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**EVIDENCE**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell**

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# Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Thursday, November 18, 2004

• (0905)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.)):**  
Good morning.

I'd like to call to order meeting 8, for November 18. Pursuant to the order of reference of Tuesday, November 2, 2004, we are looking at Bill C-14, an act to give effect to a land claims and self-government agreement among the Tlicho, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the Government of Canada, to make related amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

This is the second day of our meetings, of listening to witnesses. I'm very pleased to welcome the Tlicho, the grand chief, his negotiators, and his legal counsel.

Good morning to my fellow northerners. As the clerk explained to you, you'll have a chance to do the presentation and take questions afterwards. I know we're missing some of our colleagues, but we want to take most of the time that we have, because there's another meeting here at eleven o'clock this morning.

Again, welcome, Chief Charlie Nitsiza and your crew. You're welcome to start.

**Chief Charlie Nitsiza (Deputy Grand Chief, Dogrib Treaty 11 Council):** *Mahsi.*

I want to talk in my Tlicho language, as a majority of the Tlicho Nation want to hear this. I have with me an interpreter, Eddy Erasmus, to translate for me.

**A voice:** Yes.

**Chief Charlie Nitsiza (Interpretation):** Thank you, committee members, for taking the time to listen to us. If you have any questions after our presentation, I have with me the negotiators. With me are the chief negotiator, John B. Zoe; and our legal counsel, Rick Salter.

I am the chief of Wha Ti, and my name is Charlie Nitsiza. We are the Tlicho. We live in the four communities of Behcho Ko, Wha Ti, Gameti, and Wehweti, in the Northwest Territories.

I speak the Tlicho language and live our way of life. We hunt, fish, and trap.

I would like to thank the elders who have worked with us as advisers during negotiations. We have had four elders working with us from day one, and I would like to thank them. They are Alexis

Arrowmaker, from Wehweti; Jimmy Rabesca, from Wha Ti; Harry Simpson, from Gameti; and Joe Migwi, from Behcho Ko.

During our negotiating process, we have lost some of our elders. One of our elders was our adviser. He was Johnny Nitsiza. He has passed on. And we have also lost one of our chiefs, Chief Eddie Paul Rabesca. But even though we lost members as we were negotiating, we are still committed to finalizing the Tlicho agreement.

• (0910)

**Chief Charlie Nitsiza (Interpretation):** Back in 1921, our leader, Monfwi, signed Treaty No. 11 with Canada. Today, our claim is based on what Monfwi said at that time.

In 1971 Jean Chrétien, as the Minister of Indian Affairs, came to Rae and opened up the school. At that time, Chief Jimmy Bruneau stated that he wanted the Tlicho to be strong like two people. He wanted the Tlicho people to be taught in Tlicho and in the English language. Because of that, today we have a Tlicho dictionary and Tlicho Bible, all written in the Tlicho language.

Our elders and the Tlicho negotiators have negotiated based on that and what Monfwi and Chief Jimmy Bruneau have said. We did our part, and it is now Canada's turn to pass the Tlicho bill. The Tlicho have been waiting patiently for fifteen months, and our elders are anxious to see this bill passed.

The agreement itself has taken over ten years' worth of negotiations since 1992.

• (0915)

**Chief Charlie Nitsiza (Interpretation):** All along, the Tlicho negotiators kept the Tlicho people informed of the negotiations. The Tlicho negotiators shared with the Tlicho people the whole agreement, through assemblies, annual gatherings, and regional meetings.

The Tlicho people mandated the Tlicho negotiators to negotiate the final agreement. The Tlicho people ratified the Tlicho agreement when 92% of those who came to vote actually voted in favour of and accepted the agreement. The Tlicho celebrated this historic day.

The Government of the Northwest Territories passed the Tlicho legislation unanimously in October 2003. It is now Canada's turn to honour its commitment.

• (0920)

**Chief Charlie Nitsiza (Interpretation):** The Tlicho agreement is not just for the Tlicho today; it is for future Tlicho generations. The Tlicho agreement will give us the tools to govern ourselves that we can pass on to our future generations in order that the Tlicho way of life, culture, and language will be protected and will be preserved for generations.

We are preparing our youth for this future. We are working with the schools and agencies to make sure that the youth are prepared by teaching them our way of life—to live on the land, hunt, fish, and trap.

We work with the elders, as they are our link with the past and they ensure our future. We are strong like two people.

The Tlicho ratified and are happy with the Tlicho agreement. The Tlicho people urge this committee to pass the Tlicho bill as soon as possible so that we can make Tlicho self-government a reality.

• (0925)

**Chief Charlie Nitsiza (Interpretation):** On behalf of all of the Tlicho that we represent as leaders of the Tlicho—we represent a little over 3,000 people—we are receiving constant phone calls from our people as to what is happening here. They are watching us. They watch television to see what is happening in the House of Commons. They watch television to see what is happening in the committee meetings. That's why I am urging the committee, the House of Commons, to pass third reading as soon as possible. The Tlicho leaders have been working together and are united. That's why I would just like to say this much to you and I would like to thank you for listening to my presentation.

*Mahsi.*

**The Chair:** We thank you very much for your presentation, knowing that it came from your heart and from your people.

I would like to give an opportunity for the committee members to put questions about the treaty directly to the people who are going to be the beneficiaries.

Mr. Harrison will lead off for the Conservative Party.

**Mr. Jeremy Harrison (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** First of all, I'd like to very much thank the chief and the negotiators for being here today to answer our questions. You have come a long way to be here, and I know everybody on this committee very much appreciates your presence here.

I have a few specific questions.

My party has opposed this, and we do so for a number of reasons. One of the provisions I would like to look at right now is section 7.13.2 of the agreement, which deals with the international legal obligations of the Government of Canada with respect to this agreement. Section 7.13.2 reads:

Prior to consenting to be bound by an international treaty that may affect a right of the Tlicho Government, the Tlicho First Nation or a Tlicho Citizen, flowing from the Agreement, the Government of Canada shall provide an opportunity for the Tlicho Government to make its views known with respect to the international treaty either separately or through a forum.

By my reading, this essentially creates a duty to consult on the part of the Government of Canada with the Tlicho government when signing an international treaty that could have any effect, however oblique that may be, on the Tlicho government.

My first question on this issue would be to ask for some enlightenment as to the reason for the inclusion of this provision. At the last meeting I asked the negotiators from the Government of Canada why this was included, and, quite frankly, I didn't get an answer that I thought was very good. I'm wondering if the Tlicho negotiators could maybe enlighten the committee as to why this provision was included.

