000 women in 2004 and 690,000 women in 1999.

The most significant change that we found in spousal violence rates between 1999 and 2004 was for relationships that had ended by the time of the interview. While women reported higher rates of violence by previous spouses than by current spouses, the percentage of women who experienced violence in the previous five years by ex-partners declined from 28% in 1999 to 21% in 2004.

If you look at the chart that shows differences between women and men, we see that in 2004, 7% of women reported violence, and 6% of men reported spousal violence. While these numbers do seem to be similar, statistically there is a difference between these two figures, so we can say that statistically women are more likely to experience spousal violence than men are.

Turning to the next chart, you'll see that despite the similarity in the overall rates of spousal violence, women are more likely to report more severe forms of violence than are men. For example, when we looked at the most serious types of violence experienced, women were two and a half times more likely to say that they were beaten, choked, threatened with or had a gun or knife used against them, or were sexually assaulted than men were.

Given the more serious or severe types of violence that women are exposed to, we find that women are also more likely to suffer much more serious physical consequences. For example, they were twice as likely to be injured, six times more likely to receive medical attention, five times more likely to be hospitalized due to their injuries resulting from the violence, more than three times more likely to say that they feared for their life at some point because of the violence, and two times more likely to report what we consider chronic or ongoing violence, defined by 10 or more violent episodes.

Turning to the next chart, we see that there are a number of factors that increase the risk of a woman's being the victim of spousal violence. Rates of violence continue to be highest among young women, those aged 15 to 24. Rates are also three times higher for women living in common-law relationships. We also know that being young and living common-law are highly correlated.

We see that women are seven times more likely to report violence by a previous partner than they are to report violence by a current partner, and we know that separation is a particular time of risk for women. Half of the women who reported experiencing spousal assault by a past partner indicated that violence occurred after the couple separated, and in one-third of these post-separation assaults, the violence became more severe or actually began at the time of separation.

We also know that emotional abuse significantly increases the risk of spousal violence. Women living in current relationships where there is emotional abuse are 25 times more likely to say that they also experience violence than women living in current relationships where there's no emotional abuse.

● (0925)

Also, according to the 2004 victim survey, we found that rates of spousal violence were by far the highest for aboriginal women. Aboriginal women were three and a half times more likely than their non-aboriginal counterparts to be the victims of spousal violence.

It's also clear that alcohol plays a role in spousal violence. Just under half of female victims stated their spouse had been drinking at the time of the violence. We also know that when alcohol is involved the violence tends to be more severe, more frequent, and more likely to result in injury. It was also found that women whose partners were classified as heavy drinkers—in other words, binge drinkers—also suffered much higher levels of and more injurious violence than women whose partners were perhaps moderate drinkers or rarely drank.

Women are particularly vulnerable when they're pregnant. In 1993 when we conducted our national violence against women survey, we found that 21% of abused women did say that they were assaulted during pregnancy, and in 40% of these cases that's when the violence began.

Turning to the next slide, looking at rates of police reporting, we see that between the 1993 survey and the 1999 survey there was a marked increase in reporting rates of spousal violence, which went from 29% up to 37%, but rates of reporting to police have stabilized during the 1999 and 2000 period.

A number of factors influence reporting to the police. The primary reason given by women when we asked them directly why they chose to report to the police was to stop the violence and to receive protection. Fewer reported because they wanted to have their partner arrested or punished.

When we statistically compare those who choose to turn to the justice system and those who don't, we find the most important factor is the seriousness of the violence; by this I mean if there was injury, if she had to receive medical attention, if at any point she feared for her life, or if she was exposed to multiple incidents of violence. Also, we found that whether children have witnessed the violence, and by this I mean whether they heard or saw the violence, and the presence of alcohol will also statistically increase the chances a woman will choose to report to the police.

Looking at the next slide, which is from our official police-reported statistics, we know that about 84% of recorded incidents of spousal violence are against women and 16% are committed against men. When police are called, we know a larger proportion of wife assault cases result in police removing, arresting, or laying a charge against the abuser than in the cases of husband assault.

Among all police-recorded incidents of spousal violence, current and former husbands made up the largest number of intimate partner assaults. We also see, however, the number in this group has declined since 2001, in keeping with our victimization survey data. The number of current and former boyfriends reported to police for intimate partner violence has increased since 1998 to become the second-highest category of intimate partner violence, surpassing the number of assaults by wives.

In the following slide, we are now looking at lethal spousal violence: homicide. We know that one in five homicides in Canada involves the killing of an intimate partner. Rates of women being killed by a spouse are four times greater than that of a man being killed by a spouse.

We know that since 1974 spousal homicide for both men and women has decreased by about one-half, and the decrease in spousal homicide rates in recent years may be due to, among other factors, increased community-based support. We know that in the early 1970s there were only about 20 shelters for abused women in Canada. Now that figure surpasses 550.

Mandatory charging policies and improved training of police officers could also contribute to this decline. Research also shows the decline is linked to improvements in women's socio-economic status, some of the things that Colin has spoken to.

Police statistics suggest that a substantial percentage of women accused of spousal homicide were acting in self-defence. In 41% of spousal killings of men in which police had the required information, the police determined that the male victim was the first to threaten or to use physical force in the incident. This was the case for 5% of spousal killings of women.

In a large number of spousal homicides there is a history of domestic violence. For example, in 55% of homicides against women and 72% of homicides against men there was a history of domestic violence between the couple. What we don't know from

police statistics is who was the perpetrator in these previous incidents.

● (0930)

The last slide looks at risk of spousal homicide. We see that according to the homicide survey we know that the risk of spousal homicide is highest for young women, and the risk of being murdered by your spouse does decline with age. Women are at particular risk during separation, especially young separated women. While separated women make up 4% of women in the general population, they represent 26% of women killed by spouses. When we look at the data to see if there are differences in rates depending on the length of separation, we found that women are at particular risk of being killed by their spouses in that first two months of separation.

Finally, living common law also increases one's risk of being killed, again, especially for those who are young and living common law. For example, while 13% of Canadians were living in a common law relationship, common law relationships accounted for 40% of spousal homicides.

Like Colin, I'd like to thank the committee for providing me the opportunity as well to appear before the committee. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

As you said, I think you could probably use a whole day of going on in different chapters in that report. We congratulate you and all of your staff who did the work on that. I think it really produces a lot of very important information that can help all of us as parliamentarians move forward an agenda for the women in Canada in particular, and for our families.

We will go into the speaking order.

Ms. Minna, seven minutes, including answers.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Lindsay, you said earlier that single women, women who never marry or are not married, have a higher earning capacity than married women—that is, if they stay single. I think this was one of the things that came out of what you said earlier, if I'm not mistaken. That is, women who are not married with children tend to have an income closer to men's than married women with children, am I right?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: No. It's possible, but I didn't say that. Certainly that is not a result of *Women in Canada*.

Hon. Maria Minna: I wanted to clarify that, because I wasn't quite clear from what you said if there was a break....

One question I wanted to ask, though, is based on something you said, that education is much higher among women and that they are now attaining much closer.... Have you seen a correlation? There doesn't seem to be a correlation between higher education and higher income. You said earlier that most women are still clustered around traditional jobs. I'm wondering if it's too early in terms of the data of the number of women who have education to figure out why, or do you have some magic bullet that can give us an understanding as to why that is happening?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: No. First of all, the *Women in Canada* report was really intended largely to be an on-shelf database for women and men, people across the country, working in the areas of gender, and studying and working in those areas. We have 300 or 400 series in the publication, so there really wasn't time to look at the reasons for why these trends were happening. But yes, I think that's one of the two or three real questions that come out of here.

