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Chair: Mrs. Karen Vecchio



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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)): Good morning, everybody, and welcome to the 43rd Parliament and our second meeting of the status of women committee.

Today we're going to be talking about supplementary estimates (B) of the 2019-20 budget and vote 5b under Department for Women and Gender Equality.

Today we have with us the Honourable Maryam Monsef, who is the Minister for Women and Gender Equality.

Welcome, Ms. Monsef.

We also have with us, as our witnesses from the department, Guylaine Roy, the deputy minister, and Nancy Gardiner, the assistant deputy minister.

Thank you very much for joining us.

I am going to pass the floor over to you, Minister. You have 10 minutes, but we're flexible here.

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality): Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

Hello everyone, *bonjour, aaniin, as-salaam alaikum*.

Congratulations on being appointed to this very important committee in these very important times.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging that we are on unceded Algonquin territory.

I will spend the time you've provided me, Madam Chair, talking a little bit about what my mandate is and talking a bit about supplementary estimates (B) and how they help advance gender equality in Canada. Hopefully, we'll have an opportunity for some discussion.

This committee in the past has helped inform significant policies and programs that have come out of my department. This committee's work on violence against women and girls informed Canada's first federal strategy to address and prevent gender-based violence. I know that folks around this table, like so many parents and youth across the country, are concerned about online violence, and the work that this committee did in its previous iteration to address revenge porn on social media sites provides a really good benchmark for what can happen in terms of significant change when we work together across party lines.

I look forward to continuing the work and the partnership.

When the Prime Minister appointed me as the Minister for Women and Gender Equality last fall, he entrusted me with the mission of driving systemic change that promotes a fairer and more inclusive society for women and for LGBTQ2 and gender-diverse peoples—when I say women, I mean the broad intersections of women—by improving the quality of their life, by working to ensure that this country is safer and by working to ensure that more of us end up around decision-making tables such as this one.

To advance systemic change, one of the tools that the Government of Canada has at its disposal—and Canada introduced the tool at Beijing in 1995—is gender-based analysis. We apply an intersectional gendered lens to the implementation, design and evaluation of our programs and services. Doing this provides a better understanding of the intersections of sex and gender but also of the ways in which various other identity factors—rurality, indigeneity, disabilities, age, whether you are a francophone living in an anglophone majority community or vice versa, your immigration status, and who and how you love— affect the way that society treats you, as well as the barriers and the opportunities that are in the way. That's what GBA+ allows us to do.

We have, over the past five years, been able to bring forward significant change. I'm going to talk a little bit about that change, recognizing too though that we have much more to do. For every step we've taken forward and those who have come before us have taken forward, there has been backlash. That backlash is alive and well here in Canada but also around the world, and it impacts our ability to progress and to achieve equality for all.

Right now, I can tell you that over the past five years, Canada has moved up 11 places in the World Economic Forum's gender equality index. That's significant. There are plans, programs, and laws in place now that didn't exist before. For example—and I know colleagues debated Bill C-16—there's protection for trans individuals and non-binary gender individuals in law now. We have a national housing strategy with a carve-out set aside specifically for women and girls, especially those fleeing violence and abuse. There is a gender violence plan to address and prevent this. We have a comprehensive national action plan to address and prevent human trafficking and we have a poverty reduction plan.

• (1105)

The small but mighty agency that was Status of Women Canada, thanks to the advocacy of so many across the country, is now a full and equal department under the law, with the same authorities, responsibilities and powers as other departments. It is now the law of the land for a federal budget to have an intersectional gendered lens applied to it.

These are some of the ways that we have made significant progress. We have built on the foundation that those before us have built, and we need to build upon it further.

This is an important year. We've discussed it. It's considered a super year for gender equality. It marks 75 years since the United Nations was established. It marks 50 years since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada began its historic and significant work. It marks 25 years since the platform for action was agreed upon by the international community, the most comprehensive blueprint for gender equality. It's been 25 years since gender-based analysis started to be applied here within the federal Government of Canada. We have five years to look back on sustainable development goals, and a recognition, too, that we have five years to go until the next review of the sustainable development goals happen, and 10 years until the sustainable development that the international community agreed to are due.

This is an important year. The way to move forward, I remain convinced, is through partnership and by empowering grassroots and local leadership in communities across the country. One of the ways that we've done that is by enhancing our investments in women's organizations and equality-seeking organizations. Some 630 organizations have received over \$250 million over the past five years from only my department. That doesn't include other government departments. This allows them to build capacity to sustain their efforts, to address and prevent gender-based violence, to enhance women's economic security and work to get more women and diverse individuals in positions of power, like the ones around this table.

The year 2020 is also significant because the calls for justice, the response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, are due. This is one of those initiatives that didn't exist in the past five years. There was no national inquiry. Now we find ourselves as a country working hard to operationalize reconciliation. Recognizing that whether the work is to advance indigenous women and girls' rights and well-being or other women and diverse populations, the work will be difficult. It will require courageous conversations. It will depend on smart partnerships. I'm really grateful that our constituents have given us the power and the opportunity to be here in Ottawa at this critical moment in time to move our communities and our countries forward.

I'll wrap up there, Madam Chair. I know you'll be asking me about supplementary estimates and I'm happy to talk about those adjustments.

• (1110)

The Chair: Excellent.

Is there anything from the department or will we just move forward?

Wonderful. Thank you very much.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: I hear you have them for about an hour after me

The Chair: It's a half an hour after that.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Be nice to them.

The Chair: Ms. Monsef, are you here until noon?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Yes.

The Chair: Excellent.

This committee will be going for an hour and a half, with 30 minutes of committee business to follow.

We'll be starting our round of questioning. Just a reminder that it's six minutes each to each party to start.

The first round begins with six minutes to Raquel.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Thank you, Minister, for being here today.

I would like to discuss with you women employed in untraditional sectors, something you know much about. I appreciate the focus in your opening remarks on the importance of gender-based analysis for women, particularly in untraditional sectors.

I was interested to learn as I was researching your department and the work you've done about a program your department undertook several years ago called the mining and refining for women pilot project. It was a 30-month mentorship project, with the goal to retain and advance women's employment in non-traditional roles by Teck Resources' zinc and lead mining operation in Trail, B.C. As you know, women are not well represented in the trades, particularly in mining. This project, funded by your department, was looking to help women close that gender equality gap. It received resoundingly positive feedback from the women involved. I was very encouraged to see that your department takes women in untraditional sectors very seriously and that this is really in line with your mandate to improve gender equality in Canada. I appreciate, with this program, that your department wants women to succeed in mining.

Given all the success women had with this project, I'm curious to hear your thoughts on the Teck Frontier mine. The project presented a mass of high-paying employment opportunities for women, for local first nations and women in the mining sector. Of course, it's well understood that the decision on the Teck Frontier mine was to be made by cabinet and by you this past Tuesday, February 25. Although we know the project did not go forward, and we were given notice two days' prior, your government had the proposal since July 2019.