**Mr. John Zoe (Chief Negotiator, Dogrib Treaty 11 Council):** My name is John Zoe. I'm the chief negotiator. I will refer this to Rick Salter, our leading counsel.

**Mr. Richard Salter (Legal Counsel, Pape and Salter):** Thank you, John.

Good morning, members of the committee.

I was here on Tuesday when you asked your question to the government, so I can only speak to why we understand it to be in the treaty as being a party to the treaty.

First of all, I wish it were as broad as you said, to be honest with you, because it does not involve a consultation. It says that the government is bound to basically seek the views of the Tlicho government. It carefully did not use the word "consult," which is a defined term in the agreement, which is a much broader consultation, and I think this just reflects what happens now, in effect. When Canada is involved, for example, in international treaty negotiations around the salmon treaty, it always will involve and get the views of those people who are going to be affected. In the case of aboriginal people, they've been involved. This could either be done by asking the Tlicho to be involved individually, as a government, because it directly affects them, or to be part of a broader forum of discussion.

I don't think this represents any change in the way things are now done. I would have been happier if it had said "consult", and if you had been at the negotiating table on the side of Canada we might have been able to achieve that, but we didn't.

Thank you.

• (0930)

**Mr. Jeremy Harrison:** Regarding this provision, again, I have a couple of more questions.

Number one, it isn't made clear in the agreement what happens if the Tlicho don't agree with the treaty that Canada's entering into upon which this provision applies.

Second, I would like to know which side on negotiations insisted that this provision be put into the treaty.

**Mr. Richard Salter:** Madam Chair, I will answer those two questions if I can.

On the first part of your question, in my reading of this clause and in my understanding of what was said at the table, if the views of the Tlicho are obtained and Canada decides to proceed contrary to those views, it is Canada's right to do so. There is no consequence to Canada for not giving in to the views of the Tlicho government.

Second, if the Tlicho were so upset, they would have the same rights as any other citizen or any other level of government in Canada to use the courts, but this provision would not give them any additional legal leverage, in my view, in the courts.

The clause, like a lot of clauses in the agreements.... It is very hard for me, and I've been part of the negotiations from the beginning, to point to one clause and say that was brought on by Canada or this was brought on by Tlicho, because all the clauses have been negotiated. I think what happened here is that after all the self-government provisions were negotiated, the draft of those clauses was circulated to the government and also they circulated within our own side of the table and certain officials said, well, what about Canada's international legal obligations? That's the way it works in the give and take of negotiations, that at the table certain principles are reached, even like an agreement in principle, and then various departments get to have their input.

The Government of Canada, I don't have to tell you, is an enormous operation, and I can't believe sometimes the kinds of concerns that come out of the government from places I never heard of. It was during these negotiations, Mr. Harrison, that I learnt the acronym DFAIT. I think you'd have to ask them that.

**Mr. Jeremy Harrison:** So this was something that came out of DFAIT, then.

**Mr. Richard Salter:** I think they were involved because it involves their jurisdiction. Just as when we talk about things that involve the National Energy Board, the people from the National Energy Board make their opinions known, the people from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans will come and make their opinions known when we're dealing with fisheries issues, and so on. I think that's just the way it works in negotiations, because you have to deal with the whole of the Government of Canada, not just one department.

**Mr. Jeremy Harrison:** At some point I'd like to dig a little further into the DFAIT aspect of this, Madam Chair. But regarding the first question that I asked in that series, the legal counsel indicated that Canada can proceed, in his opinion, but avenues of litigation are open to the Tlicho if they so choose to take advantage of those avenues of litigation.

My concern is that we are really jumping into the unknown on this. If the Tlicho decide to litigate a provision of a treaty that Canada has signed, upon which bears a duty to talk to the Tlicho, my concern is that the directions in which we've seen the courts going, the jurisprudence that we've seen out of the courts, we could be in effect giving a veto over certain parts of our foreign policy to the Tlicho government.

I think this is a legitimate concern, and I've not received a good answer from the government on this, most definitely. I really am worried about this, and I think this is something our party is worried about as well. We haven't received a good answer. I'm hoping we could get some elaboration. I don't know if the legal counsellor of the negotiators can actually provide that. It really is, I think, a leap into the unknown on the part of the government on this particular issue.

● (0935)

**The Chair:** I'll take that as your closing comment for your round of questioning. Thank you.

**Mr. Richard Salter:** Madam Chair, I'm sorry to interrupt, but when I began to answer those questions, I realized I may have cut off Mr. Zoe by mistake.

**The Chair:** Okay, but what we're going to do is do one round of questioning, if you don't mind. I didn't realize we had more than one presenter this morning. I'll do one round, and then we'll go back to John.

Mr. Cleary, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Cleary (Louis-Saint-Laurent, BQ):** First, deputy grand chief, I congratulate you on the splendid work your group has done negotiating this agreement. I read it with a great deal of interest, and all the more so since I have been negotiating for 23 years aboriginal issues. These are issues I had to deal with.

Obviously, there were as many ideas as there were negotiators. But I would rather not put forward my own ideas, because I find you have done your work wonderfully and you received almost unanimous support in your community. As you said earlier, 92% of voters supported the negotiated agreement. The territorial government also supported the agreement, and I hope that, at the Canadian government level, support will be unanimous.

I will try with you to convince the Conservatives to support us in this, because I think you deserve this support. But everything is not perfect on this earth, and societies improve with time.

I would like to go back to an earlier point. We just had questions on international treaties. This might be an enlightening answer. I very often had to negotiate this kind of issue. The difficult part for us was to adjust to international treaties on the migratory birds hunt. The Crees in the North Shore and Lower North Shore areas hunt migratory birds in the Spring. But Spring hunting was forbidden. I do not need to tell you we fought constantly over this. We managed to have the federal government consult with us when it had to discuss this issue.

Why did we get this right to be consulted? It is quite simple. When the Canadian government signs international treaties on trade, it consults with those who trade, it has discussions with various people, and so on, and, in international treaties, it tries to stand for the concerns people have and to get what people want out of the negotiation. The Canadian government, whose role it is to represent us, should take into consideration the results of these consultations. Otherwise, we have a problem.

That is exactly what happens with the Tlichos. And even with them, the federal government does not go as far as real consultations. On that minor aspect, if I had been with you, I would have insisted on getting real consultations. It does not make sense that you should not be consulted. I think it is quite normal that you should be able to give an opinion on treaties affecting you. You made a breakthrough for all aboriginal peoples, and we should be thankful for that. This type of result seems extremely important to me.