What we're not seeing at this point in time is a payoff in terms of better jobs and higher incomes among these young women who have much better educations right now than their young male counterparts.

We also did another study in coordination with Status of Women a couple of years back where we looked at women who were around 25 years of age in 1976 and their daughters, just to track the changes. It was called *A Quarter Century of Change: Young Women in Canada in the 1970s and Today*. Again, one of the conclusions we came to was that there does not seem to be this payoff for increased education on the part of these young women.

Why that would be I'm not sure. Is it going to be the case that in a short period of time the baby boomers are going to start to retire and then they're going to take off? That's a possibility. Certainly one of the things we hope for, in a report like *Women in Canada*, is that it will spur further research. That's certainly one of the questions that really is very obvious and needs some further research, yes.

• (0935)

Hon. Maria Minna: I find that troubling, obviously, and I think we all do, that gap in income. The only thing I could look at is the possibility that women, those who are married and have children, are spending time raising families and they're in and out of the labour force, and that might impact it. From what you've said, though, it seems to be that they're clustered in traditional jobs, and that doesn't seem to be a major factor.

My other question on this area in terms of income was the issue of diversity. I was wondering whether you had done, as part of your study—you had mentioned it earlier and you weren't able to get into it—something on immigrant women or minority women in terms of where they are—are they worse off than women in general, or are they about the same? Is there a differentiation between them?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: If you look at the immigrant and visible minority populations, women do make less on average in those two subpopulations than those in the overall population. Obviously there is a lot of overlap between the immigrant population and the visible minority population. However, if you look at immigrant women, and I believe also visible minority women who arrived in Canada before the 1990s, their statistical profile is very similar to that of the native-born population. Immigrant women who arrived in Canada in the

last decade don't have as positive a profile as those who have been here for longer periods of time and the native-born population.

So there are some adjustment problems going on there, obviously.

Hon. Maria Minna: Otherwise, beyond the adjustment phase, the data doesn't show any major differentiation between the native population and immigrant women with respect to levels of income?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: I didn't quite get the question.

Hon. Maria Minna: I'm talking about beyond the settlement stage.

Mr. Colin Lindsay: Again, when you look at immigrant women who arrived in Canada before 1990, their statistical profile—that is, the employment rate, the low-income rate, things like that—is very similar to that of the native-born population. It's only when you look at women who've arrived within the last decade that you do see some differences, and fairly wide differences.

Hon. Maria Minna: That's interesting.

Ms. Mihorean, I don't have time to go into all of my questions, so I'll just piggyback on what I was just talking about with respect to immigrant and visible minority women on the issue of diversity and violence. I know in many communities it's taboo to discuss it, and women don't report.

Have any studies been done by Statistics Canada to try to get at some of that information through existing organizations, voluntary agencies, or what have you? I know it's there, because I've gotten it.

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: In our national victims survey we ask about race and ethnicity, so we do know if respondents are visible minority or immigrant and when they immigrated to Canada. Remember, this is a telephone survey that is conducted only in English and French, so we are limited.

That said, we have found through our survey that rates of violence for both visible minority and immigrant women are in fact lower than the rates for the general population. We looked at why this might be and found that both visible minority and immigrant women were more likely to report lower rates of emotional abuse, which we know has a high correlation with violence. They are also less likely to say that their spouses are heavy drinkers. Also, there is a much lower prevalence of common law relationships among both visible minority and immigrant women.

Hon. Maria Minna: Okay. I'll come back to you.

The Chair: Ms. Mourani.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Good morning, Mr. Lindsay.

Firstly, I wish to share with you some information I've heard. You say that there has been a significant increase in the number of women in the paid workforce, that women are better educated and that this is a very positive thing. That gives the impression that everything is fine. However, at the same time, when one looks at the situation more closely, one realizes that even though there has been growth in the workforce participation rates of women, women are still concentrated in precarious, atypical occupations, which you yourself described as being traditionally female occupations. Therefore, to describe certain occupations as traditionally female indirectly means that there are occupations which are reserved exclusively for men. Do you understand my point?

On the other hand, do you believe that the language used in society may contribute to widening the gap between men and women? For instance, we talk about occupations that are traditionally held by women, and the fact that it is normal for a woman to be a secretary, a receptionist, or a salesperson; whereas, men must be CEOs, managers, and so on, and must earn high salaries.

Then again, I am very surprised to hear you tell us that in a society such as ours, where everyone has the same level of education, statistics do not reveal that there are equal jobs. Please correct me if I am wrong. Therefore, women are well educated, but at the same time, there does not seem to be an increase in the number of women who hold good jobs that are well paid, so on and so forth.

However, it's quite possible that I didn't fully understand what you said.

• (0940)

[English]

Mr. Colin Lindsay: Again, I apologize, because my French is not good enough to answer your questions.

I think you're absolutely right. As I said, we did not get into the reasons why these things happen. Certainly, one of the surprising conclusions we came to in this report was that we did not see a further evolution of the occupational distribution of women. If you go back and look at the period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, you would see a breakdown of what used to be called the old pink ghetto types of jobs, the jobs that women traditionally did. When we say they are traditional, we're talking largely statistically. For example, currently about 75% of all clerical and administrative workers are females, and that's a fairly consistent figure. So when we say traditional jobs, it's jobs in which they have been concentrated.

Yes, if you went back to the *Women in Canada* report in 1995, the third edition, you would have projected that there would have been a fairly significant change in occupational distribution, given that (a) over the previous two decades, there had been some significant changes in that area, and that (b) you are getting this increase in educational attainment on the part of women. Why over the course of the last decade, it kind of flattened out? That's a question we have to throw to other researchers to try to figure out. But you're absolutely right, yes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Can you tell us a little bit about female offenders? In your report, you talk about crimes committed by

women, as well as women who are serving in the correctional service. Can you quickly say a few words on that?

[English]

Mr. Colin Lindsay: That would go to my colleague Ms. Mihorean, who is the expert in that regard.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Very well. Good morning.

[English]

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: *Bonjour, madame.*

What I can tell you about women in the system—because I was part of a larger study back in the early 1990s, looking at federally sentenced female offenders—is that perhaps female offenders have a history of abuse at higher rates than male offenders. They've come from backgrounds where they've suffered sexual abuse and physical violence.

Could you be more specific in your question, about what you're looking for with respect to women offenders in the justice system?

• (0945)

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: For example, with respect to prison sentences, there seems to be a very high tendency to hand down probationary sentences. Probationary sentences make up approximately 8 per cent of sentences, I believe. Full prison sentences are less prevalent among women. I am not sure if I am making myself understood, but I gather that there are not as many women in the prison system because they are less likely to commit offences. I would say that this has always been the case in the past. The rate of crimes committed by men has always been higher than the rate of crimes committed by women. On the other hand, crime committed by women has always been less violent.

Currently, we are studying Bill C-9 on the abolition of conditional sentences in the House of Commons. In fact, the bill deals with a sort of extension for conditional sentences, by making a 10-year imprisonment term ineligible for a conditional sentence.

