



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

HUMA • NUMBER 028 • 2nd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

—

Chair

Mr. Dean Allison

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

• (0905)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.)): Welcome, everyone, to the 28th meeting of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities on Wednesday, May 13, 2009 from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

Today, the committee is in Montreal as it begins a tour across Canada on the issue of poverty. In the Atlantic provinces, we went to Halifax and Moncton. Today, we are in Montreal, and in a few days, we will be in Toronto. In the fall, we will travel to western Canada and the far north. This is the start of our tour.

Our goal is to hear from Canadians, especially the people on the ground, on the issue of poverty. Obviously, it is important to know about the problems that exist, and you are the people who know the most about them, but we would prefer to hear your recommendations about the role the Government of Canada could play in addressing this problem. This is important to us.

The committee's analyst, Mr. Kerr, is taking notes. The ultimate goal of this meeting and many others that have taken place in Ottawa is to prepare a report that will be approved by all members of the committee. Once that report has been prepared, it will be tabled in the House of Commons and submitted to the Minister of Human Resources, who will have to respond to it within a prescribed time frame.

We have a number of groups with us. Around the table are representatives of all the parties in the House of Commons: for the government, Mr. Lobb and Mr. Komarnicki; for the official opposition, Ms. Maria Minna; for the Bloc Québécois, Ms. Beaudin; and for the NDP, Mr. Mulcair. I understand that Mr. Lessard will be joining us later. As vice-chair of the committee, I am a member of the Liberal Party of Canada.

The first part of the session will end at 10:30 a.m. This is how we will proceed. I will call one group at a time, and you will each have five minutes to read your brief. If two people are going to read the brief, you will have to share your five minutes. Once everyone has finished, each political party will have seven minutes to ask questions and hear answers. Once that is done, we will start another round where each party will have five minutes.

On our list, we have Ghislain Picard of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, Mélanie Gauvin of the group Au bas de l'échelle, Mr. Lafrenière and Ms. de Sève of the Centrale des

syndicats du Québec, Ms. McLeod and Ms. St-Martin of AGAPE, and Claude Piché and Normand Pépin of the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques.

According to my list, we are going to begin with Mr. Picard of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador. Again, welcome to our meeting.

• (0910)

Chief Ghislain Picard (Chief, Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador): Thank you very much.

[Witness speaks in his own language.]

Madam Vice-Chair, ladies and gentlemen of the committee, good morning.

We submitted a copy of the brief from the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador. I will not read it, as I would prefer to talk more about the context in which we are making our representation to your committee this morning.

I would like to begin by saying that I feel somewhat helpless. This is not the first time I have represented the first nations of Quebec and Labrador before a standing committee or a commission of the National Assembly of Quebec. We are becoming increasingly weary as we make representations in the appropriate forums and we see that, in the end, very little is done to change the situation of the communities we represent.

It was in part for this reason that, last fall, the chiefs I represent took a fairly hard line that nonetheless reflects the helplessness I spoke about earlier. Our aim is to act rather than react, which we no doubt have done a bit too often in the past. The chiefs clearly indicated that we have the mandate to try to move things along more quickly and to present the federal and provincial governments with a situation that might force them both to address the grievances we have been sharing for too long.

Moreover, what I am saying is backed by various reports that have been drafted and updated more than once. The Auditor General, Sheila Fraser, described the housing situation in first nations communities as follows:

Many First Nations are facing a housing crisis. Unless action is taken quickly, the already unacceptable housing conditions are only going to get worse, with population growth on reserve that is twice the Canadian average.

This is just one of many examples that show that there are urgent needs in the communities we represent. Of course, I speak only for the first nations of Quebec and Labrador, but it is clear that the situation across the country is similar.

The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador consists of some 40 chiefs in these two regions and is supported by various commissions. The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission and the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec are certainly the two commissions with the most direct interest in the issues that concern us.

In October 2006, with the help of civil society in Quebec, the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada, we organized a socio-economic forum whose main objective was to shed light on issues pertaining to socio-economic conditions in our communities, including housing, education, health and many other areas.

• (0915)

We brought together more than 500 participants for a three-day meeting designed to call directly on the governments and civil society in Quebec to find ways to deal with the situation described in the brief that was submitted to you.

Clearly, two years later, despite our periodic attempts at making progress reports, we have to admit that we are still very far from our objectives. One of the messages that was conveyed at the socio-economic forum was that, to find a way to deal with the situation of the peoples and the communities we represent, it was necessary to improve the prospects for those communities over 10 years. That meant creating 10,000 jobs, building 10,000 new homes and graduating at least 10,000 new students in our communities.

According to demographic data, our population is much younger than the overall population of Canada. Individuals under the age of 25 account for approximately 40% of our population, but only 30% or 31% of the population of Quebec.

You have received specific recommendations concerning areas such as health, employment and training. I will not take the time to list the recommendations. I could certainly answer any questions you might have about our position. In our brief, we have taken the trouble to quote from reports by the federal government and the Government of Quebec that confirm that the first nations we represent are among the poorest of the poor. I will conclude on this note, because we can never say often enough that the human development index ranks our communities 70th, while Canada as a whole ranks 8th. There is therefore a huge difference between the quality of life that Canadian society as a whole enjoys and the quality of life in the communities we represent.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Mr. Picard, seeing you takes me back a number of years.

We have received a brief from Mr. Picard in both official languages. I believe everyone has a copy, and we will take note of it. Thank you.

I now give the floor to Mélanie Gauvin of Au bas de l'échelle.

Mrs. Mélanie Gauvin (National Spokesperson, Front de défense des non-syndiqués, Au bas de l'échelle):

Good morning. First, I thank you for inviting us, and I must say that unfortunately, we did not bring a brief. We were invited to participate only at the end of last week. If necessary, we would have no problem sending in a document.