Can you provide to the committee the gender-based analysis plus for the Teck Frontier mine project?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Raquel, I wish you all the best in your first term here in Ottawa. I'm sure you're going to make a world of difference.

The Teck decision to pull out was their decision and, as we all have been discussing over the past few weeks, it must have been a very difficult decision.

I can tell you that they had done an excellent job with their indigenous consultations, and that is a model for future projects to move forward on.

On the initiatives around women's economic security, some of the pilots you mentioned—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I'm sorry, Minister, to cut you off.

I just want to know if you can table the gender-based analysis report for the Teck Frontier mine.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: What came out of the joint panel is available online. Anything that comes out of cabinet—this one isn't one—is, of course, protected by cabinet confidence.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Sure.

Can you confirm that you did one?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Of course. We do a GBA+ on everything that comes forward to cabinet.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Okay, perfect.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: The Prime Minister has mandated that we all do.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I know you're aware that nearly 10,000 jobs were potentially created in Teck including 14 first nations. I'm also certain you're aware that there are over 200,000 people who remain unemployed in the energy sector since your government took office in 2015.

Further, I'm certain you're aware—if not an expert, actually, given your many years as minister of status of women—of the challenges faced by women particularly in regard to family breakdown and the tremendous negative impact these kinds of unemployment numbers have had on people in general, but on women specifically. I'm sure you are an expert in this.

Not only do we know that there are women employed in the energy sector, but for every one energy sector job, five other jobs are created, and many of them are in the service industry, which we know is disproportionately represented by women.

I am confident, given the state of unemployment in our energy sector, that the GBA+ would show that the Teck Frontier mine would have had a very positive impact on the Alberta community and the energy sector in general.

Can you give a brief overview for the committee of what the gender-based analysis said for Teck Frontier?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: I believe I answered that question already, but I will say that—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Was it a positive analysis?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: —the decision to pull out—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: For sure, but would it have been a positive impact on them?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: We have done a gender-based analysis, and you mentioned some numbers. I think it's really important to have those numbers.

Over the past five years, over a million Canadians have been lifted out of poverty and, as you know, poverty is sexist, so women disproportionately benefit from those—

• (1115)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I have to move on, Minister. There are just a couple of minutes left, but I wish that you could have shared a little bit more specifically of the positive impact this project would have had, given your tremendous mandate from the Prime Minister. Your mandate letter states that every proposal that comes before cabinet has to have a gender-based analysis, which you're responsible for. I was hoping to have a little bit more from you about the positive or negative impacts of the Teck Frontier one.

Moving on, are you aware of how many of your colleagues have completed the GBA+ training?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: We have the numbers. My officials can pull them up.

Hundreds of thousands of public servants and political staff, both within the Senate and the House of Commons, have taken the training. I encourage anyone who hasn't yet taken the training to do so. It's available online. It's free of charge, of course, and when you're done, you are provided with a certificate.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I'm currently working through this myself. It's very informative.

Just to continue—

Hon. Maryam Monsef: The number is 150,000.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: That's 150,000 people. Does that number include all of your cabinet colleagues?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff have completed the GBA+—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: —and your cabinet colleagues, correct?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Correct.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Correct, okay.

What do you feel your cabinet colleagues would have thought, through their gender-based analysis training, about energy resource projects like Teck Frontier? Do you feel they would have thought it was important to have this project and other energy sector projects which your government hasn't approved go forward? I think there are 11 now that have been postponed or thrown out.

Do you feel your government is doing a good enough job to see the impact of those decisions on women in the sector, considering 200,000 people are unemployed?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Absolutely, we do.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: How do you...?

Are we almost done?

The Chair: You're almost done, yes. You're at 10 seconds left.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Right. It sure goes fast, doesn't it.

The Chair: It sure does.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I'll just conclude, Minister.

I hope that you can commit that the next time you come to committee you will have a bit more substantial information for us regarding the impact on women that your government's decisions on Teck Frontier and other energy projects have had.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you very much.

We're now going to move over to Sonia.

Sonia, you have the floor. I recognize you will share time with Anju, so go ahead.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I am sharing my time with Anju.

Thank you, Minister and officials, for coming today, and thank you, Minister, for your leadership in the last term. You are doing an amazing job.

My riding is Brampton South. A new study conducted by Family Services of Peel noted that the region of Peel has an alarming rate of human trafficking. Sixty-two per cent of police-reported cases in Canada originated from police in the Peel area.

I would like to ask you about the national strategy to combat human trafficking that was announced by the former minister of public safety shortly before the last election. Could you tell us more about how the new strategy has enabled a whole-of-government approach to addressing human trafficking?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Thank you for your question. I'm glad to see you around this table again.

The majority of human trafficking crimes, about two-thirds of them, are reported from Ontario. Like many others in Ontario, this past Saturday we observed a day to learn more about human traf-

ficking and empower those who are on the front lines, including survivors, to address and prevent this heinous crime.

The national human trafficking strategy was announced by my honourable colleague, former public safety minister Ralph Goodale, last summer. It is a comprehensive strategy. It is based on four pillars: prevention, partnerships, prosecution, protection. Then, it has an additional pillar, which makes it, I believe, one of the best plans internationally. That is the empowerment pillar.

I've heard from colleagues around this table, as we've heard from Canadians across the country, that once those who have been able to get themselves out of the system and are ready to get their lives back together to piece back what's been broken, significant wrap-around supports are needed. That empowerment pillar is part of what we are trying to do as a federal government to provide those supports and services.

The strategy invests significant dollars—it's fully funded—to empower victims and survivors to regain self-confidence and self-control, to prevent more of these crimes from happening, to better protect those who are vulnerable to trafficking, to prosecute traffickers and to embrace partnerships with provinces and territories and other organizations to maximize our impact.

Also, as of a few months ago, we appointed a new special adviser on human trafficking who is a retired RCMP officer. She is working to provide ongoing advice and recommendations to the federal government to bring awareness to human trafficking here in Canada but also internationally as well.

One of the questions I asked one of the front-line service providers was what it is that makes our daughters—overwhelmingly, it's girls and overwhelmingly it's indigenous women and girls—so vulnerable to human trafficking. What are they seeing in terms of trends?

She said that often for these girls, the first time they hear kind words such as, "I am proud of you", or the first time someone shows interest in them, it comes from their trafficker. I have little girls in my life, as I'm sure many of you have, and hearing that sent chills down my spine.

All this is to say that it is preventable. It is complex. Canada has a plan. We are working with our domestic and international partners.

I welcome any work by this committee. I know that several members have expressed interest in helping to enhance our existing initiatives around human trafficking.

• (1120)

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Thank you.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Thank you for being here, minister.