Another thing I would like to emphasize, something that strikes me as important and very interesting is the modernization of an old treaty. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada stated clearly that the Government of Canada should try to modernize old treaties. Obviously, this is not the government's policy.

Once again, I congratulate you on a work well done. I had the opportunity to deal with many issues concerning treaties, and I was always answered that they did not want to modernize the treaties. You managed to do that. It is an enormous achievement for all the nations under a treaty, because we now have an acceptable model. And this acceptable model is normal, just, and honest, it is a self-government treaty that includes everything first nation people want in Canada. In your own set of circumstances, you have just done something everybody else wants.

I congratulate you for this.

● (0940)

Personally, I do not intend to indulge in minor and silly questions to try to uncover small problems. There are some, certainly, but you will be able to sort them out. This is what is called a treaty. You sit with another party and can reach an agreement to be able to manage the land in a partnership with governments.

I will stop here because I know you feel you have heard enough from me. But these are the points I wanted to make now, instead of asking questions. I will have the chance to meet with you and ask questions.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm not sure if someone there wanted to comment on the comments. We do have a bit of time.

Mr. Zoe.

**Mr. John Zoe:** I'll take this opportunity to do my presentation.

**The Chair:** I will give you some time. I wasn't aware there were two speakers this morning, so I apologize for that. But I'm not sure how the committee members feel.

**An hon. member:** That's fine.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. John Zoe:** I thought that if I did my presentation, it might clear up some of the things that might be asked later. At the same time, I want to let the committee members know there are three parties to the agreement.

In our party, we have a negotiating team that hasn't changed since day one. We've been consistent. We haven't changed any of our people. The Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories have had new sets of people, so we're used to a reorientation of people we sit down with, and to backtracking to go over things they might not be familiar with as we go along. But that's part of the process. That's part of coming to a consensus with the people we sit with. That has a lot to do with respect.

At the same time, one of the negotiators who worked with me and with everybody else is Eddie Erasmus, who is a lands negotiator. Also with me is Ted Blondin, who is the claims manager, as well as James Wah-shee, who is the self-government negotiator.

All I'm saying is that there is a story behind every picture. This opportunity that we have to make our presentation to Canada is very brief, but there is a good, long, ten-years-plus history. It goes back to the time when....

If people are not familiar with the short history of the Northwest Territories, there were Mackenzie Valley-wide negotiations going on in the 1980s. We were one of the parties to that larger agreement, but that agreement fell apart in 1990. The four of us were involved in that larger agreement starting way back in the early eighties, and we were at the table in 1990 when it fell apart. But we didn't just pick it up and start running with it the next day. Between 1990 and 1992, we undertook an extensive consultation within our own group as to where we would go from there. If we were to go anywhere, then how would we proceed? What kinds of principles were we going to be based on, and what were we trying to achieve anyway? How were we going to keep our people informed? We had to build a structure around it to make sure we were answerable to our people, to make sure they were well informed, because we were doing it for the collective.

We've developed a system of making sure we make our community rounds as often as possible. We use predominantly the Tlicho language, and we have simultaneous translations with us. We videotape almost every large meeting that we have. We record them on cassette tapes. We distribute the written material. We go into the schools. We go to any community activity where we can show our presence, to make sure we have answers for any questions that people have.

When we decided to get into the land claim, in the two-year period one of the principles that was laid down to us was that the agreement should not include extinguishment but should include self-government. At the same time, we should participate in economic development. Those were the bases with which we went into negotiations, and they were fairly broad. Those policies and things didn't exist at the time, but we were part of making sure we participated in a consultation process like the Hamilton report, I believe, on certainty. And we also participated in consultations to develop a self-government policy. Those were developing as we came along.

● (0945)

In 1992, when we got together with all these ideas, we had a large gathering in Rae-Edzo, which is Mbehchoko. We had over a thousand people there for a good three days. We talked about what we wanted to do, and the consensus was that, based on these principles, we should go ahead and put in a statement of claim. We did that in the fall, and it was accepted by the Progressive Conservative government early in the new year of 1993.

Somewhere along the way, we signed an interim provisions agreement that allowed us to get involved with the resource regulatory body. We signed a framework agreement in 1996 that outlined the timeframe we were going to take to negotiate a list of provisions that we put into place and how we were going to conduct ourselves in those talks.

In 1999, in one of our assemblies in Gameti–Rae Lakes, the chief negotiators initialled an agreement in principle that was signed off by the parties in January 2000. That agreement in principle was to allow us to continue to negotiate a complete agreement based on the AIP that we had initialled off.

Working toward the complete agreement took another two years, but here is where we have done something different that was never done in Canada before. If you go by the process laid out for comprehensive claims, it's fairly straightforward as to the steps you take in order to get to a complete agreement. We invented something because we wanted to make sure people were properly consulted, not only amongst ourselves and in the adjacent area, but in the whole of the Northwest Territories.

We had a final agreement by the chief negotiators. We initialled not for the purposes of ratification, but we initialled the first time for the purpose of making that agreement public beyond the normal consultation allowed under the comprehensive policy. This allowed us to invite people through large-scale advertising in the northern papers and on radio and television. We told them to come, because we'd like to listen to them if they had concerns.

We had people from industry and government, we had interest groups, we had people in outfitting, and we had municipalities. We had a wide range of interest groups that made oral presentations. We had meetings like this, where we invited them to come over and do their oral presentations, and we accepted written presentations. And not only that, but we had town hall meetings more than once in the city of Yellowknife, because that's where the largest population is.

We took six months to do that, and it was a good thing for us because it made us make the agreement more clear for those people with concerns in areas that might have been grey for them. It was only after that six-month period that we satisfied ourselves that we were obviously not going to get any more out of the consultations, so this time allowance that we had was complete. It was only after that period that we re-initialled for the purposes of recommending to our principals to accept it for ratification.

● (0950)

In that acceptance, the Tlicho were the first ones to ratify, over a two-day period. And when we say 92%, of course, it's a lot different from what we've been hearing in the last week, which was 84%. The reason is that, of those people who voted, 92% were in approval. But the way it works, there are eligible voters who didn't vote for one reason or another. Those who didn't vote were considered to be a "no" vote. That's the way it worked, and that's how you get the 84% overall.

In August 2003, then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, the Premier of the Northwest Territories, Stephen Kakfwi, and our grand chief signed the completed agreement, which allowed the territorial government to pass legislation in October 2003 by a unanimous vote. They completely agreed with the agreement.