Do you believe that this will have a significant impact on the sentences handed down to women, thereby further criminalizing them, and causing more of them to be imprisoned?

[English]

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: I could provide some of that information to you, but perhaps not today. Certainly we are looking at the impact of the elimination or reduction of the use of conditional sentencing. At this point, we haven't looked at gender differences, but it's something that we would plan to look at in the future.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Smith.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Thank you, and I would like to thank the presenters for this very insightful presentation today. I always like to take a look at the stats. There are always variables in play that aren't reflected in the stats, but this concise work is very important to us. So I want to thank you.

Karen, if you don't mind, there's one thing: violence against women in Canada. The statistical profile I thought was extremely insightful and useful and alarming is that young women in relationships, whether they be common law or boyfriend-girlfriend relationships, are at a much higher risk than anybody else because, I would assume, a lot of these are not relationships that are supported. Many young people—I know if you have a daughter—often like to keep their relationships to themselves, and often you don't know things. As a former teacher, I know often we didn't know things until after they had already happened. You couldn't predict.

One thing I've been working on over a long period of time is trafficking against women. I noticed in this statistical profile nothing talked about women who were either trafficked or in prostitution. I've been doing quite a bit of work on it, and it's very alarming to see. It's a slave trade right now, women being trafficked from different countries. I just came back from Israel, where I spoke to three women who had been trafficked through Egypt. Often these women come to Canada as well and the U.S.

Has there been any statistical profile in this area about violence against women? Has any work been done? They seem to be a forgotten community. It's a very volatile community, and these women are really treated in the worst possible way. Could you comment on that?

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: I'd be happy to.

Actually over the past year and a half or so I have been a member of the interdepartmental working group on trafficking in persons, and as a Stats Can representative, I have been working with Canada Border Services Agency, CIC, and the RCMP looking at ways to measure this. Certainly, as we sit around our table, we constantly look at what is the true nature and extent of trafficking in Canada.

We certainly know that Canada is a transit country, but we also are concerned about trafficking within our borders, especially among aboriginal and young aboriginal women. We don't have the statistics at this point. We are currently developing a research and data framework, and we hope in the near future we will be collecting that information.

At the same time, I'd say it's probably the most challenging piece of work I've ever embarked on. It's probably the most hidden of all offences or types of violence against women, just because of the dynamics involved in trafficking in persons and the risk to the victim and having women come forward. But we are moving in that direction. We certainly see it as a priority. I'm sure you've discussed the whole issue of trafficking in persons in Canada; it's something we want to move forward on.

• (0950)

Mrs. Joy Smith: It's really good to hear that, because I think when we start to move forward on it then that protects these women. I think we need to ascertain the statistics on which women disappear, because in two cases I know of, two young women just disappeared, and they can't find them.

So I don't know if that has a correlation with the missing persons aspect when you do violence against women in Canada. Could you comment on that? Do you deal with that at all?

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: We haven't looked necessarily at missing persons. I know certainly we have worked somewhat with the RCMP in their missing persons area. This area is looking specifically at human trafficking. We are working with them, looking at these women who are missing, especially aboriginal women, and looking to see whether or not these are cases of trafficking. So it is something we are looking at, but again we don't have the information. We haven't got to that point yet.

Mrs. Joy Smith: One other question I have in this same area is this. There used to be, and there is currently, the integrated child exploitation unit. It is a unit based on cybercrimes, chat lines, which has grown to alarming proportions as crime where young boys and girls are lured, and some of them do become missing persons. Some of them get into very unhealthy relationships. Certainly the predators are out there and growing.

In terms of violence against women in Canada, this is something that would be very important, because this is violence as well. Often these young children are sexually molested. Often they are hurt. Some of them disappear.

I know from first-hand experience, because my son, who is in the RCMP, was in that ICE unit.

My concern is that I don't think the general public is really aware of this horrendous crime, and I'm wondering if Statistics Canada is currently looking at this. I wouldn't say it's a relatively new crime, but it almost is, because in the past decade it has escalated. Child Find has been involved in this as well.

Could you tell me, please, is there anything that Statistics Canada is doing to profile this crime and get a handle on exactly how many children are involved? There are children within our own communities, our own families, children we know next door, involved in this. Could you comment on that?

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: You're right in saying the whole issue of Internet luring is fairly new. With technology, crimes are always changing and becoming more sophisticated. Really, the crime doesn't change. It's for the purpose of child sexual abuse, or whatever. It's the method in which these children are lured that is changing.

On our police-reported system, our uniform crime reporting server, we have in fact just included measures that will get at Internet luring and how the Internet is used to commit various crimes. So we'll be able to look, for instance, at child sexual abuse cases and whether in fact the use of the Internet was involved in those crimes.

Again, it's very new. It will probably be a year or so until we have the information.

The Chair: Ms. Mathysen.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you very much.

My first question is for Mr. Lindsay. I was taken by the fact that 38% of all families headed by lone-parent mothers had incomes that fell well below the income cut-off in terms of poverty, and I wondered two things.

What proportion of poor children live in mother-led single-parent families? In my own community, the United Way and the University of Western Ontario have done a study, and in London-Middlesex—a fat cat, a very affluent community—more children go hungry than anywhere else in Ontario. I think that's a statistic that shocked our community. So I want to know about the poverty rates among those children.

The second part of my question has to do with child care. All the literature I've read in regard to affordable, not-for-profit, regulated child care indicates that is the key, the very first step in reducing and ultimately ending child poverty. Has any of the research you have done or the information you have from women or women's groups corroborated that or supported that?

• (0955)

Mr. Colin Lindsay: Yes, in fact, part of my presentation was to mention the statistic you asked about initially, and for some reason I had forgotten.

In fact, yes, the serious issue here is that female-headed lone-parent families account for a very disproportionate share of all children with families. Currently, 43% of all children classified as living in a low-income family live in a female-headed lone-parent family, whereas these families account for only about 13% of all children. So obviously there's a disproportionate share there.

In terms of the day care and that part of the question, we didn't tie the two together. In fact, we didn't do a whole lot of research into the low-income statistics for female lone parents, but I did some work on this in the past. We actually did a full publication on female lone parents a few years back. The data are a little old now, but as I recall it, there was a strong correlation between the incidence of low income in these families and the non-presence of an earner. So in a female lone-parent family, if there is no earner, it's almost assured that 95% or 96% of those families will have low incomes.

In fact, if you took our two charts on female lone parents, the percentage who have low incomes...and if you inverted the one with employment rates, what you'll see is that they track very closely. Whether that's a real statistical conclusion or not...but certainly having someone who is employed in that family has a very strong correlation to the incidence of low income.

Now, we didn't then take it to the next step and ask, well, why are the 35% of female lone parents who are not employed not employed? That's certainly one of the questions that comes out of this.

Is the lack of child care a factor? It could be, but at this point in time we certainly don't know. Certainly the issue of these families and employment is absolutely key to the relationship with low income, no question about it.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: So if we want to dramatically improve the lives of low-income women and their children, should we most definitely take a look at this? Would there be some wisdom in pursuing that?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: Well, it's certainly a question. Why those 35% are not working is a very good question. They may simply choose to stay at home, and say, "I'd rather be at home with my children." That's a possibility. Or there are other barriers to their being in the workforce. And again, that would certainly be a question.