My question is regarding Bill C-5. Being a lawyer myself and having worked in the criminal justice system, I'm very happy that our government is reviving and reintroducing this bill to provide training to judges. Can you tell us a little more about the bill and what it will achieve?

I also want to know whether, as part of the training sensitizing the judges, we will have victims or victims' organizations sitting with the judges during the training so that they can bring a better understanding, with their experiences navigating the criminal justice system themselves. This should—

The Chair: You have 45 seconds to respond.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: I'm happy that we were able to support Rona Ambrose's bill. As you heard during your travels on coming up with this strategy to prevent and address gender-based violence, a responsive legal and justice system is a key pillar of our work.

This bill ensures that survivors of sexual assault have greater confidence in the system. The training that will be provided to aspiring judges will be developed in collaboration with survivors and experts in this work.

Did I do okay there? Yes?

Okay.

The Chair: We're now going to turn the floor over to Andréanne.

You have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Good morning.

You said in your presentation that one of your priorities was women's economic situation. You talked about ways to improve it. Can you elaborate on that?

What would your government have in mind to improve women's economic situation?

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Thank you so much for that excellent question.

Women's economic well-being is a key determinant—not the only one—to their vulnerabilities to other hardships, including violence. It's the right thing to do to put women who choose to be out there, as Raquel mentioned, in STEM fields, but also in traditional fields. If you want to work, we should do everything we can to remove barriers from that work. It's the right thing to do, and it's fair. Also, given the shortage in labour that our country is experiencing, like so many other countries, with declining birth rates and aging populations, it is smart to get as many women into the workforce as possible. One of the ways we're doing that is with the Canada child benefit. It provides families with a guaranteed income every month. It's means tested and its purpose is to help families decide how they want to spend that money, whether it's on child care or other responsibilities.

Another is investing directly in child care spaces. We set aside \$7.5 billion for our child care framework to create some 40,000 spaces. Each province and territory then came to the table

and we signed bilateral agreements as to how many more child care spaces they would add on. More than 20,000 of those spaces have already been created.

That's one of the ways we're doing that work.

We are working to support more women to enter those non-traditional fields because they are high-wage jobs and because it's one of the fastest ways to lift women out of poverty. Initiatives like pilot projects that we brought in—my colleague Navdeep Bains is working to encourage more girls and young people to code, for example—are one way to do that. We have a women entrepreneurship strategy too. Right now, only 16.5% of businesses in Canada are women owned or majority owned by women. Surely we can do better than that. We have a strategy to do better to start up and scale up those women's businesses.

Then there's pay equity. This group includes members who worked hard on advocating for pay equity. We introduced pay equity legislation. One of the significant barriers is the way that we value women's work. By paying women equally for work of equal value, we help to address some of the wage gap that has been so persistent.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Okay.

There is something else. First, the motherhood penalty is often discussed. Of course, there are benefits, but too many women who make that choice still experience negative economic impacts because of it.

Second, why do feminine products cost more than equivalent products for men?

In addition, we have already discussed the issue of non-traditional occupations, which are often paid more, but there are many other injustices in terms of finances. You talked about the need to further encourage women's leadership and to help women create their own business model. Are those other tools your government is considering?

Yesterday, I met with a housing group for women. Does your strategy on domestic violence focus on providing more assistance to centres that help women who are victims of domestic violence. The needs are there. Funding is provided for buildings, for walls, but paid staff is also needed to support those women. That reality must also be taken into account, so that women can go to housing centres, come out of the cycle of violence and then re-enter the workforce.

I would like to hear your thoughts on that, as well.

[English]

Hon. Maryam Monsef: You're absolutely right. Violence is a significant barrier to women achieving their full potential in this country. We've been able to invest in close to 7,000 shelter spaces so far, recognizing that there's still much more work to be done. Our housing strategy support has a pillar specifically devoted to building more housing for women, as my colleague Adam Vaughan says.

Women are often the first to lose affordable housing and the last to gain it. The cost of housing affects their spending every month, but if you're in an abusive relationship, you're going to have to make a choice between whether to stay under that roof with an abusive partner or be in the streets or couch surfing. That's a difficult choice that no woman should have to make and we're working to make sure that she has more choices.

Also, in response to your point about the motherhood penalty, motherhood is hard. I see the mothers in my life and what they do, and it's significant work. I'm sure it's a joy too. I see the joy, but it's a lot of work. We've heard from fathers and from parents too that taking parental leave is something we ought to take into consideration seriously, so we've introduced a new parental leave. Then fathers or adoptive parents or same-sex parents can take time in the early days of their newborn's life to spend some time together.

One of the things that does that —

The Chair: That's excellent.

I hate to cut you off, but you're quite a bit over six minutes—

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Okay.

The Chair: —and I saw that you were going on to another phrase. When the pen starts twirling, that means you have 10 seconds, okay.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Maryam Monsef: The twirling pen.

The Chair: When you start seeing this green thing, 10 seconds. Okay?

Thank you.

Sorry about that, Andréanne.

We're going to move it over to Lindsay for six minutes.

I remind everybody about the pen at 10 seconds.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Oh, watch the spinning pen.

Thank you, Minister and your departmental colleagues, for being here today. I appreciate it.

You talked about violence, harassment, what women face. I agree with you that it cannot be tolerated. I see a lot of it within the workplace. There are reports that one in two women has experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

I know that Canada was key in putting forward the convention, C190, to the International Labour Organization, but we haven't

moved forward on that. We have not ratified it. I understand that working with the provinces and territories is key. I want to know, as Canada needs to continue being a major player on that, what you are doing to work with the provinces and territories to ensure we can ratify that. We're not the first, but we should be one of the first countries to ratify that convention.

● (1130)

Hon. Maryam Monsef: That number, one in two, sent shock waves across the country. One in two women experiences harassment or gender-based violence at work here in Canada. In the last Parliament, the House of Commons, unanimously passed Bill C-65. That was a significant step. The international community applauded Canada for its leadership in putting forward the first plan of its kind to address and prevent gender-based and all forms of harassment in the workplace. That initiative is now being implemented. It includes training, awareness and accountability measures, and there's an opportunity with this Parliament to review its progress.

As for relationships with our federal, provincial and territorial partners, the first FPT meeting that occurred following the 2019 election was the status of women gathering. We have really positive relationships with our provincial and territorial counterparts. For the first time in the 37th or 38th year of this gathering, we came up with a three-year strategic plan based on a common set of priorities and indicators to measure our progress. All forms of gender-based violence is our number one priority with this initiative.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Specifically, in terms of the work you're doing and the actual meetings you're having with those provinces to get this forward, what are you doing?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: We have to get our own house in order, first. Some provinces and territories are way ahead of the federal government with their efforts in advancing gender equality.

When we took the patchwork of policies that existed federally and put them all into one plan with Bill C-65, we said we would bring into force this law within two years of royal assent. This is the year that it will be brought into force. This committee as well as all of Parliament has an opportunity to monitor its progress.

