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Mr. Massimo Pacetti

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• (1440)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.)): Good afternoon. Thank you for coming and taking time out of your day to make yourselves available to us.

We're here pursuant to Standing Order 83.1 for pre-budget consultations for 2005.

Normally I allow you seven to eight minutes for your opening brief, if that's possible. If you can keep within that timeframe, I'd appreciate it. I don't want to interrupt, but if I have to, I will. It's getting late in the afternoon, so our attention span is shorter, and I want to give the members an opportunity to ask questions. So please, let's try to stick to the timeframe.

I have here a list of groups, and we're going to go in the order I have here. I have, from the Indian Taxation Advisory Board, Mr. Jules.

Mr. Jules, you're first up to bat.

Mr. Clarence (Manny) Jules (Chairman, Indian Taxation Advisory Board): Thank you.

I am Manny Jules. I am Secwepemc. I am from Kamloops, and I'm also the chair of the Indian Taxation Advisory Board.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before the Standing Committee on Finance to present the Indian Taxation Advisory Board pre-budget submission. This is the seventh time we have made a submission. We are pleased that this committee has supported the principal recommendation in our past submissions. Over the last seven years we have called for the creation of a first nation tax commission and the institutional framework to support improved first nations statistics, financial management, and infra-structural financing tools.

On March 23 of this year, the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act received royal assent. We would not have achieved this without your support. Thank you.

Together we have established a precedent for Canada. Now first nation leaders and Parliament can use a similar approach to what was established through the Fiscal and Statistical Management Act for other pieces of first nation legislation. We now have a model to take the Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs apart, one clause and one brick at a time. We are excited about the responsibility of implementing the Fiscal and Statistical Management Act. We want to share in the greatness of Canada. We recognize the price of greatness is responsibility. We are standing on the threshold of a new

relationship. We don't want to be dependants; we want to be partners in Canada.

We want to be partners in the productivity challenge facing Canada. We're the fastest-growing component of the Canadian labour force. We're also the most underemployed. Our lands are also underused. This situation simply cannot be allowed to continue. However, the challenges of improving first nation productivity are different from those faced by the rest of the country. Our problem isn't market adjustment. Our problem is getting the market to work in the first place.

The most common question I am asked is, why are first nation communities so much poorer than the rest of Canada? The answer to that is it's simply too difficult to do business in first nations country. Investors will spend four to six times longer getting a project to construction on our lands. Not surprisingly, we receive only a tiny share of private investment. Private investment represents 80% of all investment in Canada. I would be surprised if private investment represented 8% of all investment on our lands. The truth is we cannot reduce disparities and improve first nation productivity if we do not address this problem.

Public investments in education, training, housing, child welfare, and business development will all be less effective as long as private investment is stifled. There will be no job or business opportunities on first nations lands. Moneys that flow into first nations will continue to flow out. Big investments in child welfare, housing, and business development will help first nations. But unless we complement these initiatives with initiatives that allow the market to work, we will not get the most out of these investments.

I would like to present some proposals to allow the market to work on first nation lands. These initiatives address problems that have been identified by first nations who have generated investments.

To begin, we need a first nations land registry to provide basic certainty over land title. This will provide investors with the most basic types of certainty. Without a proper land registry, our land will continue to be undervalued by investors.

Second, we are proposing the establishment of open-market housing on first nations. We need to have the same right to equity and wealth in our homes that other Canadians take for granted. Some have proposed that this can be accomplished through certificates of possession on first nation lands. Although this may be ownership, it is certainly not an open market. The result is that certificate of possession homes are worth one-tenth of what comparable homes are worth off reserve.

We need to be able to buy and sell homes on our lands just like other Canadians. We have demonstrated that this is possible in my community through long-term leases. A number of first nation persons have already bought homes in the Sun Rivers development. Some of them have sold their homes for capital gain. This has been part of the housing solution. Participating first nations will be able to build more houses. We estimate that for the same money that is spent on our housing, at least five times as many homes could be built.

•(1445)

Perhaps more importantly, our proposal will also provide people with the ability to earn equity in their own homes. They need this equity to start businesses. They will also be able to compete for the best mortgages, just like other Canadians. Many people are skeptical that this is possible. I invite you to Sun Rivers to see it for yourself.

Third, we need a first nations school of taxation. There is no school for administrators to provide the skills needed to meet the unique requirements for developing first nation economies. ITAB has provided some necessary training, but when the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act is in force, we will need to expand the scope and scale of this training. Over the past 15 years we have developed much of the unique expertise and curriculum for facilitating first nation investments. Our school of taxation will be a forum so that it can be shared with other first nations. These types of skills have not been available at any other institution in the country.

Fourth, we need a first nations infrastructure program. This is a dedicated infrastructure program for first nations that would be similar to what provinces did for their small local governments. The provinces recognized that their smaller communities were caught in a development trap. They needed infrastructure to attract development and investment, but needed the revenue to build infrastructure. By providing them with the initial infrastructure grant to complement these other financial instruments, these small communities were able to attract investment and become more self-sufficient. Ultimately, this saved provinces money. The ITAB is proposing a similar infrastructure program to complement the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act.

Last, we need to establish the fiscal and statistical institutions as special agencies, clearly separated from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. This should be done for two reasons: creating independent first nation institutions will create trust and reduce regulatory costs; secondly, it is time for Canada to send a signal around the world that it is serious about getting rid of the Indian Act and taking apart the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Our initiatives will do what no other first nation institutions have successfully done to date. We will bring private sector resources to bear on first nation disparities. Unless this happens, disparities

cannot be corrected. We will not attempt to bribe the market with subsidies. Our ideas are about reducing transactional costs so that the market works. We will engage first nation administrations on the task of facilitating investment at the local level. This means bringing local expertise to work and creating a more responsive government. We will focus on creating incentive for good government and good accountability, rather than attempting to impose these. In short, we will help attract private investment on first nation lands; we will generate independent revenues for first nation governments; we will build an institutional framework for accountable and responsible first nation governments; we will enhance Canada's reputation; we will raise our standard of living and we will raise Canada's productivity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Jules.