Au bas de l'échelle is an organization that defends the rights of non-unionized workers. We have two main areas of interest. The first is providing information to individuals who have problems at work. We offer various information services over the telephone and also offer information sessions on the Quebec Labour Standards Act to individuals who have filed psychological harassment complaints. We also provide information to people who are in the middle of a mediation process. Our second area of interest is getting involved politically and participating in public consultations. We have published a number of legal analyses, and also educational materials on labour laws.

As part of these consultations, we would like to draw your attention to two important issues that could be factors in poverty: nonstandard employment and minimum wage. First, I will talk about labour casualization as a cause of poverty. By labour casualization, I mean the increased number of types and statuses of jobs, or people who work part time, on call, who have contract or temporary jobs, people who work from home or for a temporary help agency—any job that is not stable, generally full time, and indeterminate.

In 2008, 37% of jobs in Quebec and in Canada were nonstandard. Why do we call these jobs nonstandard? First, they generally offer lower wages. Second, they also offer less stability and job security, they offer limited or non-existent access to benefits and training, and, to a degree, they complicate the right of association and the right to collective bargaining. There is a difference in the way regular, permanent employees of a company are treated, and the way the others, who have unstable employment, are treated.

I would like to throw out a few figures to give you some examples. For non-unionized employees, the average hourly wage for a permanent employee is \$17.51, while the average hourly wage for a short-term employee is \$13.32. That is a difference of 24%. In the business sector, there is a wage gap of 40% between full-time and part-time workers. In public administration, there is a difference of 35%, and in the manufacturing sector, a difference of 33%. For workers hired through temporary help agencies, the gap is even wider. People who are hired through temporary help agencies earn 40% less than permanent employees. That is why we are calling for the necessary changes to the Quebec Labour Standards Act to ensure that everyone is treated equally, and to restrict the increase in numbers of casual jobs and to limit the advantages that companies gain by offering these types of jobs.

We called for the same thing during consultations in October 2005, on the reform of Part III of the Canada Labour Code, and we will soon be making similar recommendations in the discussion paper on the Canada Labour Code labour standards review.

• (0920)

So that we can ensure that everyone is treated equally, the Quebec Labour Standards Act and the Canada Labour Code need to establish that an employer cannot provide working conditions to an employee that are inferior to those provided to workers doing a comparable job for the same company, for the following reasons: if this person usually works fewer hours per week; if this person was hired through an employability program or measure covered by legislation; if this person is a temporary, casual or on-call employee; if this person was hired through a temporary help agency; or if this person works outside the work building. We are also calling for companies to pay wage compensation that is proportional to the loss in benefits to which other employees of the company are entitled.

Recently in Quebec—and it is similar in the other Canadian provinces—we have seen some employers that try to reduce costs and increase flexibility, and end up creating inequalities based on the type or status of the job, which can make it difficult for people to access decent jobs, and explains part of the problem with poverty among workers.

Another important part of access to decent work is the minimum wage to which a worker is entitled in exchange for work done. I will be talking about minimum wage.

Now, the minimum wage—

• (0925)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Your five minutes are up. You may finish your speech.

Mrs. Mélanie Gauvin: In conclusion, minimum wage is keeping workers in poverty. A person who works 40 hours a week is approximately 23% below the poverty line. According to Statistics Canada, that is before taxes, and for a single person. We are calling for minimum wage in Quebec and the rest of Canada to be increased to the poverty line. We are asking that a minimum wage be reinstated in the Canada Labour Code. The Arthurs report, reviewing federal labour standards, agreed with this point.

An improvement to the federal labour standards is very important for workers who have jobs in sectors under federal jurisdiction, and

also for those across Canada in sectors under provincial jurisdiction. The Canada Labour Code serves as a model for provincial legislation.

Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Thank you, Mrs. Gauvin. You have a document in front of you that I assume is in French. Would it be possible to translate at least the part with the recommendations regarding the role of government, and to have it sent to us?

Mrs. Mélanie Gauvin: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Send us the text, and we will have it translated. I cannot pass around any documents that are not in both official languages.

Mrs. Mélanie Gauvin: Perfect.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Send it to the clerk and we will take care of it.

Mrs. Mélanie Gauvin: Okay.

We will also give the clerk our comments on the reform of the Canada Labour Code.

Would you like us to send our speaking notes? They discuss our recommendations, and even go into more detail in some cases.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Yes. That is the document we would like to have.

Mr. Mulcair.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): In fact, it is not accurate to say that she cannot pass around the document. She can give us the French version of her text today, and the committee can have the document translated. As committee chair, you cannot distribute a document that is not bilingual, but we can receive a document from her that is in French.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Mr. Mulcair, the clerk has informed me that this is a routine motion. What Mrs. Gauvin can do—it is her right—is give a printed copy to the committee members once the committee has finished sitting. That is acceptable. However, she can only distribute it to members if the document is bilingual.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: The rule is that she can distribute what she wants to whom she wants.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Not during the sitting, Mr. Mulcair.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: The committee cannot distribute it.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Not while the committee is sitting.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: She could have given it right before, if we had told her.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Not during the sitting.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: She could have given it right before, if we had told her.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): There was a motion stating that documents cannot be distributed if they are not in both languages. I think we are spending the committee's time on something that is not very important.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: It is important for her to be able to share her documents, Ms. Folco.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): If she wants to, Ms. Gauvin may hand out her documents after the meeting.

When you rise, you can give them to the committee members. There is no problem with that. You can give the clerk the most important of the two documents. We will have it translated and will distribute it to all the committee members.

Thank you, Ms. Gauvin.

We will now hear from Daniel Lafrenière and Nicole de Sève from the Centrale des syndicats du Québec.

Mr. Daniel Lafrenière (Vice-President, Centrale des syndicats du Québec): Thank you, Madam Vice-Chair.

Good morning, committee members.

First, I will give a brief introduction on who we are. The Centrale des syndicats du Québec is a labour organization. It is the third-largest labour confederation in Quebec. It represents more than 100,000 people in the fields of education, health and social services, culture, community services and childcare.