There are three questions that came out of this report. In terms of our thinking, the first one was asked by the very first questioner. That's the second one. Why in fact are these low income rates persisting among these types of families, and what are the factors keeping these women out of the labour force, if they want to be there?

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Yes, okay, and I suppose we could link it back. I was quite astounded by the statistic in regard to literacy, that only 19% of women aged 16 and over have high literacy rates, and that 20% of both female and male populations weren't able to perform simple reading tasks. I assume that if we looked at numeracy, we'd be looking at the same kind of shocking reality.

Mr. Colin Lindsay: The same kinds of numbers, yes.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: So that excludes 20% of our youth, an incredible number of our population, from contributing to our communities, to our economy.

Would there be a connection in terms of those literacy/numeracy skills? And on my question in regard to child poverty, is there a possible extra piece—

• (1000)

Mr. Colin Lindsay: That would be beyond the scope of certainly what we did, but the earlier part of your question is really quite interesting. I often get asked this question: how is it that you are a male doing *Women in Canada*?

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: You're the most fascinating Canadian.

Mr. Colin Lindsay: After 20 years of doing it, I am used to it. The other question we sometimes get is this: where's the report on men?

We do react to demand at Statistics Canada, and at this point in time there does not seem to be a great demand for that kind of thing; however, in doing this report, every statistic in here has a male component to it. One of the things that jumped out at us, and one of the things we would like to follow up on, is that you have very high drop-out rates among young men. Some 20% of them did not complete high school, a considerably higher figure than for younger women. For the first time ever, that figure is actually tracked down. With every generation the percentage who are not completing high school has declined, and the current generation is the first generation where that has not happened. So that's an issue for the other side of the gender equation.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Yes, it's certainly something of concern.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Mathysen, your time is up. We'll keep going with another round.

Ms. Neville, go ahead, please.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much. Thank you to all of you for coming out this morning.

I have a whole series of questions on a different tack, on aboriginal women. But before I go there, Mr. Lindsay, what's the third question? You said the second question was asked by Ms. Mathysen, and that there were three questions that came out.

Mr. Colin Lindsay: For the moment I've blanked out. It's in my notes here, and I'll dig it out. I'm sure we'll come to it during the course of the morning.

Hon. Anita Neville: I find the whole report very interesting, but I looked with particular interest at your chapter on aboriginal women, and some of the data that you provided there.

You talk about the number of women who identified themselves as aboriginal being 22% higher than it was in 1996, whereas the non-aboriginal population grew by 3%. Do you attribute that solely to the increased birth rate, or is part of it now due to self-declaration for aboriginal women?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: I'm not totally an expert in that area, and somebody else wrote that chapter, but my understanding is that the assumption is that most of that difference is accounted for by birth rates but some of it may be accounted for by changes in identification.

Hon. Anita Neville: I was fascinated by the data on the configuration of families: numbers living alone, not living alone, living with extended family, the numbers of senior women compared to those in the non-aboriginal population. What do you do with this information? Whom do you provide it to for purposes of policy-making and policy decisions, and are you part of the discussions when policies are made by other departments?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: Well, first of all, I'm talking for myself. The *Women in Canada* report itself is one of a series of reports that we do on a whole bunch of groups. In particular this report gets used as a kind of report card for the status of women, but that's really not its main purpose. The main purpose of this report is to provide people across the country, who are working and studying in the area of gender statistics, with an on-shelf database. So I suppose in that sense this report, where it points out emerging trends, fits into the policy area, but it's certainly not the function of this particular report to have a direct impact on policy.

I can probably pass the question to Rosemary, who could talk a little more specifically. We do have a full aboriginal people survey division. It's one of the main functions there. Maybe she could address that a little more specifically than I could.

Mrs. Rosemary Bender: On that point, I can say that we do have regular ongoing exchanges with policy researchers and policy-makers at the various levels—the federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal levels—and we share a lot of information from various sources that we have.

Women in Canada is one of our key sources for gender statistics, but we do have ongoing dialogue with policy-makers who either take the data as is from a publication like *Women in Canada* or they ask for further statistics. They like special tabulations or special meetings to talk with experts on the underlying statistical notions and concepts that really lead to the conclusions of the report.

We're usually very busy on many fronts, speaking with whoever is interested in our statistics and in using them.

●(1005)

Hon. Anita Neville: This report has a particular section on Bill C-31 and the impact of Bill C-31. Do you extrapolate forward the potential implications of Bill C-31 and the numbers of women who may in fact lose status because of Bill C-31? It's a very controversial bill, and many people want it revised. Do you move forward?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: None of us is really an expert in that. I'm sure some work has been done at Statistics Canada, and we could probably go to the actual experts in that area and provide the committee with some documentation, if there is any available. I know there are population projections, but whether or not that's included, I think, it's certainly beyond our—

Mrs. Rosemary Bender: The one area where we do move forward with projections is in the area of demographics. So we do project the populations of various areas in Canada as well as for certain subpopulations, for example, such as visible minorities or aboriginal groups.

So in the area of demographics, yes, we do project forward based on the assumptions on the various characteristics of growth, whether it be migration, fertility, or mortality. We do not project forward some of the trends in terms of employment status or labour market activity. On that we don't project, as a rule.

Hon. Anita Neville: Could you pick up on the discussion earlier about low-income families and whether you've broken that down as it relates to aboriginal women and particularly lone-parent families?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: No, we did not. We do know that aboriginal women are more than twice as likely to be a female lone parent as opposed to the regular population. We know that aboriginal women in general are twice as likely as other women to have low incomes, but in this particular report we didn't look at female lone parents.

We try to stay away from family issues with the aboriginal numbers because it's difficult to define an aboriginal family sometimes, but no, we didn't break that down in this particular report. At some point in time we had to make some decisions. Otherwise the publication would become simply too large and too costly, and this was one that wasn't included.

We could probably find it for you, though, and send it to you.

The Chair: Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a couple of questions, actually, and I'll try to get through them in the time allowed.

My first question is to Mr. Lindsay. In terms of establishing the incidence of spousal violence, we're seeing that one-third report to police. How do you come at establishing what the universe of that is, in order to know that the incidence of police reporting is at around 36% or 37%? How do you come at the big number? You mentioned you've got the victimization survey and so on, and you've got certainly hard numbers on the police reports, but how do you know it only represents a third of the actual incidence of violence?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: I will pass that to my colleague Ms. Mihorean, who is more the expert in that area than I am.

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: In the victimization survey, what we do is we ask about very specific acts of violence, and so for anyone who says yes, then we follow up with a series of questions to get at the nature of the violence and the extent of the violence. One of the questions we ask is whether the police ever found out about the incident. So we ask the woman or man if the police found out. If the police did find out, we also then ask if they reported the violence or someone else reported the violence.

So if you've got in your sample x number of people reporting violence, the subpopulation of that is who reported to the police and who didn't. Now, the 37% or 36% or so who do report spousal violence is actually in keeping now with the overall rate of violent crime. So if you look at violent crime that's committed by others, non-spousal, the rate of reporting is also around 34%. So in fact when we saw that huge increase between 1993 and 1999 in reporting, probably what was contributing to it was all the work that was going on at the community level—better police training, pro charging, encouraging people to report the violence.

The question is, now that it has levelled off between 1999 and 2004 and it's consistent with other violent crime, is this the plateau now? Have we reached the plateau? Will we see a further increase in reporting?

• (1010)

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you for that.