It's important for us to have our own house in order before we join efforts with others, because that often becomes a barrier to partnerships. If you haven't stepped up to the plate like others have, they're less likely to want to join the initiative.

I can assure you that this is a priority for our government. As I said before, we cannot afford for women to be unsafe in the workplace. We cannot afford to lose a single drop of talent.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: You talked about your national action plan to end violence against women. How much of a part of these convention policies is moving forward in that action plan?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: We are in the process of actually doing just that. We've taken the hundreds of recommendations that have come forward from various reports, conventions and recommendations on the issue of gender-based violence. My team at Women and Gender Equality have put it all in one beautiful, very large document.

Whether it's gender-based violence at home, in the workplace, at school or online, these are all aspects of the current work we're doing, but they will definitely inform the work we're doing with the national action plan. We are in early stages for the national action plan in terms of developing it and figuring out who our partners are and how we're going to move forward.

Again, Madam Chair, I welcome any recommendations from this group, as I have before, to help ensure that the plan is the best possible plan it can be. It will be an evergreen plan, so we'll continue to improve it, because societies change and so does the nature of gender-based violence.

• (1135)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: I will just squeeze one more question in.

We're seeing NAFTA go through our Parliament and the acceptance of that. We had done a lot on and there was a promise from the minister at the time to create a gender chapter within NAFTA. However, what we heard quite often from experts was that it's not just about one chapter. I mean, for women and indigenous people, you couldn't just limit it to one chapter; you had to, in much the same way that you—

The Chair: Spinning pen.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: All right.

In much the same way that you had to put a gender-based lens on all legislation, you would do this for international agreements, as well. What are you doing to move forward on that?

The Chair: You have 10 seconds to respond. We're way over time.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Gender, environment and labour are among the considerations we've taken with NAFTA, and there are agreements that have a specific gender chapter while they take all of that into account.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We are starting our second round. This is now a five-minute round.

The floor goes to Alice Wong.

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Thank you very much, Minister, for coming.

My first question is a little bit time-sensitive. We're almost in March now, and of course very soon we'll be celebrating International Women's Day. The theme for 2020, #BecauseOfYou, was only just launched a few days ago. Why was it delayed? Also, unfor-

tunately, there have been so many delays with the government getting committees struck to get work done in Parliament.

We have been celebrating International Women's Day for so many decades, and I just wanted to know why there was a delay in launching this year's theme. It's a bit rushed, because we don't have time to really celebrate or get it done.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Thank you for your question, and thank you for your work as a minister. You've moved significant pieces of work forward.

We will be celebrating it on March 8. Because this is a very special year for women's rights and equality as a whole, the theme, #BecauseOfYou, is the theme for the entire year.

Whether it's International Women's Day, Gender Equality Week, which our colleague pushed forward with Bill C-309, Women's History Month in October, or the 16 Days of Activism that happened throughout until the middle of December, the theme for the entire year is #BecauseOfYou.

We believe there is some time still to plan and move forward. If there are movers and shakers in your community, as there are in every community, who you want honoured through social media or through other means, the community should be encouraged to nominate and to recognize them using that hashtag.

There are opportunities throughout the entire year. As you can appreciate, an election year means there are some things that need to be rebuilt so that we can move forward, but the entire year is going to be a big year of celebrations and honouring those whose hard work and sacrifice allow women such as ourselves to enjoy the opportunities that we do.

Hon. Alice Wong: Yes, and in response to our colleagues, regarding women in the workforce, you did mention that.

Close to my heart are the women who are paid or unpaid family caregivers. They might be looking after their parents, or their grandparents now, because we all live longer. That directly affects the productivity of the women who are in the workforce. They have to choose between working full time or part time, and so on and so forth. I wonder if the government is doing anything, or if that's still a gap that we should work on.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: That is most definitely a gap that we should all still work on.

Unpaid work more often than not is caregiving work. More often than not, it's provided by women. It's one of those areas of work that is highly undervalued, yet our economies and our communities would not be able to survive or thrive without it.

In working to bring in pay equity for federally regulated workplaces, we are working to do our part within our jurisdiction. We've also introduced leave for those who are caring for a severely sick loved one in their household, in their family. There is new leave that allows them to have some compensation.

My mom works in this sector, too. As our population ages, dementia is something that caregivers and leaders have asked us to take some federal leadership on. There's a new dementia strategy that my colleague Minister Schulte is working on. As of budget 2019, it has \$50 million attached to it so that those who provide some of the most complex forms of care can be reassured that the federal government has a plan to address some of the challenges they face.

The new horizons for seniors program, which I know you are very well informed about, is to ensure that those loved ones we care for, especially our elders, have opportunities to share their gifts and build relationships and partnerships in their communities.

I have a few more things to say, but I see the green pen.

• (1140)

The Chair: Thank you very much. That was your five minutes.

We're now going to move over to Gudie, for five minutes

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair. We're going to have get you a bigger pen.

Minister, it's always a pleasure to have you and your officials here. The work that you and your team have done for the last five years, going from Status of Women to now a full-blown department, Women and Gender Equality Canada, or WAGE, as well as the increase in the budgets and the work that's being done on the ground, I know is felt in my riding.

As you've heard me say many times, and many of my colleagues have heard me say, I have a very large rural riding. It has a land mass bigger than Switzerland, with lots of tiny, beautiful communities. I have four small status of women's groups in rural areas, in Port aux Basques, Stephenville, Corner Brook and Port Saunders. There you have people with one or two paid positions and the rest are volunteers doing great work on the ground.

I want to bring up the rural aspect, because you are also the minister responsible for rural economic development.

I'd like your comments on how the two interact: women and women in rural areas. I know our government has a huge commitment on broadband and the initiatives there. How do you see them interacting with women and rural women?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Thank you so much for your question. I'm glad that the Prime Minister has partnered me up with you, Gudie.

One thing that those of us who come from rural communities or mixed rural-urban communities are tasked with, just by the nature of this beautiful country, is we have to work that much harder, be that much louder and that much more prepared to ensure that the perspective of rural Canadians is heard and understood. That's part of GBA+ as well, but we are working to strengthen that lens. Gudie, when you say that your riding has a land mass bigger than Switzerland, that's a really smart way to help demonstrate that rural lens.

Budget 2019 included an investment for broadband for high-speed Internet. It included investments through CRTC. It included investments to move forward with low-earth orbit satellites, LEOs,

for those particularly remote communities. It also included funding through the universal broadband fund, funding that we hope to roll out in the coming months so that communities across Canada can be connected further to high-speed Internet. I believe it's an essential service. It's not a luxury to have access to high-speed Internet. Canadians have told us that.