A lot of our people were present to witness that, because, as you know, Yellowknife is only a hundred kilometres away from where we live. There was a huge interest from our community in regard to witnessing this event. You have to remember it's a one-time thing. At the same time, the legislative assembly is not someplace where a

large number of our group have ever visited. So it was an opportunity not only to see the building, but to witness what was going on. We had school buses of high school students who went to observe, we had elders, we had the chief, and we had community members come in, and they witnessed the unfolding of what they'd been working on for over ten years. That was really something, and we had this little tea dance at the end of it in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly. That was something memorable for us.

From there, as we know, it went to Parliament here in Canada, and it went through second reading. That was when the election was called, and we know what happens when there's an Order Paper that's not completed when the election is called.

So while we're sitting here today talking amongst ourselves, we're saying we're really, actually on new ground here, where we haven't been before. It is something for us, and we have this opportunity to say these things.

What I also want to reinforce is that there is a story behind the picture. One of the things Chief Charlie Nitsiza mentioned was that, during this period, a lot of activity has been going on, including the translation of the new testament into Dogrib, and that's one of the ways of reinforcing the language in the Northwest Territories.

● (0955)

We have to remember that in 1992, one of the principles we were abiding by was that while we're negotiating this agreement, we can't ignore the fact that there is development in the north and that we have to continue to participate in it while we try to build our human resource activity at the same time. So during negotiations, we also participated in environmental hearings on the development of three mines, BHP Billiton, Diavik Diamond Mines, and now De Beers. We took the time to sit down there in order to make sure that our way of life, our coexistence with the animals, the environment, would not be damaged and there would be some continuity beyond the development. Our participation was to ensure that the hearings received fair scrutiny on our part.

During that period of negotiations, we also signed overlapping agreements with our neighbouring first nations. There was a whole set of negotiations happening at the same time. The land claim table wasn't the only one. We had the BHP table. We had the Diavik table. We had the De Beers table, which we're working on. We had the first nations group table going on—not only one but two, and not only two but four, all at the same time. So there was a lot of activity.

During that time we took more than a thousand of our own members onto the land. It was more having to do with youth interacting with the elders and also with the leadership, to continue to build unity amongst us, to make sure that people continued to be together.

Also during that time we managed to negotiate and build a 4.3-megawatt hydro dam. That's a whole new set of negotiations, not only with the NWT Power Corporation but also with regulatory agencies, on the financing of those things and the management around setting up as corporations.

Those are things that went on during the last ten-year period. During that time we also set up a scholarship group made up of members of the four communities, through a full-time coordinating office with a budget of over half a million dollars, using our own moneys to make sure that our youth have an opportunity to advance further than the limitations that are present in the Northwest Territories. So we're trying to build human resources while we're at this, trying to prepare.

The people involved have come not only from our team but also from the federal government team, the Government of the Northwest Territories team. Many people, probably hundreds, were involved over the ten-year period. It would be very difficult for me to say all those names. But from my participation in those talks, all the members from all the parties were very professional and they brought in the best of what they know. It wasn't where we went to be confrontational. We didn't want to get to the confrontational stage. There was no reason for it, and there's always a loser in confrontational-style negotiations. One of the things that happened right off the bat was that the three parties agreed that we would start off with a workshop on non-confrontational, more cooperative negotiations where, if we were dealing with an issue, we would place all our issues on the table, expose them, and see the best way of putting the agreement together. That means not only the best for the Tlicho but also the best for the Canadian government as well as the Government of the Northwest Territories.

• (1000)

The principles that supported our teams over the years, and the words put in the agreement, required a lot of work. It also required the confidence of the people we represent, and that's one of the areas we spent a lot of time on.

What do we see Bill C-14 doing? It would recognize our inherency, our ability, our right to pass on those rights to future generations. We were consulted on the drafting of Bill C-14 and the one before that, Bill C-31, the one before the election was called. We heard about it and we consented that it was good for it to go forward.

I know there'll be a lot of technical questions today, and we have people here to answer them. If there are any questions, we'll take them, but at the same time, this is our chance to speak, to tell a little part of the story. It's not an easy thing to try to summarize in a few minutes, but like anything else, if we've been working on something for a long time, we're looking to make sure it completes the journey it started. This is the last part of that journey. For this agreement to continue, we need to make sure it goes back to the House for third reading. We look forward to that day. I'm sure, when we ask for the support of the committee, the quicker they do it, the better.

*Mahsi cho.*

• (1005)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Zoe. I know we do try very hard to put human faces to the pieces of legislation we're dealing with, so I thank you very much for your intervention.

I'll continue the round we had started, beginning with Mr. St. Amand and then back to Mr. Prentice.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to those who have come a great distance to be with us this morning. Thank you for your presence, thank you for your diligence in negotiating the agreement, and, frankly, thank you for your patience with respect to the implementation of this agreement.

Beyond what has been said, and said eloquently, is there any other way in which neighbouring first nation communities will be affected by the agreement?

**Mr. John Zoe:** I'll pass this on to one of the others.

**Ms. Bertha Rabesca Zoe (Legal Counsel, Pape and Salter):** *Mahsi* for your question.

The agreement very clearly states that the agreement will not affect any neighbouring first nations; however, there is a provision in there that they have an opportunity to participate in the.... For example, with the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board, if a neighbouring first nation should come on stream, there is a provision in there to share, to be a member of that panel along with the Tlicho.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** Thank you.

The point has been made that a very large number of persons in your communities have voted in favour of the agreement, be it 84% of eligible or 92% who actually voted. With respect to those who have not voted in favour of the agreement—and I appreciate it's a very small number—were specific concerns voiced or raised by those who are not in approval of this agreement?

**Mr. John Zoe:** Even with the communications plan and all this stuff we've been doing, I guess there always are people we're unable to reach. Not all of the membership live in the four communities. We have people who live in the States and across Canada. We were unable to reach them on a personal level, but we sent them packages of information. Some didn't make it back; people move around. We also had some membership come to us on the very day of voting to say, look, I don't think I voted the right way. But that's the way it is; we have to just accept the decisions we make. There was a lot of regret by some members who might have voted in a way that they weren't completely happy with. And as I say, not everybody lives in the four communities. There are some outside who we might not have had a chance to sit down with.

To get 100% would have been nice, but we're quite happy with the 92% we received.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** As you should be. My question was simply whether or not anyone in your community, or anyone who gained access to the data, expressed a particular or specific concern about any component of the agreement.