In addition to making recommendations on collective agreement negotiations, we have actively campaigned as an agent of social reform in Quebec, and Canada, to have legislation passed that improves the wages of Canadians and Quebecers, and the living situations that enable them to exercise their rights as citizens.

We would like to take this opportunity today as part of our organization's mission to make some recommendations. We have three recommendations to make today.

Our opening statement will focus on the situation of aboriginal people. The CSQ represents the people who work on the Cree and Kativik school boards. We represent more than 2,000 members in these communities. I could go over many details that Mr. Picard brought up earlier, but I will stick to a few of them. A lot of things were said. In the field of education, in particular, we have a long way to go. You will note that our recommendations will go in that direction.

We want to point out that section 25 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, adopted in 1982, states that with respect to treaty rights and freedoms, Part II of the Canadian Constitution affirms the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada. In the future, these rights can no longer be unilaterally extinguished. To be recognized, these rights must be negotiated or recognized by a court. It was already mentioned that for rights to be existing, one must be in a position to exercise them. We agree with this.

In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples issued a number of recommendations, in particular, ones calling on parties to resolve land claims, extend the land base of aboriginal communities and improve the living conditions in these communities.

That same year, the Supreme Court of Canada gave the definition of an aboriginal right protected under the Canadian Constitution in the Van der Peet ruling. Even the Canadian government is slow to enforce the Commission's resolutions and refuses to ratify the international convention on the rights of aboriginal peoples.

Therefore, we believe that the first thing this government needs to do is to sign the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That is our first recommendation.

Our second recommendation for the Canadian government is to allocate the money needed to improve the living and housing conditions in aboriginal communities, and to the improve funding for infrastructure in these communities. I very strongly support what Chief Picard said earlier.

Need I point out that there are still aboriginal communities that do not have access to running water or electricity? In most communities, families are packed into homes that become small because of the size of the families and the shortage of housing.

Need I point out that aboriginals have a functional illiteracy rate that is four times higher than the Quebec rate, an infant mortality rate that is three and a half times higher, a suicide rate that is six times higher for young people under 20, and incomes that are 33% lower? The situation is unfortunately not much different today. In some communities, the suicide rate in adolescents and young adults is 20 times higher than the rate in the rest of Canada.

Many studies, and often tragedies, have shown that young aboriginals are more often exposed to problems such as alcohol abuse and drug addiction. Combined with pervasive poverty, persistent racism, and a legacy of colonialism, aboriginal peoples have been caught in a cycle that has been perpetuated across generations. This was a quote from an excerpt of Roy Romanow's report. In light of this, the education of young aboriginal people becomes a serious challenge.

● (0930)

In Quebec, there are two types of communities: treaty communities, those that signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, which have their own school boards; and non-treaty communities, which receive funding from the federal government and are governed by band councils. In our third recommendation, we are calling on the Canadian government to grant funding to non-treaty schools that is comparable to the funding of treaty schools. Band schools are currently subject to an outdated funding formula that disregards costs.

I will share with you some interesting statistics. I encourage the committee's researcher to take note. In our schools, there are zero dollars for the integration of technology, zero dollars for school libraries, zero dollars for vocational courses in high school, zero dollars for sport and leisure extracurricular activities, zero dollars for adapting to the education reforms implemented in Quebec, and zero dollars for young people to receive a diversified curriculum. The unemployment rate among young first nations people is 32%, three times the rate among non-aboriginals in Quebec, and 49% of them do not have a high school diploma.

We cannot afford to wait any longer. The Canadian government can invest in infrastructures to face the economic crisis, but it can and must immediately invest in aboriginal communities to face the humanitarian crisis they are experiencing. This is close to home. It is not happening in another country; it is in ours.

Thank you.

● (0935)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Ms. de Sève, if I understand correctly, you have nothing to add. It is too soon. Thank you.

We will now hear from Betty McLeod and Sylvie St-Martin, from the organization AGAPE.

Mrs. Betty McLeod (Treasurer, AGAPE): Good morning, and thank you for having us today.

I apologize; we do not have any documents to distribute. I was just invited. I was asked to appear and I am here. I will send a briefing note shortly. It will be a bit more detailed than the speech I will give in the five minutes I have been allotted.

If you do not mind, I will speak in English, since that is my first language.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Of course. That is one of Canada's two official languages.

Mrs. Betty McLeod: I represent the non-profit organization AGAPE, which serves English-speaking and multicultural communities in Laval.

[English]

AGAPE is the one English-speaking organization serving all the needs of the community.

In Laval, the situation has deteriorated greatly over the past 20 to 25 years. Laval was considered one of the richest cities in Quebec. Unfortunately, the homeless situation has increased drastically over the past few years, and many of our homeless, especially young people, have taken refuge in Laval, hoping to find a little bit of security there, compared to the great cities like Quebec and Montreal.

We meet these homeless people on a regular basis. Some of them come from as far away as Halifax, Moncton, and Toronto because they feel it's safer here, which surely doesn't help the situation in Laval. Because of the increase in the homeless situation, crime rates are on the rise, material needs are on the rise, food is lacking, and so on, and for all of that, my organization is involved in attempting to put out some small fires.

We've applied recently for a grant to open a centre to receive these homeless and change their way of life, which is going to be quite a task for us, but we're up for the job. However, we have a serious problem with the newly arrived immigrants, the refugees in waiting. These people come to Montreal and decide to come to Laval because, again, they think it's a safer area to live in. These refugees in waiting find themselves turned down by landlords because they're not a sure rent. They're turned down by society because they're coming from another country. When we talk about racism, we know what we're talking about. Many of them have to take to the streets because they can't find a place to live. This is also where we come in.

I'm going to tell you in a few words that the waiting period for a refugee in waiting to get a temporary work permit is too long. We would like to recommend that we activate files to get these people on the job market. There are many ways of finding work in Laval. These people are willing to work for minimum wage as long as they can survive. They do not wish to fall into the cracks of society and live on social welfare, but right now they're trapped on welfare, with a minimum income. Some of them come to us with their bags, looking for a place to live.