From the Vancouver Port Authority, Mr. Cox.

Mr. Jim Cox (Vice-President, Infrastructure Development, Vancouver Port Authority): And Lori Lindahl. Lori is going to make the presentation, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Lori Lindahl (Vice-President, Human Resources and Corporate Services, Vancouver Port Authority): Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, honourable members, we would like to thank you today for this opportunity to speak to you about the Port of Vancouver and how changes are needed to federal budgetary policy for the Vancouver Port Authority to fulfil the public mandate assigned to it by the Government of Canada.

Today we can confidently tell you that Canada's largest port is in the midst of a period of unprecedented growth and opportunity. We can also tell you that such opportunity comes with many challenges—challenges that could prevent the Port of Vancouver from maximizing its growth potential in the future. The good news is that these obstacles are not insurmountable. In fact, many are being addressed. But we still have a lot of work to do to achieve our full potential as Canada's Pacific gateway port.

In our allocated time, we want to share with you the nature of this work. We also want to clarify that it's work that cannot be conducted in isolation. We need the support of business and we need the support of the communities within which we operate. Of course, we also need the support of government, and we specifically need federal support on several key priorities to ensure that Canada's Pacific gateway is equipped to capture projected growth opportunities and overcome anticipated challenges.

Each year, the Port of Vancouver trades \$43 billion in goods with more than ninety trading economies. Our latest economic impact study, released only months ago, indicates that there is growth across all our sectors and that port activities generate annually 30,100 direct jobs across Canada, \$1.5 billion in direct wages, \$4 billion in total GDP, and \$411 million in federal taxes. While this activity has been the cause of tremendous excitement and optimism, it has also generated considerable challenges.

Our first challenge is to ensure that we have sufficient terminal capacity at our port to handle projected growth. That's why we have five different projects either planned or underway to expand container terminal capacity at the Port of Vancouver. Capital cost for these projects are expected to be in excess of \$1.4 billion.

But in addition to port infrastructure development, the port authority is working to improve the capacity and efficiency of Canada's supply chain, because we've said it many, many times before. We can build all the terminal capacity in the world, but it doesn't mean anything without an efficient road and rail system to get our products to market.

The efficiency of Canada's supply chain is critical to our ability to accommodate international trade through the Port of Vancouver. We recognize that our customers are focusing on the entire supply chain. They're looking for end-to-end solutions. They want to know their cargo is moving quickly, efficiently, and reliably from origin to destination, and that every step in the supply chain is integrated and optimized.

Some people point at the commercial success of Vancouver and question the need for more federal government resources toward it. There is no denying that we have been successful in recent years, but I hasten to add that we are reaping the benefits of planning and spending decisions that predate the present six-year-old regulatory model. The financial environment under which port authorities were first conceived is radically different today. Self-sufficiency, user-pay, and cost-recovery were the mantras of the early 1990s as the federal deficit bottomed out at \$46 billion and the long-term debt was many times that amount. Regulatory models were driven by an acute need within the federal government for revenue wherever and whenever it could be extracted. Now the federal ledger is in surplus and long-term debt is dropping, and the Asia-Pacific opportunities—a mere hypothesis fifteen years ago—are a cornerstone of any global business plan.

We say to this committee of Parliament that it's time to eliminate outdated economic assumptions and to apply financial resources to the needs of Vancouver and other ports, based on the realities of the 21st century marketplace. The present prohibition on federal allocation for infrastructure projects is not only working at cross-purposes to our assigned mandate as an agency of the Crown, it flies in the face of plans to reap the maximum benefit of skyrocketing Asia-Pacific trade.

Our U.S. competitors—primarily Seattle in this case—are subsidized to the tune of billions of dollars at all three levels of government. Without the cost of borrowing that we must endure, U.S. ports will continue to buy business away from us. It is clearly in the public interest that Canadian port authorities should be eligible

for the same grants and funding available to other Canadian companies.

● (1450)

To its credit, the provincial government in British Columbia is doing its part with its Pacific gateway strategy. However, there is an important role for the federal government, and it needs to step up to the plate soon.

Container terminal capacity and an improved supply chain are only part of what's required. There's a great deal more to be done to ensure that the Port of Vancouver continues to provide reliable and competitive service to its customers and achieves its growth targets. One might ask further, given that we are the agent for Canada's international trade expansion, why our federal government is collecting money to go into general revenues when it could be invested in port development. Vancouver already generates tax revenues of \$411 million for the federal government, and our economic impact amounts to \$4 billion in GDP. Instead of collecting an annual gross revenue charge on our earnings along with other administrative costs, it would make the most sense for this money to be left in port hands for strategic reinvestment within our business.

For the Port of Vancouver to really compete on the world stage, and particularly with our U.S. counterparts, we cannot have our eligibility to access federal funds limited in this way. These are funds that can make the difference between our port becoming a continental gateway, or losing important business to competing ports around the world.

As we have said, the efficiency of transportation networks is crucial to the port's ability to deliver goods to market. That's why we're asking for federal support for highway and rail infrastructure projects laid out by B.C.'s gateway program. The federal government must also ensure Canada's railways operate in a taxation climate that incents them to invest in new infrastructure that is critical to the success of Canada's Pacific gateway.