**Mr. John Zoe:** Personally, I didn't hear anything; nothing jumps out at me. There might have been some technical questions, but there was no real opposition to any subject matter that might jump out.

• (1010)

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** All right.

As I understand the documentation, both the agreement itself and the Tlicho constitution assert that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms does in fact apply. Concern has been raised in the House of Commons and at this committee level that somehow, for reasons that haven't been articulated, the charter will end up being subservient to this agreement.



Is there any validity to that concern? In what way would any of you, perhaps legal counsel, respond to that suggestion?

**Mr. Richard Salter:** The Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to all Dogrib citizens and Tlicho citizens and to all Tlicho government institutions. That's in the agreement itself. It also is reflected in the constitution that the Tlicho themselves passed, and included in their own constitution.

So the charter absolutely applies. It's actually a little bit beyond the charter; the constitution expresses the protection for individual citizens.

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand:** Just moving to another topic, with respect to non-aboriginal residents, what is the ratio of Tlicho citizens to non-Tlicho residents in the four communities?

**Ms. Bertha Rabesca Zoe:** Wekweti is the smallest of the four Tlicho communities. The majority of the citizens are Tlicho citizens, perhaps with the exception of maybe the schoolteachers they have there and maybe the bank manager. Maybe five or six individuals are non-Tlicho there.

The next-largest community after that is Gameti, which is in a similar situation in terms of the ratio of Tlicho citizens versus non-Tlicho.

The other community is Wha Ti, the second-largest Tlicho community. That's in a similar situation. A lot of teachers live there, and maybe some nurses.

Behcho Ko is the largest aboriginal community in the Northwest Territories and it's the largest Tlicho community. That's where a lot of the non-Tlicho citizens would live. A lot of them tend to be teachers, again, but we also have a lot of non-Tlicho who are long-term northern residents.

So as to the ratio, I would say that of over 3,000 Tlicho people, maybe 300 would be non-Tlicho citizens.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. St. Amand.

We're now going to Mr. Prentice, and this is our second round, so we are down to about five minutes.

Mr. Prentice, Mr. Valley, and Mr. Bellavance. The clock is ticking.

**Mr. Jim Prentice (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

If I might at the outset welcome you, Deputy Grand Chief, and John B. Zoe and Bertha, together with your lawyers.

On behalf of the Conservative Party I would say that there is no doubt in our mind that the Tlicho people have been very ably represented at a political level, following in the tradition of Chief Bruneau and Chief Monfwi, by yourself, Deputy Grand Chief. And there is no doubt in our mind that the Tlicho people have been ably represented throughout these negotiations. That is very clear to us.

Let me also say that I have travelled to your community and been treated warmly and with respect in my visits there. It's funny in a way how life comes around. When I was a young fellow, having graduated from law school, one of the first things I did was my father had taught me to fish when I was a young boy and I decided that as a gift I would take him somewhere. So I went to your community, of

course, and took my father on a fishing trip. He has passed away now, but it's something I will always remember, because I wanted to take him to a community where he would be able to experience catching lots of fish, because it wasn't always that easy when I was a little boy.

I think I've told you this story, Chief Nitsiza, but we fished in the community and on one occasion in the boat we were catching so many fish that my father had to go lie down and rest and relax.

So I have very fond memories of the community, and our party wishes you all the very best. There are aspects of the agreement, in particular the comprehensive claim aspects of the agreement, that will stand your community in very good stead, and we wish you all the very best as you move forward.

We would like to be clear that the concerns we have raised relate more to future governance issues. Really the concerns we have raised relate to Canada at the negotiating table, not the Tlicho community at the negotiating table. We have raised concerns about why Canada and their negotiators have negotiated some of the aspects of the agreement. Those are the concerns we have been raising.

We welcome the dialogue to the extent that you can help us understand some of those issues. For example, my friend Mr. Harrison has raised the question of Canada's international legal position. It should not be surprising to Canada that we are raising these issues because Canada's policy is that in negotiating self-government Canada's international status is non-negotiable. Those are not my words; those are the words written in Canada's policy.

Clearly, what Canada has done is to negotiate in this agreement in a way that is entirely inconsistent with Canada's stated policy. So it should not be a surprise to Canada that we are raising questions of the government as to how that has happened, because either the policy has to change or alternatively their approach in self-government negotiations has to change to reflect the policy. It has to be one or the other. I don't think even the minister disagrees that this is what the policy states.

Those are the kinds of questions that we have been raising. We could talk for a long time, I think, about what these provisions of the agreement relating to international obligations say or mean, but the long and short of it is that Canada has built into the agreement provisions relating to their international obligations, including an arbitration clause, that are entirely inconsistent with their stated policies.

That's just by way of explanation an example of why we are raising some of the concerns that we are. Our concerns relate to the future governance of the north.

•(1015)

I'd like to make it very clear that it is not the intent of the Conservative Party to delay or block the process of your agreement through Parliament, Deputy Grand Chief. We are here in this committee to deal with this agreement as expeditiously as possible. We understand that these negotiations started a long time ago. They actually started under a previous Conservative administration, as I understand it. It is not our intent to slow this down or delay it. We wish to see it dealt with expeditiously. That's the expectation of yourself, your community, and the people who have been involved in the negotiations. So it is our hope that this will move through the committee in a reasonable, expeditious way, and that it will get back to the House of Commons as quickly as possible and we can all get on with our future.

In so doing, it's clear that there are provisions in the agreement we are not comfortable with. The agreement was negotiated under a government with particular ministers, and clearly we would have negotiated a different agreement and given different instructions to the negotiator. It's very difficult at this point to pick and choose through an agreement that has taken ten years to negotiate, I understand that. I'd like to be clear in saying that is the position of our party and where we're coming from. I hope that clarifies matters and puts your mind to rest on some aspects of this.

I don't know if you have a response. For a specific question I'd like to ask that you may want Mr. Salter to answer.

•(1020)

**The Chair:** We'll have to keep the answers as brief as we can to give more time for the other members to ask questions.

Go ahead, Mr. Zoe.

**Mr. John Zoe:** I was saying earlier that this is our only opportunity to give some enlightenment to the agreement and some of the questions that are asked about it. We know that the government has been asked those questions. I think it's important that if there is a different way of saying the same thing to give more comfort.... I have faith and confidence in the way Rick explained it before, but if there's a better way to enlighten and clear up that question, I think we'll give Rick another shot.