It's very important that we activate their files and also that we activate their dossiers: are we going to keep them or not? Sometimes it takes four to five years. During that period of four or five years, these people, again, lack every essential for the needs in their lives.

I'm sorry. I prepared these notes as I came in this morning and I know that I'm forgetting half of the stuff. I could talk to you all day about AGAPE. People like Raymonde and Tom really know what I'm talking about.

Reviewing the files sometimes takes four years or six years. The needs increase and the problems increase. The owners don't want to deal with people who have no money. As you know, the landlords don't want to deal with anybody who is poor.

On the other situation with young kids, the homeless youth, we have to find ways and means to get these people out of their situations. Here's what I would recommend. I know it's not going to happen, but I would love to see senior members of Parliament come and spend a couple of days—in my case, in Laval, and also with the people of the first nations—and live what we go through every day, live the situations that we find ourselves in, and meet the homeless people we meet. They could meet them and ask them why they're on the street. Some of them have a very good reason.

Besides activating those files, visible minorities are a problem, in that you know that racism exists and you know that in Laval it's really on the rise, and it is a problem to try to find a better way of life for these people. I don't know what we can do about that, but I'm submitting it to you.

I'm putting the ball in your court, Madam Folco, and we'll talk about it.

Laval received \$919,000 from 2007 to 2009 to serve the homeless projects, which is a far cry from the needs that we have.

Thank you.

● (0940)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Thank you very much, Madam McLeod.

Madam St-Martin, do you wish to add anything? There will be questions.

[Translation]

We will now hear from the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques.

Mr. Faucher.

Mr. Claude Faucher (Vice-President, Centrale des syndicats démocratiques): I will make the general presentation and my colleague will be able to answer questions as required.

The CSD is a congress of unions located in Quebec. We represent 70,000 workers. While we have workers from the health and social services network and from municipalities, we are mainly involved in the private sector. The CSD is also a member of the Collective for a Poverty-Free Quebec. As such, we completely support the proposals that have been made by previous speakers.

Additionally, we think that there are other ways to fight poverty and to prevent people from becoming poor even though they may not currently be. As an example, the employment insurance program could be enhanced to allow people to live a little better, with a little more dignity. Consider the eligibility criteria that are not the same everywhere because they depend on the regional unemployment rate. We feel that they should be made uniform and that a total of 360 hours of work should qualify people for employment insurance. Other provisions should be corrected, such as the length of the benefit period, which should be 50 weeks in all cases, and the benefit rate, which should be 60% in all cases. As one political party has proposed, the waiting period could also be eliminated.

This combination of changes to the employment insurance program would result in a large number of those without work in the current financial crisis having a marginally decent income. Another measure that is part of the joint platform of Quebec's four labour congresses is the creation of an income support program for older workers.

You are well aware that, at the moment, the forestry and manufacturing sectors are severely affected, that a number of businesses are closing down, and that there are a number of mass layoffs. When you are young, properly educated and with marketable skills, everything is fine, you can always try to find a job as long as jobs are available in your area. But, when you reach a certain age—an age that we have set at 55 and older—it is more difficult to find a job.

In fact, older workers definitely face unspoken discrimination as they look for jobs. In addition, society being what it is, people at that certain age today very often left school young and worked only in one company doing one very specific task. Now, those people do not have the necessary skills to get a reasonable and well paying job close to their homes. For those people, it is a crisis. They have to say goodbye to a job that they have done for a very long time and that they have enjoyed, at the same time as they have contributed to the advancement of society with their taxes and their efforts. They also feel the loss in the complete helplessness they feel without the

necessary skills to quickly find a reasonable job close to their homes. What happens to these people? They are completely disillusioned by the system and, once they can no longer receive employment insurance, what prospects do they have? Do they have to go on welfare as a last resort? It is possible.

Then, some of them have managed to earn good salaries working in manufacturing and forestry. Over the years, they have managed to put a little money aside, which they have used to acquire some property, a little house, a car, perhaps even a cottage, who knows? When the time comes to apply for welfare, they have to get rid of their possessions, as if it was a sin to have acquired them. But they are caught up in a mass layoff because their companies have shut down, for which they bear absolutely no responsibility.

● (0945)

So they are left high and dry; something has to be done for them because they are powerless and do not have the means to help themselves. Young people today are fine because they can go on the Internet, but for people who are 55, 60, 62 years old, it is not quite so simple. Those are the people that we have to help.

Our proposal is that, when a person reaches 55 years of age or more and is part of a collective dismissal, as defined in the Act Respecting Labour Standards—a layoff involving not fewer than 10 employees of the same establishment in the course of two consecutive months, or when the establishment closes—that person could, if he or she has worked for 10 years in the last 30...

You may ask why 10 years in the last 30. It is simple. Labour casualization is now a factor. Jobs have become less and less secure over the years and people have been forced to do only insecure work, as my colleague has described. As a result, these people, often women, have not been able to work continuously all through those last 30 years. We feel that, as long as they have worked for 10 years or so in the last 30, they should be eligible for an income support program for older workers, if the skills that they have already acquired and those required by the current labour market do not match and, as a result, they cannot find a reasonably well-paying job.

We are not asking the federal government to pay the entire bill. We have already approached the Quebec government, and they have agreed to establish a program and to contribute 30% of the costs. It is now up to the federal government to buy into a program like that and to contribute 70% of the costs.

This did not come out of thin air. In the 1970s, programs already existed for textile and clothing workers. Later, the idea spread to asbestos and to regions coping with economic difficulty, but that was abolished in 1997. The idea could be revived as a new income support program for older workers.

That would allow them to live with dignity until the normal retirement age of 65, without being forced to get rid of their little nest egg and to feel inadequate because they do not have the means and the knowledge to be able to find a job worthy of the name close to their home.

There is also the whole question of social housing. That came up a little earlier. We could deal with that.