Tax incentives and other means, such as an accelerated capital cost allowance, are required to promote investment in productivity in the logistics supply chain. Additionally, federal support toward the development of grade-separated rail crossings and communities affected by port development is key to obtaining local community support for the expansion initiatives that are in the nation's interest.

We hope we've helped you understand the opportunities and challenges facing the Port of Vancouver today, as well as the things we must do to address our key priorities. Ultimately there's a tremendous amount of optimism around our business today. We're ideally positioned to benefit from the massive increase in Asia-Pacific container trade forecast for the next 10 to 15 years. But without federal support our key priorities cannot be addressed, and if this happens it will be Canadians who lose out.

In 2004 the Port of Vancouver contributed \$8.9 billion in total economic output to the Canadian economy. Taxes to governments amounted to \$763 million, and \$411 million of that went to the federal government. Triple those numbers and you'll get the idea of what's at stake.

Thank you for your attention today.

• (1455)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lindahl.

Just for your information, the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council didn't show up this morning. We got their brief but we didn't hear their submission, so if questions are asked, you can maybe discuss that as well later on.

Next, from the Poverty and Human Rights Centre, is Ms. Young.

Ms. Margot Young (Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, University of British Columbia; Advisor, Poverty and Human Rights Centre): Thanks.

My name is Margot Young and I'm an associate professor, Faculty of Law, University of British Columbia. I'm also the advisor to the Poverty and Human Rights Centre, a B.C.-based human rights advocacy group working particularly on issues of social and economic rights and equality. I am as well part of a large community university research alliance across Canada, the SSHRC project looking at social rights accountability.

I have two sorts of comments today, both of which provide important principles that should structure budgetary discussions.

The first and largest portion of what I want to say today is to talk about the failure of the federal government to conduct a gender budget analysis in the face of Canada's formal commitments, both internationally and domestically, to do so. Second, I want to remind the committee of the series of important concerns expressed over the last few years by a number of international human rights committees about the numerous breaches of Canada's international human rights obligations, and emphasize that these should be of particular import in budgetary considerations.

To begin, the first issue is gender analysis of economic policy and budgets. In 1995 the Government of Canada agreed to undertake a gender analysis of all its macroeconomic policies and its budgets, yet to date no federal minister of finance has begun this promise, although the current minister has promised publicly to do so. By adopting the Beijing platform for action in 1995, the government acknowledged that a commitment to gender equality requires a commitment to resources for programs that make positive change possible. Fiscal policy is, of course, the way commitments become realities. Government budgets are important tools for tackling underlying inequalities through the allocation of public resources,

and gender analysis of the budget tracks the government's stated goals and priorities and allows assessment of whether or not the government is putting its money where its mouth is.

An independent non-governmental gender analysis was done recently for the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action by a prominent Canadian economist. This analysis shows that in fact, in good times and in bad times, the federal spending priorities have actually run counter to the promises the government made ten years ago to improve Canadian women's economic equality and security.

Between 1984 and 2004, the economy grew by 63%. That's almost \$480 billion more each year in market value that was produced by Canadians—yet, over the same decade, a large and growing number of women have seen their pay rates stagnate, while their costs have risen for basic provisions like housing, tuition, child care, transit, and so on. During the deficit era from 1995 to 1997, the spending cuts initiated by the government were disproportionately harmful to women, especially to the most vulnerable of women. Almost \$12 billion a year was lost in federal funds for critical programs in this period. In particular, the restructuring of fiscal arrangements with the provinces and territories destabilized, and resulted in the underfunding of, programs and services on which the women of Canada disproportionately rely.

These deep cuts balanced the books years ahead of the schedule, which raised the question of whether the severity of the cuts was necessary in the first place. With that said, we're now in a surplus era; it looks as though we're going to remain in one for some time, but the federal government has still not redressed the damage done to Canadian women during the deficit era.

The way the surplus has been allocated between 1998 and the present has ruled out any serious systemic response to the problems faced by women and by other vulnerable and marginalized groups in Canadian society. The government continues to allocate vastly more to tax cuts and to paying down the debt than it does to restoring the essential Canadian programs and services cut in the deficit era.

• (1500)

Were there more time, I could detail some of the initiatives that are problematic, but I do want to mention that the single largest initiative to alleviate the effects of poverty, which is the Canada child tax benefit and its supplement, remains discriminatory in the clawback by some provinces and territories, with the federal government's consent, of the supplement from the poorest of our Canadians families, those who are reliant on social assistance.

So it's a question of priorities. Canada must look after its vulnerable citizens. Small government is antithetical to the interests of women. Women need the systems that government can put into place to protect basic income security, address violence and injustice, and ensure quality and accountability in the provision of public good, such as child care and health care. Canada's current economic strength, virtually unparalleled among the other G-7 nations, means that the fiscal capacity is here, that government has enough resources to honour the commitments to women's equality it has already made, both in the domestic law and international arenas, and it must do so.

I will conclude by referencing for the committee's benefit the number of recent United Nations human rights monitoring committee observations on Canada. Canada has come up for review under such committees as the CEDAW committee, the human rights committee, the economic, social and cultural rights committee. Each of these committees has expressed in its concluding observations a number of serious concerns and reservations about Canada's observation of its international human rights. Most recently, in 2003 the CEDAW committee elaborated on a number of matters it was concerned about with respect to women's rights in Canada. More particularly, all of these committees have been concerned about the restructuring of CAP to CHST, and now to CHT and CST, and the removal of national standards from the significant federal transfer to the provinces for social programs.