**Mr. Jim Prentice:** There's one other aspect to the agreement I'd like to ask Mr. Salter about. My friend Mr. Harrison I think will continue to pursue the question of the international aspect of the agreement.

I'm trying to understand the concurrence aspects of the agreement and the way in which concurrence is resolved in the event of a conflict. I'm looking at section 2.10.7 of the agreement. I don't wish to focus too much on the specific wording of the section. It's a complicated section, but I'm trying to understand. In the event of a conflict between federal government law of general application and a Tlicho law of specific application, which law governs? Specifically, in this section it puts forward that the federal laws that govern are only those of overriding national importance. Do I understand that correctly? How does that relate to a law of general application, and what's the difference?

**The Chair:** Mr. Prentice, I've given you ten minutes, being very generous here. You'll have to try to be a little more respectful of the

other people who want to ask questions. I have both Mr. Valley and Mr. Bellavance patiently waiting. I'm not sure if we should defer the answer.

**Mr. Jim Prentice:** I'll simply defer the question. I don't wish to be disrespectful to Mr. Valley in any way. I'm sure Mr. Salter in his later comments will be able to respond.

**The Chair:** Mr. Valley, please.

**Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm afraid I wasn't waiting very patiently.

First of all, thank you very much for coming here. I'll be quick because I want to get to some questions and give you the floor. You've travelled a long way and you deserve the floor.

First, I have to say it's very clear from my short time here that the other side is delaying this agreement. They're doing it for specific reasons. And to suggest they could negotiate an agreement that would get higher than a 92% approval rating is very hard for me to believe.

That being said, I'll go to the points I want to make. You spoke about the elders from each community who participated; I think you said there was one elder from each community. I always marvel at the patience it takes to deal with government; it takes so long. That point was very important to me, because the elders teach us about patience; they don't get to be elders unless they have a lot of patience. So through you, I would like to thank them for their involvement. Time moves on, and you mentioned that we actually lost an elder, which is unfortunate; but when you deal with government, it takes that much time.

I'm just wondering, when the elders met with you and discussed these things, were they the forum you used to go back to the communities to talk to the other elders, or how did that process work? How were the communities engaged in this process?

•(1025)

**Mr. John Zoe:** The elders who are directly involved are the people we consulted on a daily basis. But in the community consultations we do, we gather all community members and give them information that's fairly new and consult with the members of the community, including a lot of elders, who gave their views. We gather them and try to use them as much as we can; so there were lots of working groups and community consultations.

**Mr. Roger Valley:** You have been down here; we have seen you in the gallery and everywhere else. Can you tell us a little bit of what's going on back home when the community members, the elders, everyone who is involved in the Tlicho agreement, hear of the opposition being put forward to this bill? What do they think of this opposition? Can you give us a sense of what the communities are saying back home?

**Mr. John Zoe:** We have to constantly spend our time on the phone to assure people that this is Ottawa, where they do things a little differently than in a northern community, where there's much more reliance on each other to survive, in terms of harvesting of the wildlife for survival. So there is a lot more dependence on each other there, and some understanding in a community that we have to feel comfortable with each other.

But in a larger centre where the majority of people haven't been to Ottawa or don't know what it looks like, it can be quite deceiving that people wouldn't agree on the paper that affects only those up in the north. A lot of questions are raised—what do they mean; what do they mean by this and what do they mean by that? So we have to be on the phone to assure them. They're constantly watching the CPAC channel to find out when it's on; they record it, discuss it, and try to keep up to date as much as they can. There is a lot of disappointment, I guess, among the community members, especially the elders, because they don't have a comprehension of why people might be opposed or why they say things.

**Mr. Roger Valley:** Thank you.

When you speak to them back home, please pass on that when anyone takes a look at the agreement in total, they see support for it. When you take a small piece at a time, you can find arguments against it; but if you take the time to look at the entire agreement, you'll find support for it.

That being said, please send the message back home that we will get this done. We will do our very best to make sure it moves as quickly as possible. We want to see this pass before we face any other delays.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Valley.

We're now going to Mr. Bellavance.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much for being here. I hope that when Mr. Valley talked about members of the opposition and members opposite, you understood that Bloc Québécois members are not among those who oppose this agreement. You know that, and I should not need to mention it.

We are honoured that you put your trust in us, even if we are a party whose primary concern is to represent Quebec, but we share the values you put in this agreement. We are in total agreement with self-government for aboriginal peoples. That is why we have supported you in all the work you have done. Thank you for meeting with us and explaining what you had in mind. You put in this agreement your values, your heart and your spirit. That is why we will not want to drag our feet and delay this process. On the contrary, we are going to support all your claims. I think you know that, but I wanted to confirm.

Two days ago, ministers and Indian Affairs officials appeared before this committee. We had a few technical questions, but we did not get all the answers we wanted. I think you are in the best position to give them.

The first one deals with the legislation to ratify agreements on comprehensive land claims. In the past, these bills used to be binding on the crown. It was the case in Bill C-31 that came before Bill C-14 and died on the order paper because of the election.

Bill C-14 does not have this clause that binds the crown. When we asked departmental officials about this, their answers did not seem very clear.

I would like to know why you agreed to have this clause removed from Bill C-14. What could be the impact of not having the crown bound by the legislation?

• (1030)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Salter.

**Mr. Richard Salter:** Merci, Monsieur. I have to speak English to you.

Merci.

[*Translation*]

**M. André Bellavance:** No problem.

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard Salter:** You ask a very good question.

The bill as presently drafted, Bill C-14, has changed from the previous bill that died on the order paper, Bill C-31.

On the issue of the language that the crown is bound, I agree. Clause 3 of Bill C-14 was reworked, and it is our very strong view that the present language in Bill C-14 does bind the crown and all of its institutions. The agreement, of course, binds the crown in many ways, but we agree with the change that was made, as reflected in the statements made by the Department of Justice in front of this committee on Tuesday, that the present language binds the parties more specifically, and any of their institutions, absolutely.

We know how important that is, and we're also sensitive to the history of struggle around this issue that Mr. Cleary spoke about on Tuesday.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Bellavance:** So, you do not think this is a step backward, compared with the previous bill?

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard Salter:** It is not a step backward, Madam Chair. The crown is still bound, and they agreed with that on Tuesday. We think this language is better because the law is evolving on this issue. We don't have time to have a legal seminar, but I respect the member's questions; we were very worried about it and satisfied ourselves that the crown is absolutely bound. In some ways this is an advance on the previous draft.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Bellavance:** Earlier, Mr. Cleary had more considerations to make.