It's along the same lines and in the same topic area. Clearly, while it's certainly good news that the incidence of violence is coming down, 640,000, which I think was the number, is clearly substantive. It really conjures up concerns about how you come at the root causes of this. There's a breakdown of respect within the family unit—whatever that might be.

You have some numbers looking at the fact that certainly the younger women, in particular the 15-to-24 category, higher incidents among the aboriginal families and so on.... I wonder, was there any measure looking at issues of education and economic affluence within the family? Were there relationships there? Ultimately you need to come to Ms. Mathysen's point, which is how you then come at solutions for this kind of thing.

Clearly, those are the sorts of questions that come to mind when you see these critical issues happening within the family. There is still a lack of respect that is ultimately endangering the lives of women and children. What can we do to address that? It would be interesting to know where and what categories of our society are more affected by this.

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: We do look at income and education; those are the standard socio-demographic characteristics we look at. We found that urban/rural residency, education, and income really don't have an effect on risk of spousal violence. Of those that I listed for you on page 4, probably the one that's missing is that there is more violence where the woman's partner had a father who was also abusive towards his mother. Certainly, there is this generational aspect. Spousal violence does cross all socio-economic boundaries.

Really what we're seeing is that there certainly are pockets with being young and at risk. But again, I would say that if you look at the risk of any type of violent crime, it's also concentrated in the young age groups. The facts I have listed here are the ones that statistically are the strongest predictors of spousal violence. But there is no difference among income or education levels.

The Chair: Madame Bourgeois.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ladies and gentlemen, your presentation this morning is extremely interesting. I believe that your studies are complementary to one another.

Mr. Lindsay, you said that you have made a contribution to all Canadian publications on women. I have read practically every publication, and I am pleased to see that women's living conditions have improved slightly. I believe that women's living conditions have improved thanks to the relentless work of women's groups, in addition to all of the social measures which have been put in place for that purpose.

As for Ms. Mihorean, I also find it interesting to see that there has been a marked decrease in violence. Once again, measures were taken to crack down on spousal violence.

I am trying to combine my two questions and I don't know which one of you wishes to answer them.

An increasing number of women live in common-law relationships. In fact, Mr. Lindsay, I believe that you were the one who pointed out that there are more and more divorced women, and more families that depend on single mothers. In fact, two thirds of single mothers work, and generally speaking, two thirds of all women who have children work. Therefore, "work" is the key word, as is the importance of work for women.

With respect to violence against women, the 50 p. 100 decrease is primarily attributed to increased community support, and secondly to the improvement of women's socio-economic conditions. Therefore, the more women work, the more financially autonomous and independent they are, the less likely they are to accept violence, regardless of whether or not they are young, between the ages of 30 and 50, or older. Older women who have worked, who have drawn salaries, who are receiving benefits or a pension, are less likely to accept violence.

Canadian women are calling for a daycare system. I will not talk about Quebec, because we already have a system.

Ms. Mihorean, do you believe that this is one way to help women fight against violence and to become more autonomous?

Mr. Lindsay, my second question is for you. It will be very brief. Is your data broken down? Do you provide a province-by-province breakdown of your data? In your report, you present general data for all of Canada. Did you notice any differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada?

Those are my two questions. Thank you.

●(1015)

[English]

Mr. Colin Lindsay: Well, I'll answer the quick question.

For the most part, in the *Women in Canada* report, the data is presented at a national level. We would certainly like to have more provincial data in there, but it is already a 325-page book, and at some point in time we have to cut things off.

For the major indicators, we have provided a provincial breakdown. So what you see, for example, is that in the province of Quebec women are somewhat less likely than women in Ontario and the western provinces to be employed. However, over the course of the last decade, there has been a very significant increase in the labour force participation rates of women in Quebec compared to the rest of the country, about double the rate. I think their participation rate has increased by eight or nine percentage points, whereas in Ontario and the western provinces it's up about four percentage points.

So we do have some breakdowns in here, but as I say, we have to cut it off at some point in time.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Madam Mihorean, do you have something very quickly to add?

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: I was just going to say that I couldn't speak directly about the impact of child care and rates of violence, but we do know that in Quebec, for example, spousal violence rates are the lowest, yet they have the highest rates of common law relationships, which is interesting. I know there are other social supports in play there that I can't speak directly to.

We do know that one of the main reasons women go back to abusive partners is for the sake of children. We know that transition homes are most busy around the return of school, so women are more likely to go into a transition home once their kids are established in school. Again, I can't speak directly on child care, but I'll leave you with that to ponder.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Mathysen, go ahead, please.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: I'd like to switch gears a little.

I'm looking at the statistic regarding the substantial gender gap difference persisting despite the socio-economic variables. The improvement in terms of gender gap issues has slowed quite dramatically in recent years. As a teacher, I always asked whether women had reached the level of equality. The response was always, oh yes, we've arrived. It would seem to me that we haven't arrived yet, and that there's still much work to do. I'm wondering if that is because equality hasn't been a priority for the public. The public perception reflects my students' perception that things are much better now, and that we don't have to work at it anymore.

Secondly, is there a connection between that perception and the fact that we have so few female parliamentarians? Do we need to work more at getting representation? Is there something there in terms of electoral reform?

●(1020)

Mr. Colin Lindsay: Again, as we said, looking into the future or trying to explain things is not within the scope of the *Women in Canada* publication, particularly without a statistical basis to do so. In answer to your questions, I think there was, over the course of the last decade, a lessening of the interest in gender issues. When we released the 1995 issue, it was a big deal. One of our analysts was interviewed. It was the lead story on all three news networks, and it was well covered in all the papers. When we released the 2000 issue there was very little response in that regard.

The good news, in terms of your question, is that when we released the latest issue we got tremendous coverage and there was tremendous interest in it. In fact, we released it in March, and we're still dealing with media requests and things of that nature. If there's a good-news answer to the question, it is that some of these issues do seem to be percolating to the top. We would hope that on reading this publication and on seeing that some of these trends have slowed and in fact stopped, people may be given pause to at least ask what's going on here, and the profile of the issues may be raised.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: I have a second question. This one has to do with violence and elder abuse. We haven't talked very much about elder abuse. It seems this is something that is becoming much more visible, and we're hearing much more about it. I wonder about the risk factors associated with this kind of violence and who is participating, who is committing this kind of crime.

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: It's different for men and women. There has been a very slow increase, a gradual increase in the trend of senior abuse. For senior women who are victims of violence, by and large it is a spouse or intimate partner committing the violence. I don't know if you've heard the expression "spousal violence growing old", but it's that sort of phenomenon. In the case of senior men who are abused, it's often by acquaintances, friends, or their children. In the case of senior women who are abused, there is a fairly significant portion who are abused by their sons.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: You probably can't answer my next question, but it would seem that there needs to be some intervention in terms of spousal violence. Perhaps it's a matter of there not being the support systems available—home care or long-term care—to help people through this very troubling kind of situation.

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: In Canada, I think there's only one facility for senior, older Canadians who are abused by intimate partners—I think it's still there in Calgary—called Kirby House. So there is one in the system. But the rates are relatively low. We do know that rates of spousal violence do decrease with age. Although it does exist, the rates are very low.

As far as I am aware, there used to be one in Montreal, but from our transition home survey, I think there's just the one residential facility for abused older Canadians. There certainly are other types of support groups and that, but as for residential facilities, there's one. Victim services that are located across the country do have programs that focus on older Canadians who are victims of violence, as well.