In conclusion, the Canada Health Act is now widely seen to be of little value and people are looking for all sorts of ways to be able to privatize. The privatization of health care restricts access to health care. We think that the privatization door should be locked and bolted and that the Canada Health Act should be applied in its entirety so that people cannot start to get rich on the backs of the sick.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Thank you, Mr. Faucher.

We have finished the first presentations. You will now be asked questions.

I remind you that you have seven minutes in total for both the question and the answer.

Ms. Minna.

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

Thank you for your presentation this morning.

I concur with almost everything that you said. I have some questions to ask.

• (0950)

[English]

If I may, I will start with Monsieur Picard and Monsieur Lafrenière.

[Translation]

I apologize, I am going to ask my question in English. That will be quicker.

[English]

I don't have any real questions as to the presentation that was made with respect to the needs. That's really obvious with respect to the aboriginal communities.

And, of course, Mr. Lafrenière, as for the presentation you made in terms of the areas of priority, we've looked at these many times before: housing, income security, education, and so on.

My question to both of you is a different one. Is the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs a problem in terms of delivery of the mechanism and how we deal with these issues in this country? I am curious to see whether or not we're stuck in a rut in terms of the administrative mechanism we're using in interfacing with these issues and with the communities. Is there a different way of doing it that would be more effective?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): To whom is the question directed?

Hon. Maria Minna: It's to both Mr. Picard and Mr. Lafrenière.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Mr. Picard.

Vice-Chief Ghislain Picard: Thank you.

I can try to start answering that question, if I understood it correctly.

The question has certainly been documented more than once over the last 15, 20, 25 or 30 years. It was also likely analyzed a number of times by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

The problem lies mainly in the fact that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development really has the final say over everything to do with every area of activity in our communities. That is what has to change. Unfortunately, that is what is lacking in the relationship between the federal government and our communities. The relationship is one-sided: the only side that counts is the side that provides the resources. Almost all the receiving is done by our communities. Even those resources are inadequate.

First of all, it has to be clearly determined whether the resources are meeting the need. As an example, I am going to use the comparatively recent announcement, from a little earlier this year, of several million dollars for housing. It means about \$45 million over the next two years for our region of Quebec.

Once again, the criteria for assigning those amounts are determined by the federal government. But, together with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, we are involved in a process that is supposed to give us a voice. But it does not translate into concrete measures that correspond to the reality of our communities as we live it. That is what makes me say that the measures being announced are still somewhat inadequate.

The last thing that I would like to say about this is that intentions are good, but unfortunately, they do not correspond to the realities of the housing. We have said it and we have documented it: in Québec alone, to meet our housing needs, 8,000 new houses would have to be built tomorrow morning. That shows that the budgeted \$45 million are a long way from the \$400 million we need.

[English]

Hon. Maria Minna: Thank you.

[Translation]

Thank you.

That gives me a clear answer, Mr. Lafrenière.

Very quickly, because I only have seven minutes left...

Mrs. Nicole de Sève (Manager, Social issues, Centrale des syndicats du Québec): My answer will be very clear.

The education funding formula for non-conventioned communities, for band-run schools, that is, was developed in 1998. It does not take into account technological development, as an example. The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador did an outstanding job on this. The supporting figures make it glaringly obvious. There are new areas of professional training that did not previously exist. So the formula has not even been indexed.

In addition, the resources are not adequate to cover the costs of salaries, facilities, textbooks and all the equipment that a school needs to provide quality education.

So we have to ask the question: do we want to keep our young people ignorant? By keeping them ignorant, we keep them poor.

• (0955)

Hon. Maria Minna: I understand. Thank you.

[English]

My next question is for Madam Gauvin.

You were talking about part-time work and so on, and I understand the issue very well. Women, as we all know, tend to be the larger number of the workers who are in part-time work. Also, in the most recent figures in the last month, the job creation has been in the self-employed area where, of course, people don't have pensions and don't have EI and what have you, because they're not covered yet.

Does your research show what is happening right now to women, especially immigrant women and other minorities, in this particular area with respect to their ability to survive the economic downturn in regard to their inability to collect EI or other programs because of their in-and-out precarious situation? Have you done any studies that look specifically at the most vulnerable?

[Translation]

Mrs. Mélanie Gauvin: I do not have the data on employment insurance, but I know that studies dealing with it have been published. They tell us that, for immigrants, especially women, the more recent the immigration, the less stable their situation and therefore, the lower the income.

A male immigrant who has been in Canada for less than five years is slightly better off than a woman in the same situation. In terms of the difference in salary, the worst situation is the immigrant woman who has been in Canada less than five years. These are also often people working for minimum wage. If you compare the salary of a woman in that category to the salary of a Canadian man in a stable job, you can see a considerable gap.

I do not have all the data with me today. But I think it was a study published by Statistics Canada or by the Institut de la statistique du Québec. So it is quite a reliable source. I do not know if that answers your question.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Thank you.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lessard.

You have seven minutes.

Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to find you back in a position that I knew well six years ago. I am going to turn the second part of my time over to Ms. Beaudin.

Welcome and thank you for being with us today.

I would like to start with the situation of the First Nations that Mr. Picard and Mr. Lafrenière spoke about. I will ask Mr. Picard first.

When talking about the standard of living of First Nations, I find it quite troubling that, not only do I have the impression that we are more or less in the same situation as we were at the beginning of the 1980s, I am almost convinced of it. I grew up in northern Quebec. I have had a lot of interaction with Aboriginal nations in my life, mostly the Algonquin, but also the Cree. I feel that I am hearing the same thing as I heard then, particularly before 1990. In 1990, you obtained that kind of commitment from the Canadian government, and it was unanimous. The parties agreed to reduce poverty, and, among the programs designed to achieve that, some specifically targeted First Nations.

I followed the work that you did in Mashteuiatsh in 2006 very closely, as well as the work the following year in Val d'Or. I find it astonishing that, 17 years later, you are still bringing up the question of a lack of information and other basic questions like that. Mr. Picard, you wanted a commitment to create 10,000 jobs for Aboriginal peoples in the first 10 years. When I think about what was done before 1990, I realize that that is what we were saying then as well.