[English]

**The Chair:** You have about ten seconds.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Bellavance:** I am sure he can do it in ten seconds.

**Mr. Bernard Cleary:** Ten seconds? I would rather pass. I will ask my question at the next turn.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We have Mr. Smith next.

**Mr. David Smith (Pontiac, Lib.):** Madam Chair, gentlemen, ladies, people from the gallery, first of all I would like to thank everybody for being here and having the opportunity to discuss with you on a subject that is important to everyone and that seems to be very important to everyone sitting around the table. I share many thoughts and many visions stated by Mr. Valley and even some of Mr. Cleary's points. I can tell you that some members around the table are concerned. It's okay. It's called a discussion. Once we clarify the points, the concerns should be put aside.

I have a question for your legal adviser on section 2.10.7, which is the question of federal law, as to which law will prevail. I would like you to please comment on that point as to what is your understanding of this.

•(1035)

**Mr. Richard Salter:** Thank you very much.

Madam Chair, I'll try in answering the member's question to also deal with the question asked by Mr. Prentice.

I think I should just state for the record what the basic concept in the agreement is, rather than us getting knotted up in these words. The basic concept of the agreement is that federal laws of general application are paramount to Tlicho laws. The agreement then goes on to say that where you have a federal law that is specific to a Tlicho citizen, to the Tlicho government, or to the Tlicho institutions, then the Tlicho law would be paramount. In other words, there would be no sense in reaching an agreement that the laws of general application are paramount if we left open the possibility that at some future date some bad government in the future could try to pass a specific law that was directed solely at the Tlicho or their institutions in order to change something that was already agreed to or to interfere with their own laws. So in that very specific case the Tlicho law would be paramount.

With regard to the laws of the Government of the Northwest Territories, if there is a conflict, then the Tlicho law would be paramount. But let me state that what we've done here should be of positive excitement to most people in this country, because what this agreement says is that the laws—all the laws—continue to apply. So if John B. Zoe wants to drive his car 110 kilometres an hour through Yellowknife, he can't stand up and say, hey, Tlicho law doesn't say I can't. He's bound by the laws of the City of Yellowknife just like you would be, Mr. Smith. All of the laws of Canada will continue to

apply just like they do to other citizens. That is what we mean by the concurrence.

In section 2.10.7 it deals with a whole other very specific issue. I just want to say this for Mr. Prentice's benefit if I could, Madam Chair, because I'm sneaking an answer into his question....

**The Chair:** I remind you to address your remarks to the chair.

**Mr. Richard Salter:** To the chair. I'm sorry, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, section 2.10.7 deals with the situation in which the Tlicho agreement provides that in regard to self-government rights, if the negotiators weren't so smart as to imagine every possible self-government right that might be available now or in the future, there's a way to reopen it and discuss that self-government right if something in the future comes up. Section 2.10.7 deals with that eventuality. It is not a part of the process in dealing with the concurrence of laws.

Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'm sorry for...

**Mr. David Smith:** To my understanding, the Tlicho agreement is the same thing for Tlicho citizens and citizens in my riding and people all over. This being said, I'd like also for a final time today maybe to review the point on international trade.

If you could indicate to me your understanding of what.... When we look at the beginning of the agreement there is, in layman's words, a short dictionary that defines words used inside the agreement. To my understanding, it's that the international trade subject that the Tlicho community or government can be.... Their opinion can be asked, but if there isn't an agreement between Canada and the Tlicho on a specific point, it is Canada's position to go ahead even without the support of Tlicho government. Is this correct?

**Mr. Richard Salter:** That's absolutely correct. There is nothing in this agreement that interferes with Canada's jurisdiction to enter into international agreements.

**The Chair:** Going back to the Conservative Party now, Mr. Harrison, please.

•(1040)

**Mr. Jeremy Harrison:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

As my colleague from Calgary Centre North pointed out, we very much applaud the Tlicho negotiators. I want to reiterate that our disagreements aren't with the Tlicho people. We have, I think, legitimate concerns with some of the positions taken by the Government of Canada in the process of this, not with the Tlicho.

One section I would like to draw the committee's attention to would be section 27.6.1, the very last section in the agreement, actually. This deals with agreements for equivalent benefits. One of the things I think we've made very clear is that we would like to see certainty and finality in self-government agreements. What this section essentially does, as the minister pointed out in the last committee meeting, is this section created certainty. But in my opinion, what it creates is a certainty that the agreement can be reopened if there's the discovery of a new right by the Supreme Court or by another court of competent jurisdiction.

I'm wondering if anybody could comment as to whether this is a standard type of provision in a self-government agreement, or whether this is the first time this type of provision, whereby any new rights that are discovered will be incorporated into the agreement as it is now, is put into an agreement.

**The Chair:** Mr. Salter.

**Mr. Richard Salter:** Madam Chair, this is not the first time that similar language has been in an agreement. The Yukon self-government agreement has a similar clause that has been given effect by federal legislation.

**The Chair:** Mr. Harrison.

**Mr. Jeremy Harrison:** That was the extent of my questions.

**The Chair:** Okay.

We have roughly 15 minutes, so we have Ms. Barnes next on the questioning list.

**Hon. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

I have talked to each of you individually, and you know that you have my full support and congratulations. I hope that we move expeditiously from this side of the table. I'm very grateful to the two out of three opposition parties that have expressed their support also.

In the interests of trying to assist those who are not yet supportive, I will bend over backwards in providing information and trying to give explanations, as long as I believe that they are truly trying to find those answers. That's what sometimes concerns me. We've heard not only from the legal counsel but also the justice department definitively on these points on numerous occasions. From my perspective, the answers have all been given on the international legal question.

I do want to explore with you, though, section 2.10.2, and I'm going to Mr. Salter, who I know is a very experienced counsel over many years. With regard to section 2.10.12, when I've listened to the debates, I've heard some things about weapons and dangerous substances on lands. I'm concerned that this section 2.10.12 has been misinterpreted as a suggestion of an area that would be permissive, as opposed to exclusionary. I know it relates to section 2.10.2, of reopening future potential.

Either Mr. Zoe or Mr. Salter, could you just go over those with the viewpoint of trying to explain what those sections are about, as opposed to the nitty gritty of these sections? I think there has potentially been confusion in some honourable members' minds about them.

**The Chair:** Mr. Salter, please.

**Mr. Richard Salter:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The list in section 2.10.12 covers those areas that have already been incorporated in the agreement and therefore would not be open to reopening under section 2.10.2.