• (1025)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Grewal.

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the presenters for coming here today.

I'd like to begin by asking a question in relation to immigrant women in Canada. One-third of the residents of my riding are immigrants, and a number of those undoubtedly are women. Canada was built by immigrants, but it increasingly seems as though immigrants, particularly women, are finding it difficult to gain lasting employment.

Are there any trends or statistics that might help shed some light on this issue? For example, what percentage of immigrant workers are currently employed, in comparison to Canadian citizens; and what, if any, are the differences in earnings?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: We talked a little bit earlier about this. Currently, if you look at the overall immigrant population—I'm talking about slightly different sources from some of the other data here, so bear with me—about 58% of all immigrant women are employed compared with about 64% of all women in Canada, so there's about a six percentage point difference. But as I said earlier, the big difference is in whether you're a recent immigrant or have been here for a while.

If you look at women who have been here longer, who came before 1990, their employment rate is 63% or 64%, the very same as the overall population, whereas in terms of women who arrived since 1990, considerably fewer are employed—just above 50%.

I don't have the actual income dollars here, but in terms of low-income rates, currently, among women who have been in Canada before 1990, about 16% or 17% have low incomes. Again, that's the same basic number as the overall female population.

Immigrant women who have arrived since 1990 have a low-income rate of 35%, which is over twice what it is for the overall population and the immigrants who have been here longer periods. So obviously there is that distinction, particularly for those who are recent arrivals.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Thank you.

The Chair: Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Joy Smith: I find increasingly very disturbing the plight of aboriginal women, and my colleagues around this table have been very concerned about it as well.

I don't know whether my question would be to Rosemary or Mr. Lindsay, one of you.

Aboriginal women living on reserve are showing that they have lower incomes than aboriginal women living off reserve. In addition,

they have a challenge in view of the Marriage Act in Canada. When a couple goes through a divorce, women off the reserve have all the rights in terms of being able to have the house or share equally with the husband, but on reserve, that's different. If the marriage is broken up, the women do lose their homes, and so the women and children are basically out on the street.

I'm wondering whether your organization has done anything to look at the statistics of what has happened to these women, and whether you could comment on making very strong government policy to make sure there are equal rights there for the aboriginal women. Have you done any work on that study?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: Let me talk a little bit in very general terms.

We talk about diversity issues, and we've had some questions about immigrants and visible minorities. As a general rule, those populations don't do quite as well as the overall population, but the differences are fairly close. There are much wider differences between the aboriginal female population and the overall population. They're less than half as likely to have university training, for example. They're more than twice as likely to have low incomes. They are considerably less likely to be employed. There is also a difference between women who live off-reserve and on-reserve. The women who live on-reserve tend to have statistics—again, we're talking national averages here—that are not as positive as for those who live off-reserve, although there's not a huge difference between those two groups. Again, though, our role really is to present that data, and we haven't asked those other questions.

Rosemary may want to add something here.

• (1030)

Mrs. Rosemary Bender: Only to say that we do work with national aboriginal organizations in order to really develop and design a survey for reserves, for example, that looks at the very specific issues that are really important for understanding the situation of aboriginals, and aboriginal women in particular, on reserves. We are working with the organizations to develop a tool that can really provide information they can use.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to come back, if I may, to the violence issue with Ms. Mihorean with regard to immigrant visible minority women.

I know that the studies are done with the English-speaking and French-speaking only, and that's part of the problem. I did volunteer work in the immigrant community for 20 years before being elected and I was doing work in this area for part of that time. So I can tell you that the bulk of the women in the Portuguese community, the Italian Canadian community, and a number of others were simply not reporting. I don't think you're picking it up, with all respect to you, and you're missing out. I don't know how much you're picking up from other South Asian women and others.

I feel there needs to be a study. Maybe Statistics Canada is the one to do it, I don't know. Obviously you should seek those other statistics anyway, that really address this area and start to try to identify and penetrate. Maybe it needs to be done with bilingual, bicultural workers.

I wonder if you had thought of that. I don't think your figures are accurate until you factor in the population that is not anglo- or franco-Canadian.

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: This is often one of the drawbacks in conducting a national survey. People want it to answer all kinds of questions for various segments of the population. Certainly, we are limited by the fact that the survey is conducted in only English and French.

We have conducted other surveys—Rosemary can speak to this as well—in multiple languages. This is certainly something we need to look at in the future, with the growing immigrant population and the growing number of people who speak neither English nor French.

It's not only a language issue; it's a cultural issue as well. Disclosing violence is very difficult, and depending on the culture you're from, it is something that would perhaps be more difficult for some than for others.

I released those figures to you. That's why I set out the limitations of the survey. Yes, our survey does get lower rates, but if we were to do more targeted research within those communities we might find a difference.

Hon. Maria Minna: My other question is still on violence, if I have a minute left.

I understand that the statistics show a decline, but I want to clarify that this has to do specifically with violence that has been reported to the police or in hospital. Really, what I am asking is if you think there is also a fair amount of violence that has not yet been reported.

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: The decline that I spoke of very early was from our victimization survey taken in the study period between the 1999 and 2004. That was with wife assault. Drilling down even further, in particular with respect to previous relationships, there have been decreases. This is also supported in our police-reported data; there have been slight decreases.

This is good news. We've been part of the federal family violence initiative since the early 1990s, and there has been a lot of effort going on, not only at the federal level but also at the provincial and community levels, so we hope to see a decrease. There's a decrease of 1%. Whether or not that's a statistically significant decrease, our hope is that this downward trend will continue.

Hon. Maria Minna: I have a very brief question for Mr. Lindsay with respect to income for seniors. One of the issues I worked on previously with my colleagues concerned poverty among senior women, specifically unattached senior women. Now, I see from your chart that senior poverty has declined. I wondered if you could expand a bit, because it says that one in five senior women who live alone is in poverty. Or am I mistaken?

• (1035)

Mr. Colin Lindsay: Stats Canada doesn't call it poverty. It's a low-income cut-off, which is defined based on family spending patterns, average spending patterns, and so on. I think if we put a word to it, it's called straitened circumstances, as opposed to poverty.

Yes, go ahead.

Hon. Maria Minna: The issue of senior poverty and economic security is still a major issue, obviously, with respect to unattached women.

Mr. Colin Lindsay: Again, these are national averages. I think what's significant is the fact that you had this massive decline from 60% to 20%, but one in five is still a fairly significant part of that population.

The Chair: Next we'll have Ms. Grewal and Ms. Davidson on the list, with about eight minutes left to go.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: I have a very short question. Why is there a sudden drop-off in employment and wages for immigrant women who came to Canada after 1990, as compared to those who came to Canada before 1990?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: I think “drop-off” is probably a poor word. What we really would have to do is look at how women who had arrived before 1990 had done during their recent arrival years. In that sense, we're comparing apples and oranges. The recent arrivals have not really had time to adjust.

On the other hand, while we say their employment and income levels are lower, they're a very well-educated population. Among recent immigrant women, more than one in four has a university degree, so they have some tools to work with. To make a comparison between the two, whether recent immigrant women are currently doing better or worse than their counterparts, you'd have to go back and compare how those women were doing after they had been in the country five or ten years. My guess is you would see a similar pattern.

The Chair: Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): I'd like to thank both of today's presenters.