Committees have been concerned about the rates of women's poverty, in particular the poverty rates of groups like single-mothered families. They've been concerned about the absence of adequate pay-equity legislation across many jurisdictions in Canada; about the disproportionately unfortunate circumstances, both economically, in terms of educational access and so on, of aboriginal women; about the absence of coherent federal housing programs; and about the inability of the federal government to set up a universal, public, quality, accountable system of child care across Canada.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Young.

I have the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia, Mrs. Slack.

Mrs. Sarah Slack (Assistant Executive Director, Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia): Thank you.

The Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. is a provincial non-profit organization that's been active for 39 years in providing leadership in public education on the issues of income security, community development, and accessibility for people with disabilities. SPARC B.C.'s mission is to work with communities in building a just and healthy society for all.

We understand that the finance committee has elected to focus on the issue of productivity. I note that I'm the first one who's even mentioned that word today. Oh, no, the Vancouver Port Authority did, of course.

We submit to you that the very best way to achieve productivity is by ensuring the social and economic inclusion of every resident of Canada. Despite strong economic growth in Canada in recent years, statistics tell us that the income gap in this country is growing. This is unacceptable. Despite commitments from the federal government

to eradicate child poverty, there are still many children in Canada who live in families whose incomes are below the poverty line. The vast majority of these families are headed by single women.

Newcomers to Canada, who are central to increasing our economic productivity, experience social exclusion too often when they cannot find affordable and adequate housing, or employment for which they are trained. Through long-term investments in social infrastructure at the national level, which include requirements for accountability and transparency, we can create a Canada that is characterized by increasing inclusion rather than growing exclusion, which is the road we are travelling today. I will speak briefly about our recommendations on how to achieve this in reference to the Canada social transfer and the new deal for cities and communities.

First, on the Canada social transfer, the federal government provides funding to the provinces to support social programs under provincial jurisdiction via cash and transfers. In 2004-05 the provinces received \$50.4 billion in federal funding. Before 1996, when the provinces had to meet a variety of conditions to receive federal funding, these rules helped ensure that welfare programs remained comparable across Canada and reflected broadly held beliefs about the supports that should be available to every citizen of Canada, no matter where they might live. For example, income assistance funding required provinces to uphold the right for persons in need to receive benefits, a right to a sufficient level of income, and a right not to have to work in exchange for welfare.

With the adoption of the Canada health and social transfer in 1996, many funding conditions were eliminated. Provinces now have considerable latitude on where to direct funding within general target areas. Provincial governments have also implemented claw-backs that are counter-productive to federal priorities and transfers of federal funding. Divergent provincial policies suggest that it is time to restart a debate about national standards. While provinces should have flexibility to design services, national standards will help us reclaim Canadians' historical commitment to a social safety net for all citizens.

Block grants like the CHST make it hard to track where money is going. Part of the rationale for a separate health transfer is to increase accountability and transparency in health spending. The same argument should apply to the social transfer. It makes sense to create separate accountability requirements within this transfer for the various programs it is intended to fund. There is a huge range of them, including post-secondary education, income assistance, social services, and civil legal aid. Canadians are investing some \$15 billion annually in the transfer, and it is not too much to ask that provinces are accountable for the funds they receive and that there is transparency in reporting how the money is spent.

On the new deal for cities and communities, we also see great potential to provide a mechanism for federal government investment in the social infrastructure that Canadian cities need so critically to increase social inclusion. Some of the initiatives that have been funded to date could help to contribute to inclusion. For example, there's a priority on funding public transit that will ensure low-income Canadians have access to transportation, but only if the cost of transit is within their budget. We encourage the federal government to maintain a commitment to the cities and communities agenda and move in the next phases of this initiative to address the critical need for social infrastructure.

I will give you some examples: integrated approaches to addressing drug use that include harm reduction, treatment, prevention, and enforcement. Programs that support the inclusion and integration of immigrants and refugees are critically needed in the major cities that are immigrant-receiving in Canada—and Vancouver is one of those—and a number of the other cities in the GVRD.

• (1505)

Universal design in physical infrastructure projects would ensure that mobility is enhanced for people with disabilities. The voluntary sector is an incredibly important partner in identifying community needs and solutions. SPARC B.C. is a partner in a cross-Canada initiative called "Inclusive Cities Canada". This project found that the best solutions come when senior levels of government work in partnership with municipal governments and community organizations.

The new deal for cities and communities is a very positive step to increasing local government's funding sources. But again, requirements for future funding under the new deal should include objectives to enhance social inclusion in Canadian cities. We must also be sure that just as provinces are held accountable, municipalities must be accountable for the funds they receive, and they must be transparent in reporting how they are spent. Community organizations should be involved in discussions around priorities and solutions for this money. If we invest in social infrastructure that's critical to increasing social inclusion, we can create a country where everyone can be a productive and contributing member of society.

Thank you.

• (1510)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Slack.

I have the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre, Mr. Nightingale.

Mr. John Nightingale (President, Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre): Thank you for this opportunity to present the Vancouver Aquarium's role in Canada's future.

I'd like to focus on three areas. The first is our vision for conservation, which we believe is shared by many Canadians. The second is a focus on our multi-level partnerships, including those with government. Third, I'd like to address planning for a future in which thriving institutions such as the Vancouver Aquarium play an increased role in Canadian society.

The Canadian government has described a vision for our country to assure that there are greater levels of economic prosperity for all Canadians and the attainment of the highest quality of life for all. The Vancouver Aquarium believes that economic prosperity and quality of life will be improved by ensuring a future for Canada's vibrant aquatic resources. Our vision is one in which many Canadians take part and take pride in preserving our country's natural legacy.