For the first time, we have a rural economic strategy that tells us that the number one priority for rural Canadians is connectivity. For the first time we have a connectivity plan that says by 2030 we're going to connect 100% of communities in Canada to high-speed Internet. The standard we're using is 50/10. Why that's important to the work of this committee, that gender lens here, is if she's not able to log online and see what services exist for her, she's less likely to leave an abusive relationship. If she doesn't have access to high-speed Internet, she is less likely to take the great gift that she has as a woman entrepreneur and expand upon it. If she doesn't have the ability to speak with her grandkids and her loved ones through FaceTime, then she's less likely as a grandparent to feel connected to them. Those feelings of isolation can be prevented through technology.

There's another gendered lens here too. Who develops these technologies? Right now, about 26% of those who are in the tech sector are women. That sector is experiencing significant labour shortages. It's the one that needs innovation to get ahead of everybody else. We want Canada to be number one in this sector, yet that 26% are often paid 26% less than their male counterparts for work of equal value. There's definitely a gender lens. The more Canadians we connect, the greater economic prosperity we'll be able to share, but the greater safety and security we will also be able to add to their lives as well.

• (1145)

Ms. Gudie Hutchings: Minister, I'm going to ask you a quick question.

When you refer to GBA+, what are you going to encompass in the plus? Are you making sure that we're looking at people in rural communities, indigenous communities, Inuit communities, women of colour and, of course, persons living with disabilities?

The Chair: Get that done in 10 seconds.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: The short answer is yes. We do need to strengthen all the lenses that you mentioned, but also create a culture and continue to strengthen that culture here within our government and the public service so that it becomes automatic to apply GBA at the outset, at the end and throughout the process. Turning it into a cultural norm is our key challenge.

The Chair: I'm going to ask Ms. Roy and Ms. Monsef whether we would be able to keep them for three more minutes so that we can complete this entire round.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Absolutely.

The Chair: I have thumbs up to that.

I'm going to pass the floor back over to Raquel, for five minutes.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Minister, I want to share with you a little of my personal background. I grew up in rural Manitoba in a town of about 3,000 retired farmers. When I graduated from high school, if the men weren't going to work on their farms, cattle ranches or going to university, they went to Alberta to work in the trades there and bring home a lot of income for their families.

Of course, that isn't happening anymore and it's of grave concern to me. Also, my fiancé works for Manitoba Hydro. Many men I grew up with went on to work with Manitoba Hydro.

Minister, I want to ask you about some troubling remarks concerning gender-based analysis by the Prime Minister, in Argentina, in the G20. He mentioned, "...what does a gender lens have to do with building this new highway or this new pipeline or something?" and "...there are gender impacts when you bring construction workers into a rural area. There are social impacts because they're mostly male construction workers."

Now, you can understand, particularly for me as my fiancé is one of those guys who goes into rural areas.... I know many of them in my riding do as well. We have many men and women in the trades who go into these rural areas away from their families. They used to go to Alberta but they no longer have that opportunity.

I'm just wondering if you agree with the Prime Minister in his implication that men who go into rural areas have negative implications on women.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Thank you for sharing that very personal story. I wish you all the best with your partnership.

You asked me early on about the GBA+ on resource development projects.

One thing we take into consideration now, especially with the new Impact Assessment Act that was passed last year in the House of Commons, is the calls for justice that came from the inquiry around missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. There you'll find some clarity concerning where that gendered analysis comes from.

The Prime Minister made his remarks based on facts. We also know that the men who go into those isolated communities experience their own challenges. Part of GBA+ is recognizing the challenges for all genders, not just women, and working to address them.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Do you feel that the impact of men working in rural areas, building the infrastructure of our country...? Do you feel that the negative impacts of what you're talking about exceed the positive impacts? Is that why your government isn't wanting to support projects such as Teck Frontier or other energy sector projects?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: I disagree with the premise of that question. We have moved forward—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Do the negative impacts outweigh the positive impacts—

Hon. Maryam Monsef: —with resource development projects.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: —of men working in rural areas?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: We have to ensure that the positive benefits—

Ms. Raquel Dancho: You're speaking around the question a little bit.

The Chair: What I'm going to do is stop the time for a moment. I think everybody knows this, but I believe the time is the questioner's. That is my philosophy on this issue, and as the chair, I'll take that view. I recognize the opportunity to always respond, but I'd ask that we not speak over one another.

The clock is back on.

Go ahead.

• (1150)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: That's really it.

Actually, I'd like to move a motion, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Okay, move your motion.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: It's in reference to my first question.

Given that the minister confirmed that her cabinet colleagues, including the Prime Minister, have all completed the gender-based analysis plus training, I move that the committee request that the Minister for Women and Gender Equality table the GBA+ completion certificates of her cabinet with the committee.

The Chair: Are there any questions on this motion, or is there any conversation on it?

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Could it be repeated?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I'll speak slowly for Andréanne's sake as well, just so that the translation—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: I would like to have it if possible, of course

[*English*]

The Chair: One moment.

The motion is going to be reread, and so the motion will come out.

Once I address you, then turn on your microphone. The only person who will address you to start talking is me.

Go ahead, Raquel.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: The motion is:

That given that the minister confirms that her cabinet colleagues, including the Prime Minister, have all completed the gender-based analysis plus training, I move that the committee request that the Minister for Women and Gender Equality table the gender-based analysis plus completion certificates of all of her cabinet colleagues with the committee.

The Chair: Is there any discussion on this motion?

Sonia, you have the floor.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Madam Chair, can we take a two-minute suspension?

The Chair: Yes.

We'll suspend for two minutes.

• (1150) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1150)

The Chair: The committee will reconvene.

Gudie, you have the floor.

Ms. Gudie Hutchings: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to adjourn the debate. We're not quite sure whether the department is legally allowed to disclose that information, so I'd like to move that the debate be adjourned.

• (1155)

The Chair: The question is on the motion that the debate be adjourned.

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

The Chair: The motion carries, so debate will be adjourned on the motion. We will thus not continue with it.

We have now taken up the time of all the questioning and such things.

I'm looking at the time and at where we are.

Salma, you have the floor for five minutes. Then we'll go to Andréanne for two and a half, then to Lindsay for two and a half. Then I have one final question as the chair.

Please go ahead.

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for coming before the committee. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all the work you have done in the last many years on behalf of my constituents. I wanted to pass this on, because we feel the difference in our riding.

You talked in your opening remarks about the national housing strategy. This is one issue I always hear about from my constituents. Access to affordable housing is a big issue in my riding.

Minister, one of the great things this government has done is address the housing crisis in a sustained way, which no other government has done in at least half a century. Thanks to the national housing strategy, the federal government is reinvesting in housing and establishing itself as a partner on housing for most of the next decade.

I want to ask you a couple of questions on that subject as it relates to women.

First, one of the strategy's goals is to make sure that at least 25% of national housing strategy investments go to projects specifically for women, girls and their families.

Do you know where the government is in working to achieve this goal of 25%?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Thank you.

I'm grateful for your leadership, too. It's nice to have you back around this table. I saw that you had been elected as chair of the citizenship committee. I wish you all the best on that important work.