Last night, I read the work done by the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec. I had not had the opportunity to do that before. Once again, I felt that I was going back to the development concerns that were being dealt with back then. In our work, our desire—and I think that all parliamentarians are of the same mind—is to correct that.

How is it that things are not moving forward? For some Aboriginal communities, things have even moved backwards. At least, that is what I see. What is the problem? It is not just about the bucks.

• (1000)

Vice-Chief Ghislain Picard: A lot of it is, as you say, about the bucks. You mentioned the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec. That exists because of agreements that we have been signing with the federal government since 1995. I think that we can recognize—just as I did earlier—that there is some effort in funding for housing. But, if that effort is only 10% or 20% of the real need, it means very little and no concrete steps to meet those needs can be taken.

The same goes for employment and training. Despite the fact that agreements have existed since 1995 and that they are ongoing, even if we are in a transitional period—they are supposed to be renewed in 2010—we see a growing deficit over the years because the amounts that we receive are not indexed. For example, to reflect our communities' specific demographics, if we maintain the same amounts we have been receiving since 1995 and translate them to today's reality, the conclusion has to be that we are working at about 50% of our capacity. But we should be trying to make up that missing percentage so that we can meet the needs. The data shows that the needs are real. The unemployment rate in our community is a little more than 55% at regional level.

Mr. Yves Lessard: What do we have to do differently to make up that difference? Are there things that we have to do differently? Let us understand each other. Certainly, we can see that the Canadian government, the steward of most obligations to Aboriginal peoples, has not done a number of things. But I wonder whether some things should not be done differently.

I want to know if we are about to do all this work for nothing again. I do not blame the native peoples, I am very aware of the Canadian government's responsibility. This is its only real responsibility to Aboriginal people.

Vice-Chief Ghislain Picard: Mr. Lessard, with all due respect to your committee, the people who should be listening are unfortunately not listening. I find that really regrettable, not to say frustrating and shocking. That is why I said at the outset that I am tired of making presentations before standing committees and parliamentary commissions. We give the same speech each time.

In 1992, a commission was established such as we had never seen before. It made more than 400 recommendations to improve the situation in our communities. One of the major recommendations was that the budget of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development at the time should be indexed to about \$1.5 billion. Extend that over the next 20 years and perhaps we may see some changes in our communities. Solving a number of our concerns will require concrete steps, ranging from the UN Declaration on the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples to local land claims.

My own nation has been sitting at a negotiating table for 35 years now and there is no sign on the horizon of a short-term or medium-term solution. Our communities are doing well in this situation in spite of everything, so I feel that we have no other choice but to respect the political process. At the same time, we have to be consistent and we have to take care of the needs expressed by our community. Otherwise, the community will say that the political process is really not producing any results, because the fundamental situation has not changed.

• (1005)

Mr. Yves Lessard: Is the answer not to change the nature of the political responsibility?

Vice-Chief Ghislain Picard: One of the major recommendations of the Royal Commission is that the relationship between the state and our communities must not only be rethought, it must be redesigned.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Thank you.

Mr. Mulcair.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all the participants.

[English]

I am going to start with you, Betty. At the end of your presentation, you were giving some figures with regard to the amount the federal government has spent in Laval. To the extent that the study of the federal contribution to reducing poverty is the subject of today's discussion, could you give us those figures again and tell us why they're lacking?

Mrs. Betty McLeod: Okay. The amount granted to Laval for the homeless program, for the organization, was something like—I could be wrong—\$937,000 or \$900,000. I don't have the exact amount; I have it at work.

There are more than 80 French-speaking charitable organizations in Laval. There is one, AGAPE, that handles the immigration, the refugees, and the needy in regard to those speaking English. That \$900,000 divided by 80 doesn't leave you much money to try to change things and to even attempt to present something.

Of course, there are key organizations that have benefited from the homeless program. We are one of them, for the past 15 years. Laval is so multicultural now, and the area where we are is over 52% English-speaking. Overall in the city of Laval, 18% of the population is English-speaking, so the needs are there. Also, when we say "population" we don't count the homeless, because they're hiding, and there are many of them. It's not because you're in Laval that if you're homeless you have to be French-speaking; there are people from the multicultural communities who are homeless.

These are figures that I find deplorable considering the amount of money that's invested to come to the aid of these people. As for our needs alone, at the moment we need to open this centre, and the "immobilization" budget—only immobilization—is \$400,000. We're not talking about renovations, repairs, and upkeep, which we're going to handle ourselves. There's not enough money for us to start this program, but there is a need.

As you know, Tom, being a kid from Chomedey, like me, the needs are exorbitant. The kids are living on the street. Something has to be done. It's deteriorating, and, of course, the City of Laval is deteriorating at the same time.

[Translation]

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: Ms. Gauvin, could you tell us if the current crisis has increased the difficulties and the challenges that the people in Au bas de l'échelle have to face? Is a person less likely to file a harassment complaint because the difficulties in finding a job have become so much greater?

• (1010)

Mrs. Mélanie Gauvin: In cases of psychological harassment, the complainant has not necessarily quit his job. But it does cause a rupture in the working relationship, or, then again, the person may have to go on medical leave.

In general, the crisis has an impact on workers. At our information service, we have noticed an increase in appeals from people who have been laid off, and we are there to defend them. Often, people call us and challenge their termination. What I am going to tell you are my impressions, really. Sometimes, we feel that the crisis may give some employers an excuse to lay off employees. We also see people being laid off who have been working at the same place for 20 years or so. Or an employer tries to hire younger workers that he can pay less than a person who has 20 years of continuous service with him.

In some cases, the crisis lets employers fire people without calling it that. We sense that in the calls we receive.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: That is an excellent answer.

Mr. Picard, if I may, I would first like to say that I understand the fatigue that you expressed in your presentation. Having been on the other side, first in Quebec City as an MNA and a minister, and now in Ottawa, I realize that there can be study after study after study and things still do not change. I recently had the opportunity to go to Kanesatake and visit a seniors' centre. I was able to see for myself how bureaucratic obstacles and lack of money and resources can have a cruel effect on direct services to people.