Recognized by the federal government as Canada's Pacific national aquarium about twenty years ago, the aquarium is the only institution of its kind in Canada—a country blessed with the world's longest coastline. As Canada's Pacific national aquarium, we know that we have a tremendous responsibility to British Columbians and all Canadians, as well as to visitors from around the world. As a world-recognized leader in education, marine science, and direct conservation, we help to make Canada, a country known around the world for our unparalleled natural resources, the envy of the world.

In 2006 the aquarium will be 50 years old. The institution was given life originally by the relatively small investment of \$250,000 by all three levels of government in 1956. Since then more than 33 million people have visited the aquarium—more than any other environmental or cultural institution in western Canada. Since then, the aquarium has become a unique example of a non-profit organization that does not receive any annual operational funding from any level of government.

The resulting entrepreneurial culture has allowed our non-profit aquarium to accomplish many things. We create educational programs that are admired and utilized in institutions throughout the world, aquatic research that provides major breakthroughs directly benefiting both species and habitats, and exceptional opportunities to connect with living animals at our facility in Stanley Park. All of these inspire British Columbians and Canadians to help take care of our ecosystems.

Our expertise in communicating to the public, from school children in our classrooms to a parent trying to explain the environmental issues behind the headlines, is our greatest strength. Our communications expertise allows us to make millions of connections, and helps us to create working partnerships with government agencies to extend the reach of government programs, leverage government funding, and showcase government initiatives in ways that government often cannot.

The aquarium's vision is to expand our environmental communications, education, marine science, and conservation programs to conserve and enhance both British Columbia's extensive aquatic resources and Canada's amazing Arctic coast.

We are working with Parks Canada, for example, on the establishment of national marine conservation areas. We're working with Environment Canada on many levels, including species at risk, such as leatherback sea turtles and killer whales, and on climate change programming.

Working together with DFO, we responded to the need of an orphaned killer whale by rescuing Springer three years ago from U. S. waters and reintroducing her successfully to her family in Canadian waters.

Working with the federal government, the provincial government, and other partners, the aquarium brings life to education and conservation programs that will positively affect the future of our marine and aquatic environments for generations to come.

Our partnerships extend to corporations that recognize the importance of the aquarium's role. Companies such as B.C. Hydro, Alcan, TD Canada Trust, and RBC realize that education and understanding are the greatest tools we have in establishing a way of life that works in concert with our environment.

● (1515)

The aquarium's mission has led to the development of a focused outreach program that is made up of unique opportunities for Canadians to participate in their own communities. Here are some of the examples of how we accomplish those objectives.

The B.C. Hydro salmon stream, an aquarium initiative in Stanley Park, began flowing in 2000. It's now a fully functioning salmon stream visited by four million people each year, right in downtown Vancouver.

AquaVan is our travelling aquarium classroom on wheels. It turns out that over 40% of the children east of Hope, which is about 100 kilometres east of here, have never seen the ocean. Vancouver Aquarium brings it to them. In the eleven years that AquaVan has been rolling in the province, including to many remote and often underserved rural areas, 300,000 students have been amazed by its visits to their communities.

And the TD Canada Trust great Canadian shoreline cleanup is rapidly becoming Canada's largest environmental event. Stemming from its roots as the great B.C. beach cleanup ten years ago, this year over 40,000 Canadian volunteers cleaned shorelines from Vancouver Island to Prince Edward Island.

Together, these conservation and education programs are delivering unique experiences to Canadian youths through effective community-based programming.

Funding does not exist from government for public education based on the environment and natural sciences, as it does for many arts institutions. Yet to ensure the environmental sustainability of our communities, it's necessary for government to recognize and support an institution such as the aquarium, an institution that plays a role in the identity of a city, a province, and a country, and which represents our combined identity, by extension, internationally.

As I said, in 2006 the Vancouver Aquarium will celebrate its 50th birthday. As a world leader in conservation, education, and environmental communication, we trust that you share our belief that Canadians place significant priority on environmental education and conservation. The Vancouver Aquarium has approximately 900,000 annual visitors. We contribute \$80 million to the local economy each year—about 325 full-time-equivalent jobs. With 900 volunteers, we're able to provide work experience for hundreds of high school students annually.

Over the past three years we conducted extensive studies with some highly regarded architects and construction firms to determine the full extent of the upgrades required to renew our physical plant for the next fifty years. In short, it's going to cost about \$100 million to renew the aging facility. We're well started, with support from individuals, the Province of B.C., and the last round of Canada-B.C. infrastructure funding. However, the financial need outstrips our capacity to raise that kind of money in our local community. We need significant support from all levels of government.

The Discovery Education Centre that I mentioned, a good start, will open next year. We've been successful in raising that much money in the community. If we are successful over the next twelve months, we'll be able to implement our plans and visions for being the institution we should be during the Sea to Sky Games in 2010. When the world comes to Vancouver, it will be institutions like the aquarium that will leave a marked impression and provide the legacy of participatory stewardship that will ensure that the natural environment we're so proud of is used and enjoyed by people in the future.

The lasting impressions that will result in increased visitation and investment to the province of B.C. in the years following 2010 will come from a thriving aquarium that is healthy and whose infrastructure provides for sustained operation as a world-class tourism destination and, more significantly, as a world-class educational institution.

We've proven over 49 years that the aquarium's financial model works. It's not operating funds that we need, it's assistance with capital renewal. Put simply, at age 50 many of our facilities need revitalization. We have been and we will continue to be good at raising money in the community; however, many of the things we need to fix now or rebuild are basic infrastructure, generally invisible to the public and certainly less stimulating to personal fundraising.