Certainly, it's been very enlightening. I think we've seen some statistics that are encouraging, we've seen some that are discouraging, and we've seen some where we fully expected to see the trends going that way, given the emphasis this subject has had over the last few years. We still have a long way to go, but I think it is encouraging in some areas.

Mr. Lindsay, in your first slide, regarding the education and percentage of women and men with a university degree, I think that's very encouraging to see. Your comment that women will soon surpass male numbers is intriguing as well. I think this shows a very distinct trend.

Regarding your next chart, Mr. Lindsay, with the low income after tax—maybe part of this was answered when you were speaking with Ms. Minna—but what is the low-income cut-off? How do you base that? I did read the article in the large book, but could you go through that a bit more, so we can better understand what you're using? I understand it's not a poverty level, which apparently, from any work I've done in the past, is very difficult to define.

Mr. Colin Lindsay: It's very subjective, yes.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: So how do you come to this?

Mr. Colin Lindsay: To simplify it, basically what Stats Canada has done in using averages is look at a family with a certain income level and evaluate what percentage of its income is spent on basics, such as housing, food, and clothing. If they spend a very significant proportion of their income on those variables, meaning that there's almost nothing left over, then that qualifies them as having a low income. It's not individual families that you'd measure, and it's also done by urban areas. So for a family of three in Toronto, the low-income cut-off would be based on what the average family in Toronto would spend on basics. If a family is spending all, or almost all, of its income on basics, such as housing, clothing, and food, then it's classified as having a low income.

•(1040)

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

Then I have a question for Karen as well. The rates of spousal violence against women have declined, and that's wonderful news, but we've gone from 12% to 8% to 7% for women, and we've gone down from 7% to 6% for males.

Then we go to the next chart, which talks about the serious violence against women and against male victims as well, and the male victims experience a lot less serious violence compared with the female victims. What makes up the figure 6 on the previous slide? What is the nature of the violence against the men?

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: In order to measure spousal violence, we use a scale of 10 questions. It ranges from everything such as threatening to hit you with their fists or throwing something at you that could hurt you, to being choked, beaten, sexually assaulted, etc. There are 10 items.

I should say the reason we don't have 1993 figures for men is that in 1993 we conducted a national violence against women survey that was funded by the then Health Canada. It was in 1999, when we adapted this module of spousal violence and put it onto our national victims survey—and that survey includes both male and female respondents—that we for the first time got figures for men.

There is no statistical difference between the 7% and the 6%. We know men experience violence, but we know the impact of that violence isn't as severe. For instance, they're not as likely to be beaten, choked, threatened with a weapon, or have a weapon used against them as women. It's those serious types of violence that result in the more serious outcomes of the violence. That's why you're seeing more women are being injured and having to receive medical attention and fearing for their lives as a result of the violence.

So men are experiencing some types of violence, but it's not as serious, when you look at that scale of 10, as women are experiencing. There are some, obviously, who experience serious

violence, but on a scale looking at both men and women, women overall suffer much more serious, injurious, and repeated violence than do men.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: I was just referring on page 5 to your chart regarding the low rates of reporting. It looks as though for female victims the rate's coming down and for males it's going up. Am I reading that correctly?

Mrs. Karen Mihorean: There is no statistical difference between the 37% and 36% for women, or the 15% and 17% for men. Although they look different, when you do a statistical test those numbers aren't different. I think the reason you're seeing fewer men reporting than women is that they're less likely to experience serious violence, and we know that seriousness is the number one predictor for turning to the police.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

The Chair: I had asked you to stay until 10:45 so that we could have the last 15 minutes to look after some of our committee business. Unfortunately, there won't be any time for further questions, but I clearly think, as you can see from the results here, that we may want to have you come back in the future on specific parts of the report.

Thank you very much for coming. If you could supply the committee with the previous Stats Canada reports you mentioned that Ms. Mathysen had asked about—perhaps you could supply them to the clerk, who will supply them to all the committee members—it might be helpful.

Thank you very much.

•(1045)

Okay, colleagues, we have a variety of items still to finish in a short amount of time.

I would first bring your attention to the issue of our work plan that's been distributed and the possible changes to it.

We've been trying to get confirmation of a joint meeting with aboriginal affairs. At our next meeting, we have officials from the Status of Women Canada. If we can't have the joint meeting with aboriginal affairs on June 6, I'm suggesting that we get someone from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada or the Native Women's Association to come and present.

I will submit possible calendar changes to the committee. We are trying to get our joint meetings. Part of the problem for the meeting with the aboriginal affairs committee is that we're meeting at very similar times, and we haven't been able to get everybody to agree.

The specific issue that we wanted to discuss with the aboriginal affairs committee was on matrimonial real property rights. I want to reconfirm that, so we can narrow down the agenda.

On justice, they've asked us exactly what issues we wanted to have a joint discussion on. I believe, Ms. Mourani, it was violence against women specifically that you wanted to have a joint meeting on.

We're going to continue to move forward on that. We haven't been able to confirm the dates with them yet. We may have to end up with an extra meeting, over and above our two meetings, in order to be able to get a time together with them.

Minister Oda has indicated her great interest to come before the committee. We have tentatively booked June 22 with the minister. If necessary, we may have to try to find another time that accommodates the minister, because I think it's very important that she come to see us before we rise for the summer. We'll send out tentative changes to what might be on the schedule for everybody's consideration, if that's all right.

We have several motions on the table, which were distributed last week. We also have two operational budget requests that tie into the study on matrimonial property rights, as well as the study on economic security of women, which would need approval from the committee. We can do that next week or on Thursday, if you want to have a look at these. We can deal with them on Thursday when you've had a chance to go over them a little further.

We have three motions as well: one each from Ms. Mourani, Ms. Minna, and Ms. Mathysen. But we have one more item of housekeeping business before we deal with the motions.

We have a couple of routine motions. I think they've all been distributed, including adding "and the government", regarding a quorum to hold meetings to review and publish evidence. There need to be at least three members present, including a member of the opposition and the government.

We need a mover for that motion.

Mr. Stanton.

• (1050)

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I so move.

The Chair: Let me read it out, and then we'll give you a copy of it, but you should always have a copy in front of you: That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present, provided that at least 3 members are present, including a member of the opposition and a member of the government party.

Is everybody in agreement with that? Mr. Stanton moved it. It was a technicality that we had to make sure we corrected.

Ms. Mourani and Ms. Bourgeois, I'm going to ask the clerk to read it in French.

Do you now have it in front of you?

[Translation]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Michelle Tittley): The motion reads as follows:

That the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence when a quorum is not present, provided at least three members are present, including one member of the official opposition and one government member.

[English]

The Chair: It was something we talked about at length when we had our initial meeting. We just wanted to make sure it was very clear that it included someone from the government as well.

Can we have a mover for that motion? I need a mover.

Yes, Ms. Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: We have some questions to ask, Madam chair.

If I recall correctly, these motions were part and parcel of the motions adopted at our first organizational meeting. Does motion 2 indirectly mean that when we schedule meetings to hear witnesses, everybody will be automatically notified, and that regardless of whether or not there is a quorum, what is scheduled will simply go ahead, even if we are absent? Is that correct?

[English]

The Chair: Definitely.

Yes, Ms. Bourgeois.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Madam chair, who moved that motion?