I think that is what was behind Mr. Lessard's question, in a way. It seems to me that the federal government clearly has a problem with its ineffectiveness in both jurisdiction over, and delivery of, health matters. Objectively, the feds are responsible for veterans' health—a disaster, with health on reserves—also a disaster, and with health in prisons—need I say more?

Is there no way to look for effective people and to work closer together, at least in health care? You have pointed out the crying need for housing very well, but I am trying to focus on health. Could that be part of the solution? They are just not good at it.

Vice-Chief Ghislain Picard: A little earlier, I was talking about the relationship between the federal government, mainly between the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and our communities. The relationship is certainly inadequate. In my opinion, it is the same with Health Canada, which is the other department that has a clear, direct link with our communities. I feel that we have done more than enough to document the deplorable health conditions that our communities face.

That said, I talked about the commissions that we have established. I know this is a trend across the country. Very fortunately, we have people from the communities who know the areas well. They are spending a lot of time looking at ways to respond in our communities. Unfortunately, in a number of cases, we are also behind in prevention. By that, I mean a number of problems like diabetes, which is three times more common than elsewhere. There is also the problem of suicide. Our community is continually called on to respond, but we should also be working on prevention. Unfortunately, resources for that are completely inadequate.

We cannot talk about health without mentioning all the determinants that would allow our communities to have the same standards of health that other Canadians enjoy. These are education, housing and all the other areas of activity in our communities. If we do not attack these other determinants head on, we will always be having to make up ground in comparison to everyone else.

I heard that, two weeks ago, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development visited the Algonquin community of Kitigan Zibi, about 90 minutes from Ottawa. I applaud that initiative. Once they have seen what is happening on the ground, perhaps people in an institution like the House of Commons will eventually get a better understanding of the situation in our communities. Kitigan Zibi is one example, but there are 600 others in the country that deserve some attention from the Parliament of Canada.

I will finish by saying that a study done by Harvard University found that the more institutions look like us and are run by people

from our community, the better their chances of succeeding where governments have failed.

•(1015)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): Thank you, Mr. Mulcair and Mr. Picard.

Mr. Komarnicki, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I certainly appreciated hearing your different and differing points of view. We will take that into consideration. As Ms. McLeod indicated, it's sometimes good to be on the ground and see what's happening, and, as Mr. Picard has indicated, to see the situation at first hand.

I was happy to hear Roy Romanow quoted. Of course, he's from Saskatchewan, and that might excite Mr. Mulcair more than it does me to some extent. He was a premier in our province and also a colleague in the College of Law in Saskatchewan some 40 years ago or more.

I have a number of reserves in my riding. I have visited many of them. There's no question that housing, education, and employment are key. I think or at least instinctively feel that they are the key areas that we need to address if we hope to see much improvement.

I think education plays a significant role. I know that some of the chiefs in my area have built new schools, have obtained teachers, and are focusing a lot of efforts in that regard. I've attended a number of graduation ceremonies and was somewhat saddened to hear, when I talked to the students, that not all of them were planning to go beyond that, but I was very pleased to see the progress that was being made.

I know that money is an issue. If we look at housing, for instance, I see in our current budget that we have \$4 million over two years for new social housing and remediation of existing social housing. There is \$200 million to support social housing in the north. In Budget 2006, we had \$1.4 billion over three years. Some of that went on-reserve and some off-reserve in northern housing.

So my question, I guess, to Mr. Picard, is whether it is just an issue of money. I think we need more money, and the other aspect is the delivery system and how that works. It seems to me that a lot of times you have to go through INAC and through the government to do something that's quite obvious to the people at the band level. Maybe we need to change how that works and devolve more of it to that level. I want to have your thoughts on (a) more money and (b) what may be a better or different delivery mechanism.

I do know that in one of my reserves, they have oil and gas development. They're quite actively involve, and a lot of employment is provided by that. I've seen partnerships among community colleges, employers, and the first nations. They proactively go out and say they'll the training, they'll provide the education, and there will be a job at the end of the road. They work as a team to make that happen.

I'd like your thoughts on dollars, system of delivery, and employment. I'm sad to see that there are too many dropouts from school. I know that, but progress is being made. Sometimes I wonder if it isn't just a matter of continuing in that direction and, over time, we'll see progress.

• (1020)

Chief Ghislain Picard: I would say that our biggest enemy is probably the demographics in our communities, which really play against us. In any normal society, it should be a plus to see so many young people, but in our situation and the situation of first nations across the country, if we're not able to raise the prospects for this segment of our population, then I think we're heading for disaster.

You could have the best delivery system you can have, but if it fails to meet the needs, it doesn't do much. I think a reference was made earlier to the funding formula in education, which is 20 years old. It hasn't been brought up to the level that it should be at today.

Earlier, I was talking about employment and training. There again, despite the fact... Certainly, it has been a plus for us that we were able to come to an agreement with the federal government, and it has been the case for the last 18 years, but if we are operating with the moneys that we had back in 1996-97 and these moneys haven't been indexed, then it doesn't do much, because we're really operating at half our capacity.

Really, in terms of the increase that a province like Quebec gets for its programs in employment and training, for instance, today we should be able to access \$80 million more in terms of training and manpower in our communities, which is not the case. You're always starting the year with a deficit, and certainly, that goes for housing, health, and all the other programs in our communities.

So in response to your question, the delivery system is one thing. The issue of the backlog in many areas is another important aspect not to be forgotten.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: It would seem to me that if our hope is going to be in the youth, I suppose, before things develop.... I know that we do spend a lot of money, for example, in skills upgrading and training, to the tune of \$8.3 billion across the country under provincial-federal agreements.

What you're suggesting and what I'm hearing is that we need to focus particularly on first nations and those inadequacies that have developed, however systemically, over the years, to ensure that we target those particular areas of education, skills training and upgrading, and housing. Is that correct?