As with the initial construction of the aquarium fifty years ago, we now need the assistance of all three levels of government to ensure that there are another fifty years. Today there's an urgent need for significant funding to renew our institution.

● (1520)

Like many historic organizations that define Canada's urban centres, we are an organization that's recognized on the world stage and one that is poised to represent Canada over the next 50 years as a vibrant and important conservation resource. We trust that the committee will make it a financial priority to fund organizations dedicated to ensuring Canada's tremendous natural aquatic resources, fragile ecosystems, and species so they will survive for future generations of Canadians.

I'll close by saying that our vision is one in which my grandchildren and yours know and enjoy both the beauty and the bounty of nature, at least as much as what we enjoy today.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

From Genome British Columbia, Mr. Winter.

Dr. Alan Winter (President, Genome British Columbia): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Members of the finance committee and colleagues, first of all, we appreciate your travelling to Vancouver to hear items that are critical to Canada's future.

I have with me Bruce Schmidt, who is a founding director of Genome B.C., and I'm Alan Winter. We'll address the areas you asked about: our entrepreneurial capital, and in that we'll include our industry sectors; our human capital, and in that we include our universities; and our physical capital, and in that we include our innovation capability.

Our view is that life sciences and the business sectors they support are increasingly important to the prosperity of British Columbia and Canada. These sectors include health, forestry, fisheries, agriculture and livestock, wine, the environment, and include bioproducts for mining and for energy. I'm sure the members of Parliament from B. C., Jean Crowder and Don Bell, will tell me if I'm wrong, but these are significant areas for British Columbia.

As you know, all living organisms—bacteria, microbes, and viruses—have genomes, which is the complete set of genes and genetic material. That's where our name comes from. Genomics is the underlying molecular understanding of life science and is absolutely key for our universities, our innovation capability, and our industry sectors in Canada.

To quote Dr. Henry Friesen, who is the past chair of Genome Canada:

Genomics and proteomics will be to the next 20 years what computers and the internet have been to the last: a quantum step into new frontiers of knowledge, transforming how we view disease, how we manage our resources, and how we generate energy.

Turning to Genome British Columbia for a minute, this was really motivated by the late Dr. Michael Smith, our Nobel laureate in life sciences. Genome British Columbia was formed in the year 2000 in collaboration with Genome Canada. In five years, Genome B.C. has become an anchor franchise for the genomics research in British Columbia and key to the province's life science strategy.

According to an independent third-party evaluation by Bearing-Point in December 2004—and we came through this phase with flying colours—Genome B.C. has generated “a palpable sense of excitement in BC's genomics research community”, an accomplishment of which we feel particularly proud.

We now have programs of about \$273 million in genomics and proteomics research, including investments in 28 large-scale projects covering areas important to British Columbia and Canada, and including those areas I mentioned—health, forestry, fish, agriculture, ethics, the environment—all of which are supported by a substantial community infrastructure in five science and technology platforms at universities and teaching hospitals throughout B.C. This effort has resulted, in a fairly short period, in the creation of 374 jobs, training of about 500 researchers, 26 scientific innovations, 195 scientific peer-reviewed articles, and presentation of over 400 papers at conferences.

I've told you about Genome B.C., because you should feel proud. In fact, all of this has only been possible because the federal

government made an unprecedented strategic investment in Canada's research and development capability. Genome Canada was formed five years ago thanks to those dollars.

Half of the \$273 million in British Columbia, which I mentioned, has come through Genome Canada. Genome B.C. has raised the other half, about \$136 million, with the help of partners, including the provincial government, the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, Western Economic Development, and a number of national and international co-funders, research institutions, and private sector businesses on the research projects. This is actually one of the largest targeted research programs in British Columbia's history.

Our request to you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, is really direct. We are urging you to recommend to the Minister of Finance and his department to continue to build on the Government of Canada's unprecedented strategic investment in research and development, and of course particularly in Genome Canada.

In five years, Genome Canada has leveraged over \$600 million in federal funding to more than \$1.2 billion in research across Canada. During that period, Genome Canada has involved over 2,000 researchers in 112 projects in every region in Canada. Those projects have permitted Genome Canada to build state-of-the-art science and technology platforms. One of those platforms, at the B.C. Cancer Agency here in Vancouver, was used to sequence the SARS virus in B.C.

● (1525)

Genome Canada has developed links with over 60 biotech companies, led major international consortiums, and produced over 70 inventions or patents, and that's in a fairly short time. They've developed an enviable international reputation as a leader exploring the ethical, environmental, legal, and social issues emerging from these new fields of human knowledge. They've rolled out an innovative public outreach campaign, which to date has reached over 250,000 Canadians across the country.

With the creation of Genome Canada, this country declared its intention to be among the leaders in this field of science. This is a long-term investment, and Genome Canada's projects have already attracted scientists from around the world in collaborations with notable universities such as Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Oxford, and L'Institut Pasteur. So, members of this committee, the strategic investment in R and D dollars that I mentioned in my opening remarks has put Canada on the global map of today's knowledge-based economy in this area of life science thanks to that investment. In the coming years, however, the Government of Canada must continue to direct this momentum in a way that is predictable, in a way that capitalizes on excellence, in a way that enables Canada to be on the leading edge of genomics research applied to the social and economic priorities of the country.

We hear a lot, for example, on the area of avian flu. This is just one of the infectious diseases that needs to be understood a whole lot better, and it's an area that's being addressed.