In terms of the housing strategies, our commitment was to carve out 25% for women and their children. CMHC is now at about 29%. Their target is 33%. That strategy also includes legislating—and I was happy to speak to it in the House of Commons—that access to affordable housing is a human right. In addition to that, we are in the process of working to ensure that there is a housing advocate who is working to monitor and ensure that every Parliament is accountable and is meeting those targets.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Another question on the same topic relates to the historic legislation the government signed into law last June in the 42nd Parliament, when we recognized that every Canadian has the right to access safe, affordable housing. Could you please explain more to us about how this will help marginalized communities, especially women and young girls?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: The housing strategy allowed us to get our house in order, much like other federal strategies that we put forward. Legislating housing as a human right was our way of responding to what advocates had been asking for. Minister Duclos, the minister who did the outreach across the country on this, and Adam Vaughan as his parliamentary secretary came back and said, "This is what we've heard. We need to address affordability. We need to address supply, and then we need to make sure that it's not just the federal government in 2015 until whenever that is working to uphold this. We need to make sure that every Parliament recognizes access, and the dignity that comes with a safe roof over one's head, as a human right."

Legislating that and also doing the back end work of having a strategy in place, building and repairing existing affordable units, focusing on women, on seniors, on veterans and on persons with disabilities are all things we did on the back end to get to legislating it as a human right.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Thank you.

I represent a riding where there are a lot of organizations that are helping to advance gender equality, especially for new immigrant women of colour. What efforts have been made to do the capacity building of those organizations so that they can continue doing the important work that they are doing?

• (1200)

Hon. Maryam Monsef: I'm a product of those organizations doing the good work that they do. I've benefited from those services and I know we all have loved ones who have directly benefited from those services. I spoke in my opening remarks about the backlash there is to our progress to advance equality. That backlash can be contained and can be faced best by investing in those local organizations on the ground that know the communities, know the solutions, know the shortcuts and are able to enhance the ability of every dollar, and we've done that.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: A point of order is on the floor.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I feel we had a productive discussion, Minister. However, given that you've passed legislation about GBA+, given that it's in your mandate letter from the Prime Minister, given that the Prime Minister himself has talked about this at the national level, and given that it's one of the four main pillars of your own mandate, I do feel that it is very disappointing for Canadians that you cannot put forward which members of cabinet have done GBA+. It's just very disappointing.

The Chair: Raquel, we need to know if this is a point of order or an opinion.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: That's my point of order.

The Chair: Fantastic.

Yes, Andréanne.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: I want to understand the situation. This was a point of order because it was not her turn to speak.

[*English*]

The Chair: Points of order supersede everything else.

In a situation in committee, if a point of order is brought forward, the committee stops, and it goes on to the point of order at that time. The decision on whether it is debate, an opinion, or something to do with procedure is the discussion that would come. When it comes to what the decision of the chair would be, it was not going into debate. It was a stated opinion but did not go into procedure, and she finished her statement.

I'm looking at the time, we still have a couple more minutes.

Andréanne, you have two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, earlier, my colleague brought up the issue of family caregivers and the assistance they need.

I talked about the issue of motherhood. Afterwards, women spend a lot of time in their family. Men also do it. So some time is provided. There is also a lot of volunteer work.

I come from the community environment, and I have studied the issues of women and poverty. I have worked with family caregivers. Women also volunteer a lot in those environments.

What steps is the department planning to take to properly assess all those invisible hours of work?

What measures are you considering to be able to achieve concrete social programs, provide credits or help all those people in their invisible work?

We believe that a question should be put back into the long-form census. What would you focus on in order to be able to consider all that invisible work?

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef: On the census, we brought back the long-form census. It was actually our first act as a cabinet. The new census will be rolling out in 2021.

One thing my department has worked on very closely with Minister Bains' department and Stats Canada is creating a portal based on diversity and inclusion data so that we can get those different stories and the intersecting identities. This is new. Once you start collecting the data, then you can measure it. Unless you measure it, it won't count. We cannot measure progress on addressing the unpaid care work and the invisible work. That's been step one.

Step two has been to recognize that, for so many people, to care for their loved ones is an honour. To support them in their ability to do that, a new EI caregiver benefit has allowed for that additional support to be provided. As well, it has encouraged men to take leave, fathers to take leave, so that we start to change social norms as well. There are many in my community who are thrilled that they can take up to five weeks to be with their newborns.

There's so much work to be done on this particular area of care work and unpaid care work. We will be doing more research and more work on it. Again, I invite and welcome any guidance from this committee to support that work.

The Chair: Lindsay, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Thank you for that. You talked about housing and the importance of housing. I'm glad to hear that the government believes it is a human right. I agree with that, for sure.

In my community, in London, Ontario, indigenous people suffer about 30% to 40% of homelessness, which is very, very high. For example, there are three indigenous housing places that are actually at the end of their 25-year agreements. They are now selling off properties because they can't afford to continue to provide that housing as needed. These are all coming together as a huge crisis that a lot of communities are facing.

The PBO did a report in 2019 that said that with all of these initiatives the government was bringing forward, it wasn't actually clear that any of those were doing any good to help reduce the prevalence of and need for housing. It wasn't increasing the actual number of housing units. It wasn't fulfilling the need that was required by Canadians in need of affordable housing.

If you'd like to address that issue, I'd appreciate it, especially as it relates to indigenous housing.

• (1205)

The Chair: There's one minute left.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: The most recent numbers we have are that over a million Canadians have been lifted out of poverty over the past four years or so, and over a million families have access to safe and affordable roof, which they didn't before 2015.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: How do you explain, then, the PBO's numbers, and how it's actually not helping?

Hon. Maryam Monsef: The national housing strategy is a 10-year plan with very concrete goals around eliminating homelessness, adding to the stock of affordable housing and repairing existing housing, and also renewing agreements around co-operatives to make sure that what's been affordable stays affordable.

One addition to the housing strategy, which will come into effect this April, is the portable housing benefit that gives up to \$2,400 a month for Ontarians. It's a subsidy that goes to the individual as opposed to the housing provider itself. You can choose to live in any community and you will pay about \$200 or so less every month on the cost of housing.

I'd love to have a conversation offline with you about how we can help your community to access funding through the national housing strategy if it is interested.

The Chair: I'm looking at the time.

On behalf of the committee, I'd very much like to thank Minister Monsef as well as Guylaine Roy for joining us.

We welcome to the table Lisa Smylie, Danielle Bélanger and Suzanne Cooper.

We are going to continue with this round of questioning.

There was a bit of an error on the chair's part. I would like to move the floor back over to Salma.

Salma, you have your time to ask questions, and then we'll go back to the Conservatives, back and forth. From the second round, you did not have an opportunity to ask your questions. That was my mistake. I overlooked you.

• (1210)

Mrs. Salma Zahid: No, I did.