Chief Ghislain Picard: I think what we need to target is every situation that deserves attention. We always seem to be thinking from a government perspective. I certainly don't want to speak on behalf of the government, but the situation tells us that if you do this in education, then you have solved the issues of housing and health,

whereas you should be concentrating on all those areas that are falling behind in our communities. Health is certainly one major sector.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): I will go to another round, but I'm going to cut you off at five minutes.

Madam Minna, and then Mr. Lobb. We're coming to an end.

Hon. Maria Minna: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll try to be as quick as I can.

First of all, I want to say that with the issue we are discussing today, nothing is new. I hate to say this, as it sounds cynical, but for me it's not new. I've done these hearings since 1994. We've started changing, to some degree. We had the child tax benefit, which went a certain way, and then we had the child care program, early education and child care. Of course, the issues in housing, education, and health have been around for a very long time.

The issues with respect to the aboriginal communities are not new, as Mr. Picard has very clearly stated. I accept the fact that we need to move on; otherwise, all of those things we've talked about and are discussing today, which are now being exacerbated by the economy, are not going to change.

I have a few questions, but I appreciate very much that they don't cover everything that's been said. I just wanted to say that.

My first question is to Madam Gauvin. I was speaking to some elected members of the Ontario government a week ago. They were telling me that they're starting to receive a lot of phone calls from women who are pregnant and are not being hired now or are being fired, or who are coming back from maternity and are being let go. There's this approach towards women in the labour force as a result of the economic downturn.

Are you finding this discriminatory practice picking up? Have you noticed it in your clientele and in your research? Is it something we need to be aware of? A lot of them are also single mothers, and that's another problem.

• (1025)

[Translation]

Mrs. Mélanie Gauvin: With pregnant women, yes, we have received some appeals on behalf of women who were supposed to return to work following maternity leave but whose positions had been eliminated. I have to say that the Act Respecting Labour Standards protects pregnant women very well. It makes presumptions in their favour that protect their jobs.

Nevertheless, in recent months, we have had appeals on behalf of pregnant women who have had problems. I should also say that I have been working at Au bas de l'échelle for five years. When I started, there were very few appeals from pregnant women who had been terminated or who had not been able to return to work after maternity leave. Lately, we have had several appeals like that.

As I said, the act protects female workers very well. There is a presumption in their favour and, if it happens to them, they can file a complaint on the grounds of a prohibited practice. Usually, employers are equally well informed that it is illegal to dismiss a pregnant woman under Quebec law.

[English]

Hon. Maria Minna: Thank you.

I'd like to go to Mr. Faucher very quickly. I obviously accept the EI changes to 360 hours and 50 weeks and so on; I think that to some degree most of us have now come to the conclusion that it is extremely important to do this.

What I wanted to ask about was with respect to older workers. Could you give us an idea of what kind of income support system you would be talking about? We have WITB, the working income support system, which won't work if people are not working. Then, of course, there is the option of taking the earlier CPP, but that would have to be brought way below, and that penalizes workers later.

So you're probably talking about something completely different. I wonder if you could tell us what that would be. Would the scheme allow people to work? I'm just saying that because my brother's in the same situation now and is desperately trying to find work. He wouldn't want to not have any work at all. Could you give us a quick response?

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): You have one minute.

Mr. Normand P  pin (As an Individual): The figures should be indexed, because the last time that was done was in 2007.

As for income support, the proposal is that the minimum should be about \$15,200 and that the maximum should be the one set by the Employment Insurance Plan. At the moment, benefits at the highest rate for 52 weeks are probably around \$22,000. I do not know if the copies of the Income Support Program for Older Workers document, which I brought in French and English, have been circulated to you.

When it comes to the possibility of work, the thinking is clearly that people who would have access to this program would be the people having great difficulty getting other jobs. Therefore, income would be the same as under the former Program for Older Worker Adjustment, the POWA, that you have on the last page of the document. Exactly the same formula would apply.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): I am sorry, but, when there is a long question, the answer has to be short.

[English]

Mr. Lobb, I will remind you that it's five minutes. The longer your question is, the shorter the answer will be.

Mr. Lobb.

• (1030)

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Thank you. I'll be very brief.

Mr. Picard, my brother is a schoolteacher. He's taught at both ends of the wealth in the world, I would say; he taught for a number of years in Kuwait and then moved to northern Saskatchewan, where he teaches near La Loche. He has seen both ends of the world, to put it bluntly.

So far, we've had 28 or 29 meetings on this issue, and in probably 18 or 19 we've actually had groups here. We were in Moncton yesterday. Again, we know former Premier McKenna from years ago. His quote was that "the best social program we have is a job". I'm a firm believer in that; there's no doubt about it.

I'm just curious. With the massive investment we see for renovations to first nations housing and new first nations housing, have you been able to quantify the number of jobs that will be created for first nations with this investment in housing?

Chief Ghislain Picard: I don't have a figure for you, but one reality pertaining to the job market in our communities is that most of the jobs are seasonal in many of our communities.

We have had a very promising experience in Quebec for many of our people who live on reserve. We have a pilot project involving one of the unions in Quebec that is aimed at providing some of our workers with opportunities outside of the community. I guess the framework for that is partnership agreements with unions. That's certainly true for at least two regions in Quebec.

But at the same time, I think—and this is the point I wanted to make earlier—if we have our own institutions that have the objectives of promoting training and manpower in our communities and they don't have the means they need in order to operate to their full capacity, then obviously we're going to experience a shortage somewhere.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Raymonde Folco): So that is the end of the...

Editors' note: technical difficulties

...matter of the aboriginal populations in Quebec and in Canada. I think that it shows everyone the dire need.

Mr. Picard, we have seen each other across the table for years. You see that all the members here are very sensitive to the issues. We will try to write a report that I hope will reflect what you have told us and also what Mr. Lafreni  re and Ms. de S  ve have told us as well.

I would like to thank everyone who came here this morning, and if you have documents for us, please see the clerk.

My thanks to you all.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.