The time has come for Genome Canada, in our view, and Genome B.C. and the other genome centres, to build on this impressive foundation of high-quality research, and to capitalize on the social and commercial opportunities that are before us. Just to understand that commercial opportunity, for example, one company, Genetec in California, is a biotech company formed in 1976, and it, one company, today is worth more than the Royal Bank, Alcan, Bombardier, and Noranda combined. This is the power of the emerging knowledge-based economy. The time has come for Canada to create its own Genetecs.

In summary, we urge continued investment in Genome Canada because, first of all, it's critical for our human capital, including universities and teaching hospitals in life science. It's also critical for our physical capital, including our innovation capability. And thirdly, it's critical for our entrepreneurial capital, including our life-science-supported business sectors across Canada, those I've mentioned—health, forestry, fisheries, agriculture, mining, energy, environment, and so on.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thanks for your time. We'd certainly be happy to answer any questions.

• (1530)

The Chair: Thanks, Mr. Winter.

Before I pass it on to Mr. Penson, very quickly, what is the relationship between Genome B.C. and Genome Canada? Is the money transferred downwards, or do you have to request, or is it proportionately allocated by Genome Canada? Does Genome Canada have its own projects?

Dr. Alan Winter: It's a very good question. What happens is the federal government puts money into Genome Canada, and they've put an average of about \$150 million a year or so into the fund. That is really into a separate organization among the foundations, although it's incorporated as a not-for-profit company. That money is there, and then, as a regional centre, we have to compete for that money. So we put together projects and proposals where we raise the other half of any particular project. We then go through a competition process with Genome Canada. They have a peer review, which is the international peer review, and this international peer review then decides on the projects they would recommend. For example, we started in our most recent competition with about \$1.5 billion worth of requests. In the end, about \$350 million was approved.

Genome British Columbia has done very well out of that. We have, in national share of dollars, about 25% across Canada.

The Chair: Do you compete also with Genome Canada? Does Genome Canada itself have a program, or do they distribute all the money?

Dr. Alan Winter: No. Genome Canada is, if you like, the umbrella organization. We are actually separate organizations, but linked by contract, so for our funding of the \$273 million, one-half of that has come from Genome Canada.

The Chair: Okay, I understand that.

Mr. Penson, and then Monsieur Bouchard, then Ms. Crowder, then Mr. Bell. We'll try for five minutes.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to welcome the panel here today. I thought there were some very good presentations. Unfortunately, we only have five minutes each to explore those, so I will just go to a couple of people.

Mr. Jules, I was very interested in your presentation today. It hearkens back to some of the discussions I had a dozen years ago with somebody on this very topic, the need for private ownership on reserves. It seems to me that you really are leading the way here, and anything we can do to help will, I think, be of benefit not only to your reserve and to you, but also to many of the other first nations across the country who want to be able to develop their reserves for home ownership and for industrial or other types of development. We know investors are really hesitant to make an investment if they don't have certainty of ownership, so I really encourage you to continue with that process.

As for dismantling Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, I agree with you again, and the act... I think local decision-makers can do a far better job than a bureaucracy thousands of miles away, and I want to encourage you to keep that up.

I have one question, though. When you envisage ownership registry, would it be through the province? Would any other registry be for ownership? How would that work?

Mr. Clarence (Manny) Jules: What I envision is a national land registry for first nations lands. It could take into account, and obviously would have to, the regions right across the country. Of course, the provinces have different approaches to land registry or to land issues. It's important, I think, that here in British Columbia we've got probably one of the best land registry systems in the country. That's the first place I would look at in developing a first nations land registry.

The concept is very simple. The underlying interest would always remain first nations. It would be akin to the crown and the right of the first nations, so the underlying title would be there. Then you would have, as in any other land registry, many different types of interest layered on that. It could be a road right-of-way, an easement, or individual property ownership—and that could encompass any type of individual ownership.

Mr. Charlie Penson: So it would look, to all intents and purposes, like a municipal type of government that would be able to sell land in its jurisdiction?

Mr. Clarence (Manny) Jules: Well, that's the intent. If we're going to create a true open-market housing situation on reserve lands across the country, that's what you have to look towards.

Mr. Charlie Penson: Thank you. I think that's very good work. Keep it up. If we can help you in any way, we'd certainly like to do that.

• (1535)

Mr. Clarence (Manny) Jules: Well, when you talk about support, I think it's very critical. I mentioned at the beginning of my presentation that I've been here seven times. We've asked for support, and that support has come from this particular committee. It's such a critical committee, because what we're trying to overcome is this notion that first nations issues are simply social policy issues, whereas in fact they're economic issues that affect all of us; when we're talking about productivity, if you don't bring first nations into the market-based economy and the global economy, Canada is going to suffer in the long term. The support I'm asking for is support from this committee for this initiative.

Mr. Charlie Penson: Thank you very much.

I'd like to go to the Vancouver Port Authority next. I note that you feel you're being hindered in development. I wonder if the approach of...

Well, first of all, here is the question: how much of the money you pay to the federal government is in the form of user fees, and how much is in federal taxes? It would be your members, I guess, who would use the port authority. If a system were set up that had grants equivalent to the amount of taxes paid—to allow you the type of expansion you're hoping for and needing, an adequate type of system that would recognize you contributed \$411 million in taxes last year, but that you need the money you're generating for reinvestment to make you more viable in the future—would it be a method that could be used?

Mr. Jim Cox: I can try to respond.

As you've said, the port generates \$411 million in federal taxes. The port authority itself actually pays \$3.5 million in a stipend to the federal government. That was the \$3.5 million we were saying should be left with us to be reinvested in the port.

In terms of the use of the federal \$411 million, those infrastructure projects we talked about, and the infrastructure funding, we would like to get access to the funding of road and rail expansion. Those are the uses to which we think the money could be put in order to generate self-sufficient economic development.