The Chair: She did, okay.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: I thought maybe you were asking me something.

The Chair: Oh, goodness gracious. Well, Salma, okay, wonderful.

Just to let everyone know, we'll be going Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, and then we'll end off with Bloc and NDP.

I'm going to pass the floor over to Alice.

Hon. Alice Wong: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Welcome, everyone. Welcome Danielle, who was here, and Lisa, who was not. I have met you all in my former life.

My question is about the grants and contributions.

Looking at vote 5b, \$300,000 from the ministerial operating budget has been moved into grants and contributions.

First of all, can you provide more in depth how, specifically, this increase in grant funding is to be spent or has been spent and for what specific organizations or programs?

The other thing is about the rationale behind it. Why is it moving from the operating budget to grants and contributions?

Ms. Nancy Gardiner (Assistant Deputy Minister, Department for Women and Gender Equality): Thank you very much for the question.

It's a very direct answer. The \$300,000 was in operating budget, as you said. Moving that money into grants and contributions allowed us to do programming for specific projects related to men and boys, because in operating dollars, you can't do grants and contribution programming, as you know.

Hon. Alice Wong: Right, yes.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: This allowed us to do projects on the ground to support some of the work that we talked about yesterday related to men and boys. There are four projects that we were working on.

I'll list a few of them.

There's the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. Some of the projects were used to promote awareness of gender-based violence and healthy masculinity. Next-generation men was another project that we supported.

Hon. Alice Wong: Where is the next-generation men project, in which province, or is it across the nation?

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: It's working with the University of Calgary

Hon. Alice Wong: Okay.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: Those projects were used to support projects related to men and to build awareness and healthy masculinity.

Hon. Alice Wong: That means all that money is only spent in the province of Alberta.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: No, there are other projects as well that we were supporting.

Hon. Alice Wong: Okay.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: Those were the only two that we were just talking about. Catalyst was another project, and Foxy and Smash. This project was in the north and related to engaging indigenous youth, particularly young men and boys, on gender equality issues. The issues were very, very relevant in that part of the country, and so a project was developed to support that work.

Hon. Alice Wong: Are any of the programs targeted at elderly men?

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: That's a very good question. None of the projects we just spoke about were specifically working with senior men, but engaging—

Hon. Alice Wong: You know seniors are close to my heart.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: Yes, I know that.

I think when we did the men and boys strategy, 11 round tables took place. It wasn't specifically focused on young men. People from all segments of society were part of those round tables. As the minister spoke about earlier, various issues were raised, not only impacting women, but for young men, senior men. Some of the issues that impact them from gender-based analysis plus were spoken about through those round tables, but these specific projects were not focused on senior men.

• (1215)

Hon. Alice Wong: Culturally I can speak from my past experience meeting some of the stakeholders that sometimes in certain cultures it's still male dominated.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: Yes.

Hon. Alice Wong: Very often, that has created...I don't know how to say it. I wouldn't say it was abuse, but a kind of authority over the women in their family.

That's why I want to ask if any culturally sensitive elements are included.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: We supported a number of projects that related not only to leadership, economic empowerment and violence that does focus on looking at some of the imbalances created in society and making sure we're addressing those imbalances in the projects we support. We have many specific examples of increasing capacity of organizations to support women to help them build their empowerment, or to address some of the imbalances in society related to...maybe inequities is the right word.

We can talk about that a little as well. Karen has given me a look.

The Chair: Thank you again for understanding the way I behave.

Hon. Alice Wong: So I don't have any more time.

The Chair: You have 30 seconds left.

Hon. Alice Wong: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Gudie, you have the floor for five minutes.

Ms. Gudie Hutchings: Madam Chair, I still think we need to get you a bigger pen. We will work on that.

Thank you for being here, ladies, and thank you again for the work you do.

Rural is a passion for me, and I know our programs are reaching out in the small rural communities. I also know that in small rural communities the contribution of a small amount can do so much.

I remember in a meeting with one of my status of women's groups, it was a small amount of money—I think it was \$15,000 or \$20,000—and the chair of the board actually cried. I think we need to focus on that going forward, that it's not all about the million-dollar projects. It's the small numbers on the ground that really make a difference. So thanks for doing that, and keep doing that when you review all the applications that come in.

I want to get back to the GBA+. Can you tell me how you see that's going to be applied and developed when you look at applications, when you look at funding going forward?

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: I will start, and I'm going to ask Suzanne to add a little.

The minister mentioned earlier, and I think we mentioned the last time we were here that the role and the use of GBA+ has expanded so much over the last number of years. We are now required in terms of cabinet submissions as well as Treasury Board submissions to have a gender-based analysis as part of the actual submission.

Gender budgeting, obviously, is another important aspect that has happened over the last couple of years as well. The last budget had a gender chapter specifically looking at all the initiatives that were part of that budget. A gender-based analysis was done on every initiative that was part of the budget so I think we have definitely moved forward in our analysis.

The intersectionality piece has been mentioned quite a bit in this committee, looking at the rural, indigenous, visible minorities, persons with disabilities. All aspects of a program have to be taken into account when you're developing a program now.

We have expanded in the work we have done for sure. Can we do more? Absolutely.

I will turn it over to Suzanne because as we're developing our federal gender equality plan, the gender-based analysis is a big part of that.

Ms. Suzanne Cooper (Director, Strategic Policy, Policy and External Relations Directorate, Department for Women and Gender Equality): Thanks.

One of the things we're working on, and the minister has been mandated to do, is to develop a federal plan on gender equality. The purpose of that plan is to have a whole-of-government approach to how we're going to reach the objectives laid out in the general results framework, which Lisa talked to you about on Tuesday.

As part of that, we're also looking to strengthen GBA+. As Nancy said, we have made a lot of progress, but we know, for example, through surveys with other departments that it's not necessarily evenly applied, that there are some challenges related to data, which we talked about on Tuesday as well.

We're working toward how we can fill in those gaps to make sure we definitely have the intersectional analysis we need for the policy and program cycles.

- (1220)

Ms. Gudie Hutchings: Speaking of data, how do we make sure that we are collecting the proper data across all government departments and that they are finalized, but also that we get that data that's so important to the decision that you and the department need to make?

Ms. Lisa Smylie (Director General, Communications and Public Affairs Branch, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Department for Women and Gender Equality): Over the past few years we've invested tens of millions of dollars in getting new data. With budget 2016 we invested \$1.5 million per year to get the data needed for GBA+. With our GBV strategy we invested over \$30 million in data, and then with budget 2018, another \$5 million in data.

How do we ensure that it's the right data? We develop our data plans, our surveys, in collaboration with community-based organizations, survivors, academics. We bring together expertise to make sure that we're identifying the data gaps and that we're investing our money in the right kinds of data that people need.

Ms. Gudie Hutchings: Great.

Am I correct in assuming that prior to 2015, there was very little data being collected?