**Hon. Sue Barnes:** To be clear, then, Madam Chair, paragraph 2.10.12(b), "intoxicants, weapons and dangerous substances on Klichu lands", could not be reopened.

•(1045)

**Mr. Richard Salter:** It cannot be reopened. It's already been dealt with within the agreement.

**Hon. Sue Barnes:** Thank you very much. I hope that clarifies that point and we don't have to hear about that in the future.

Not everyone is a lawyer, and probably the world is grateful for that, but some of us are, and some of us realize that the terms we throw around very easily, like general laws and specific laws, may need further clarification for other parties. Could you just give a very definitive explanation of what a specific law would be? I don't want people thinking things apply if they can't apply here.

**Mr. Richard Salter:** Madam Chair, when we talk about laws of general application—and you can imagine how difficult it is for us to talk about these things at a Tlicho gathering of a thousand people—we're talking about a law that has passed, that applies to everyone, that applies to, for example, all the lands, if it has to do with lands, and isn't directed at a particular group or a particular location, which we would call a specific law. That's what we mean when we talk about laws of general application. We're talking about most of the laws that are passed by, for example, the Parliament of Canada.

**Hon. Sue Barnes:** Thank you very much.

My final question—to anybody at the table—is what are the Tlicho doing to prepare to implement the Tlicho agreement? There are many, many parts to this. It's going to take capacity building, and I know there is preparation on human resources. How are you going about this? I know any one of you is capable of answering this question, but I'd like it for the record.

**Ms. Bertha Rabesca Zoe:** Thank you for your question.

*Mahsi,* Madam Chair.

We have to understand that the Tlicho are not creating something new here. The Tlicho are putting into reality, through this agreement, what they have been doing for thousands of years. They're using existing processes, traditional governance methods. In doing what we have always been doing, the Tlicho are not creating something new.

Since the interim measures agreement was passed when they were in the initial stages of negotiations, the Tlicho people have been actively involved in environmental management. In John's earlier statement he talked about involvement in the three diamond mines and in the negotiations of impact and benefits agreements as well as environmental management agreements. They've been actively involved in environmental hearings in the regulatory processes.

The Tlicho have also actively participated in the social and educational programs in the area. They've been heavily involved in the Dogrib Community Services Board. Also, as John said, the Tlicho have been funding their own scholarship programs of about \$600,000 annually to benefit and invest in the young people who are going to be the future generations.

We have predominantly Tlicho-speaking teachers in the communities. John has also stated, as did the deputy grand chief, that Tlicho is the predominant language in the communities. The elders and the young people still speak the language.

The Tlicho have also been involved in developing the addictions strategy for the whole area of the Tlicho region. They've spent over a million dollars so far of their own money to fund this strategy and to train local community addiction counsellors. I think we have 20 trained addiction counsellors for the whole region.

In addition to that, we've been working on implementing the Tlicho agreement. We've done numerous activities in those areas. We have various working groups set up that are dealing with the Wekeezhii Land and Water Board, the Wekeezhii Renewable Resource Board, and land protection and land management, just to name a few.

We have also started completing the capacity building through our youth and our training programs and identifying various people to help in setting up the new Tlicho government.

So we've embarked on an ambitious human resources program.

The Tlicho are getting ready for effective dates. And as the deputy grand chief has said, the Tlicho urge this committee and the House of Commons to pass the agreement as soon as possible so that the self-governance of the Tlicho will be a reality.

●(1050)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We're now going to Mr. Cleary as the final questioner.

We will also give a little time for your closing remarks and for more information on our schedule for the next weeks.

Mr. Cleary, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Cleary:** When I congratulated the Tlicho negotiating team on its splendid achievement, I forgot to congratulate the government team as well. Basically, both teams are as important in any negotiation. When they do not cooperate, they never achieve anything. That is why I congratulate the Canadian team for its open mind and its hard work to sell this agreement to its principals. I just wanted to be honest with everybody and mention this.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Cleary.

We are now going to have closing remarks from the presenters. I want to thank you very much for being here with us. I'll give you an opportunity to close the meeting.

I have to say, in case I don't have time to say a few words, I'm very honoured to be sitting here in this chair as your legislation is going through. This is a little different for John and me from our grade nine class—we didn't ever think we'd be sitting in a great room in the House of Commons working on an important piece of legislation for people of the north.

So again, I'm very honoured to be sitting here, having you here as a presenter and chief negotiator on a very important piece of legislation for this country and for the Tlicho. I want to give this opportunity for a few closing remarks.

First of all, I want to make sure I have everyone's attention to say that for next committee sitting, which is November 23, we will have Premier Joe Handley representing the Government of the Northwest Territories as a third party to this agreement. Then we'll have a few more sitting days to listen to witnesses.

We would like to make December 2 the last day for witnesses to appear before this committee. Therefore, if all members agree, we would like to make December 3, at 5 p.m., the deadline to send amendments to this legislation to the clerk, if we could have your cooperation on that. Then we hope to do clause-by-clause by December 7. This is the schedule we hope to get approval on from the committee members.

I take that as consent for what I've just outlined.

Thank you.

**Hon. Sue Barnes:** Just for clarification, what day are we doing clause-by-clause?

**The Chair:** December 7.

**Hon. Sue Barnes:** Okay.

**The Chair:** And December 3 at 5 p.m. will be the deadline for any amendments anyone might choose to present to our committee.

Without further ado, because I know there's another committee coming in, I'd like to give this opportunity to the deputy grand chief for some closing remarks.

●(1055)

**Chief Charlie Nitsiza (Interpretation):** Thank you for listening to us and for giving us a chance, an opportunity, to present to you on our agreement. As I hear the people around the table, it looks to me like we have a majority of support. Our people in our communities are probably listening in on television.

The Tlicho people and the elders have worked together for many years on this. We would like to see this agreement passed as soon as possible. We have gone this far, and it took us many years; we'd like our future generations to have an opportunity to exercise their rights, their government, in the future.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Again, on behalf of the committee, thank you for coming to Ottawa to present the people's position. Congratulations to all of you for the great work you've done on behalf of the people.

I always like to remember the ones who are not with us today and who I know have travelled with you on this very long road. I pay tribute to those people. I know they will not be forgotten.

This type of work takes many years, I know, and puts a lot of stress on the families too. Again, I congratulate you for all this work. We look forward to expeditious travel for this bill. We hope to stick with the schedule I outlined this morning.

Again, thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.









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