[English]

The Chair: These were standard motions that we had been dealing with previously.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Fine, but who moved that motion this morning? We've never seen it before.

[English]

The Chair: It came from the clerk. It just needed to be clarified from when we dealt with our initial motions at our second meeting. The clerk brought it forward as a housekeeping item just to make sure they were very clear on this.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Fine. I can understand that she wants to clarify the situation. Then, that would mean that this motion amends another. I don't have any problem with having three members of the committee present, but why must there absolutely be one member from the opposition and one government member?

We must hold a meeting on the condition that three members of the committee be present, period. If, at some point, someone wants to boycott a meeting, government members simply have to stay away, and we will not be able to hold a meeting. Why not specify: « that three members be present », and leave it at that?

[English]

The Chair: I believe this has had quite lengthy discussions. If there's disagreement, may I suggest that we hold this over and put it on the agenda for next week.

We had suggested that we leave the last 15 minutes of our meeting so that we have time to do some business, even when we have presenters. May I suggest that maybe we should have that at 10:30 so it leaves us sufficient time to do some committee business as well. So rather than 10:45, we'll make that 10:30. We'll have an hour and a half of witnesses and then a half an hour to discuss business. We'll hold this over.

Are you okay, Ms. Bourgeois and Ms. Mourani, with motion 1 concerning the presence of members' staff at in camera meetings, or should we hold that one off until next week as well?

I'm going to suggest we hold motions 1 and 2 until next Thursday, and we'll deal with them then. All right?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: There are several other motions on the table. Does someone want these to be dealt with today or at a later time? We have five minutes of our meeting left.

Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: If we are looking at passing motions to amend a previous motion, may I suggest that we have a copy of the previous motion so we know what the amendment actually does.

The Chair: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: I have two questions, Madam Chair.

Just to go back for a second, because I didn't quite understand the operational budget that you mentioned, are we putting this off for discussion to another time?

•(1055)

The Chair: Yes, we're going to hold this off until next week. You have it to look at between now and Thursday.

Hon. Maria Minna: Okay. My only question would be, so that the information would be here for next week.... You stated that we were discussing finances to cover costs to study the matrimonial property rights, and then you said economic security of women, but that's not here. I only have the one.

The Chair: You should have two in front of you. One is the study on matrimonial property rights of aboriginal women and the other operational budget issue that we will discuss on Thursday is the study on economic issues of women. These are studies that we had already approved.

Hon. Maria Minna: Yes, I appreciate that. It's just that I didn't see the second one, and that's why I was asking.

The Chair: It should be there.

Hon. Maria Minna: Okay. Well, I don't have it, so maybe we can get it.

The Chair: Yes, please make sure you have both of them.

Hon. Maria Minna: I would suggest that we start with Ms. Mourani's motion and see how far we get. I don't think that in five minutes we will get very far; that's my only concern. Maybe we need to set up a separate time to clear up the backlog of these motions and

stuff so we can continue with discussing and doing the work that we are doing. Otherwise we're going to get bogged down.

The Chair: Exactly.

Hon. Maria Minna: It's just a suggestion.

The Chair: My concern is now with our timeline. We have three motions in front of us, and I think they may require some discussion and debate, and there is very limited time left in our meeting.

Mr. Stanton, go ahead, please.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Madam Chair, it might be advantageous to consider the second and third motions in order, and we might be able to expedite those two. I certainly have a lot more questions on the pay equity motion, but if we can expedite the second and third, we could at least get those done and possibly have only one to carry over.

The Chair: There is a motion by Ms. Minna on the table, which everyone has in front of them. Do you want to move that, Ms. Minna?

Hon. Maria Minna: Yes, I so move, Madam Chair.

The Chair: All those in favour of initiating that study?

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

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Mathysen's motion is about senior women having a right to a fulfilling life. Does everybody have that in front of them?

Sorry, Ms. Mourani, is it relating to Ms. Minna's motion?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Madam Chair, how are motions prioritized? Are they ranked according to when they reached the clerk? How does it work, exactly?

[*English*]

The Chair: The order is determined by the order in which the clerk receives the motions. In future, they may need to be marked with a time stamp so we can be sure of the time they arrived.

Yes, Ms. Mourani.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Ms. Tittley, I am wondering if we can agree on the fact that it was my motion that was tabled first. I believe that is the case. Therefore, my motion should be discussed first.

[*English*]

The Chair: The only difficulty, Ms. Mourani, is that we were looking at a clock that has two minutes. Ms. Minna's motion and Ms. Mathysen's motions are basically along the same lines as issues that we had already discussed as a committee and agreed on.

Further discussion of your motion on pay equity has been requested by other members of our group here. That will take more time, so I suggest we hold the issue of pay equity over until Thursday.

Ms. Minna's has already passed. If everyone is in agreement to Ms. Mathysen's... otherwise we have to leave for the next committee to come. We can discuss your motion on Thursday; we do not have time now, as we've run out of time.

Yes, Ms. Guergis.

Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): I was just wanting to make a friendly amendment to Ms. Mathysen's motion. You've included income splitting in this, and income splitting is under the finance department, so I think it would be appropriate to have the experts from Finance discuss the income splitting part of your motion.

The Chair: Is that agreed? All those in favour?

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

On Thursday, as one of our first pieces of business, we will deal with Ms. Mourani's motion, which we'll have on the table.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: What I understand, Madam Chair, is that you are breaking a rule. The rule is that the first motion to be received by the clerk is debated first. Therefore, you are breaking a rule, and I find this undemocratic. I am sorry, Madam Chair, I do not understand why you are saying my motion would open a lengthy debate, because members of this committee have already participated in a debate on pay equity in another committee. We all agreed — perhaps not everyone, but the majority of opposition members agreed — to table a motion on pay equity. You are saying that we did not discuss this subject, whereas, indeed, it was discussed. In fact, you yourself have tabled reports dealing with pay equity. Madam Chair, I am wondering what exactly is going on.

• (1100)

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Mourani, Mr. Stanton had requested time to debate this motion and had suggested the other two motions were basically the things that we had already agreed upon. But this motion was going to require debate, so we could not deal with it today because it's 11 o'clock and the committee room is now to be taken

over by the next committee. So we do not have the time, not because we didn't want to put it first but because there isn't the time to debate this.

The other two have been passed; this one needs time. There was a request by Mr. Stanton to do that.

Yes, Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: Madam Chair, I'm wondering if as a compromise Madame Mourani would agree that we would deal with this motion first before we have witnesses at the next meeting, as opposed to delaying it. That way we are able to actually get done with it instead of—

The Chair: I suggested that we would do this as the first piece of business on Thursday morning at our first meeting.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Madam Chair, it is 11 o'clock. I can very well make the same argument. I would like to discuss the motions at hand. We do not have time to discuss anything, it is 11 o'clock, Madam Chair. So I could say the same thing. We have to discuss other motions.

[*English*]

The Chair: Unfortunately, Ms. Mourani, I have to call the meeting to an end. It is 11 o'clock. We will deal with your motion as the first order of business on Thursday morning at 9 o'clock.

Thank you all very much.

Hon. Maria Minna: Madam Chair, on a point of order, though, can I just say, to clarify for Madame Mourani, to make things easier for all of us the next time, that as motions come in we could just be told, and then let's just deal with them in order. That makes life easier for all of us.

The Chair: Yes. We're going to stamp them with the time when they come in.

The meeting is adjourned.

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