Ms. Lisa Smylie: In terms of data on a whole related to gender, there were pockets of data.

What I can say is, prior to 2015 there was no focus to...research team at Status of Women to shepherd this data collection.

Ms. Gudie Hutchings: Okay, great.

Thank you for your work.

The Chair: I'm looking at the time and recognizing that there are a few questions and we do have to get to committee business.

We're at 12:21 with nine minutes left. I'm taking up all of the time right now. I'm going to reduce the time to three minutes, three minutes, one minute, one minute. That provides everybody the equal amount of time.

Raquel, are you ready to take the floor, you and Alice?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: I am.

The Chair: Okay, it's three minutes in total.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Thank you.

I don't think you were here the last time, Suzanne.

Ms. Suzanne Cooper: No, I wasn't.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: It's great to meet you.

I want to follow up on the questions that I asked the committee the last time, just a little more in depth.

As you know, I'm a member of Parliament from Manitoba. Suzanne, just to loop you in, as you know, Manitoba has the highest percentage of violence against women. We also have one of the highest indigenous populations, mostly young, one of the fastest-

growing populations in Manitoba. We have the highest child apprehension rate. I think it's over 12,000, which is the highest in the world. We're facing significant issues in our female population in Manitoba.

I had asked last time of the department, of the \$66 million in grants and contributions, how much is provided to Manitoba. I know we have only 4% of the population, which is really like \$2.64 million. Given that we have higher needs, I just wanted to see if you have any more information.

If you don't have the exact number, that's fine, but can you provide for me, so I can let my constituents know, what some of the programs are that your department makes available to women in Manitoba?

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: Thank you for the question.

We are looking at figuring out, making sure that we're going to come back in terms of the amount of resources that are going to Manitoba in all of the areas.

We've definitely seen, at our quick glance, that there are projects in Manitoba in all of the work that we're doing. There are projects in the women's program, projects for GBV, as well as LGBTQ2.

We can come back with the exact numbers and dollar figures that would be given to you in terms of that. Is that okay?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Yes, that would be great.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: Okay, great.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: It's actually any information I can provide constituents about the programs you offer, even descriptions of who they can call. That would be great as a parliamentarian to be able to offer that.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: We would absolutely be happy to do that.

There are folks who work in our western region that do visits and outreach in all of the provinces and territories, so that would be no problem.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Perfect. I'll just wrap up with one comment.

I mentioned this last time. I know you have your Edmonton office that serves Manitoba. I just want to encourage you to consider maybe opening a small office in Manitoba given our high needs.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Have you guys worked this out, Ken?

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): No.

The Chair: Ken and Sonia.

Ken would like to speak. We're going to throw the floor over to Ken. He's really excited.

Go for it.

Mr. Ken Hardie: It's a good meeting, Madam Chair.

I used to work at the metro Vancouver transportation authority. We did roads. We also did public transit. Almost by accident, we stumbled into a process where we used what we called a multiple account evaluation on the services that were offered.

We didn't specifically have a gender-based analysis but we did, for instance, put in a process whereby a bus operator was given permission to stop in-between stops to get a woman as close as possible to her home.

This is an example of a lens through which I think a lot of our infrastructure investments should be put. I'm asking whether or not, in fact, a gender-based analysis is being used when we make decisions on what kind of infrastructure to support.

• (1225)

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: For sure that is an excellent example of a gender-based analysis approach to the work that you did. As I said earlier, there's a requirement for gender-based analysis work to be done on any programming that's coming into place through memorandums to cabinet, any new programs that are being developed, all those initiatives, which would allow us to take a really close look at how anything that's going to be introduced would have an impact not only from a gender perspective but from the intersectionality piece.

Persons with disabilities would be an excellent example in terms of the work you did on that project to see how that would impact persons with disabilities.

For us, all new initiatives going through cabinet are required to have a GBA+ lens put on them.

The Chair: You have one minute exactly.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: My riding is Brampton South where there are lots of start-ups, lots of women entrepreneurs. Are any special grants available? Can you elaborate on that?

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: I'm going to start on this with the women's entrepreneurship strategy, and then I'm going to turn it over to Suzanne to talk about the strategy.

As Minister Monsef spoke about earlier, the women's entrepreneurship strategy was introduced. The amount of money that's available for the entrepreneurship strategy is a total of \$2 billion. Recently, I think it was last year, a call for proposal process was announced by the department responsible for the women's entrepreneurship strategy to enable women entrepreneurs to access funding to advance their small business. I can get a little more detail.

The Chair: We're at three minutes.

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: Oh, sorry.

The Chair: Okay, but if you wouldn't mind sending that information to us, that would be very beneficial as well.

I'm going to pass it over to Andréanne for one minute .

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Thank you, Madam Chair.

You have already talked about this issue, but I would like to hear you on it again, as operating expenses seem to have been affected again in the women's program. What was that funding intended for originally? Earlier, it was mentioned that the amount was nearly \$300,000.

[*English*]

Ms. Nancy Gardiner: We received money in operating dollars, which is money we can use to have contacts with organizations or to operate within our own organization to hire staff, but we wanted to use that money for community organizations to work in the community, specifically, for this particular fund, related to men and boys. The \$300,000 was used to support contribution and grant agreements with organizations to allow them to do the work at the community level, as opposed to our doing the work in the department.

The Chair: You have one minute for a final question.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: We were talking about gender equality and its advancement. The minister addressed a bit about pay equity and the legislation. However, at current rates, it looks to be a very long time before we achieve it, 200 years or so.

As Canadian women earn about 32% less and racialized equity-seeking groups earn even less than that, what timelines are you looking at to ensure we get there faster than 200 years?

Ms. Suzanne Cooper: We are working on the pay equity regime [*Inaudible—Editor*] that's leading on that and I know they're looking at making amendments to the Employment Equity Act, for example.

One of our roles is to work with....

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Please repeat what you said, as the interpreter has not heard it.

[*English*]

Ms. Suzanne Cooper: We work closely with labour and ESDC to ensure that we provide them with the research and the gender expertise to make sure we're addressing those issues, but this is under the purview of labour.

The Chair: Once again, I'd like to thank you, but before we move forward, we have the vote on supplementary estimates (B).

DEPARTMENT FOR WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Vote 5b—Grants and contributions.....\$262,865

(Vote 5b agreed to)

The Chair: There's one more vote.

Shall I report the Supplementary Estimates (B) to the House?

Andréanne, we have to report this to the House. This is just about reporting to the House.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Could you please speak a bit slower? That would probably help the interpreters by giving them time to properly understand what is being said. I just wanted to bring up the speed of speech.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, I will speak slower for you.

Shall I report the supplementary estimates (B) to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Wonderful.

Thank you very much, once again, to Nancy, Lisa, Suzanne and Danielle.

This has been a great hour and a half.

We're going to suspend for about two minutes so we can go in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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