Mr. Charlie Penson: In other words, just back off on the taxes, and that would allow you enough money.

Would that amount that you're paying in federal taxes allow you enough money to regenerate the type of expansion you're anticipating?

Mr. Jim Cox: I'll try to be very clear about the taxes. The federal stipend, the \$3.5 million, would be a minor contribution, but every bit helps. We have a \$1.4-billion investment, so every bit helps. Generally what we're suggesting is that the federal government use those tax revenues that are generated by port activities to be reinvested in port infrastructure—road, rail, and potentially terminal infrastructure. That would certainly help us achieve our objective.

Mr. Charlie Penson: What percentage of the investment you would like to make in port renewal would be on the container port side?

Mr. Jim Cox: That \$1.4 billion is all oriented to container port expansion. About half of it actually would come from the port authority. The other half would come from our private sector

partners, the terminal operators. The additional investment we need, though, to support that is in the rest of the logistics chain—the road and rail, the B.C. port strategy, the gateway program. That's where we need infrastructure money to fund the rest of the logistics chain.

As Lori said, having an efficient and expanded port doesn't do any good unless you can get the goods to and from the port. That's where we're asking the federal government to consider funds for the expansion of the downstream infrastructure.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Penson.

For witnesses' information, I'm allowing the members five minutes; that's for the questions and answers. I know it's tough, but if you can keep your answers brief, it would be better.

Monsieur Bouchard, and then Ms. Crowder.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you as well to the witnesses for their excellent presentations.

I'll start with two questions, followed by a comment. My two queries are directed to the Poverty and Human Rights Centre representatives.

You stated that major cuts had been made to programs for women. You also mentioned that women now enjoyed less financial security.

Are federal transfers to the provinces the leading cause of the deteriorating financial position of women?

• (1540)

[*English*]

Ms. Margot Young: Thank you for your question.

Yes, I think there are two specific ways in which the restructuring of the fiscal arrangements between the federal government and the provinces in 1995 has contributed to the downgrading of the economic situation of Canadian women. The first way was that there was simply a reduction of funds transferred. So less money was transferred from the federal government to the provinces.

Secondly, with the switch from CAP to the CHST, the federal government had abolished all but one—which is the mobility requirement—of the conditions that had been attached to that transfer under the Canada Assistance Plan. That has meant that, both because of the absence of the attached standards and because they can attribute program changes to the cuts in federal funding, provinces have been able to significantly and seriously cut back on the delivery of provincial programs such as social assistance. We know that women are disproportionately poor in Canada and we know that women, because of this, disproportionately rely on social assistance or welfare. Some groups of women, such as single mothers, occupy large, large sectors of those who are reliant on social assistance.

In the cutbacks to the rates and the increase of eligibility hoops through which applicants have to jump, the changing of other kinds of conditions in the money, and the elimination of some benefits outright, we've seen a real increase in women's poverty and a very serious impact on the status of women's economic equality. This has been recognized at, for instance, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and at the CEDAW committee two years ago.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Bouchard: My second question is directed to the same witnesses. I'm surprised that you didn't identify changes to the EI program as a contributing factor to the worsening financial state of women. EI has undergone some radical reforms since 1993. These reforms have not helped the financial cause of young people, or of women in particular.

Do you feel that cuts to the EI program have left Canadian women worse off financially?

[English]

Ms. Margot Young: Absolutely, and thank you for that question. I had written down employment insurance and I'd forgotten to get to it.

In fact it's very well shown by a number of studies that when the changes were brought into employment insurance, in particular the switch to hours as opposed to weeks for the qualifying requirement, disproportionately women became disqualified. So in fact the number of female Canadian workers who cannot access employment insurance is much higher than the number of male workers who can't.

Now we have seen some improvement to employment insurance with the extension of parental benefits, but it's important to note that there are two reasons that these extensions in fact don't have as positive an effect as we would like them to have. The first is quite simply the fact that the benefit level was reduced to 55%. There are not a lot of women, low-income women, who can afford to take the full parental leave period at 55% of their earnings. Absent an employer top-up, most women tend to go back to work, if they're from the secondary labour sector or if they're of low income, very soon after the birth of their children.

So yes, I agree with you completely. And even in its most positive aspect, the extension of the parental leave periods, we see that many women are just not able to access these, either because they don't qualify in the first place because of the shift in qualifying requirements or because they simply can't afford to live on 55% of their income.

• (1545)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Robert Bouchard: I'd like to make one brief comment to the representatives of the Vancouver Port Administration.

My riding of Chicoutimi-Le Fjord is home to one port. I was surprised to learn that there was no federal program in place to support the development of new infrastructure. We'd like to see oil, which is currently trucked over a distance of about 200 kilometres,

shipped by boat. We'd like to see coastal shipping operations in place.

I've contacted three different departments and have yet to find a program of this nature. Since infrastructures like this come under federal jurisdiction, I would have expected the federal government to have a program in place. However, I haven't found any federal program to fund the construction of an oil terminal.

That was a comment, rather than a question. I expect that you would like to see this kind of infrastructure development program in place. If there was such a program, my riding would benefit as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard.

Go ahead, Ms. Crowder.

[English]

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

I'd like to thank all the panellists for their presentations.

The complexity of issues that were presented makes it very difficult to ask intelligent questions in five minutes. I'm going to make a couple of comments and then direct a specific question.

First of all, I'd like to acknowledge Genome B.C.'s presentation and echo the sentiment that it's very important that we continue to invest heavily in research and development. Canada should be a leader, and this is an opportunity for us to demonstrate that. The only comment I would have is that it's critical that we include sustainability when we're investing in research and development and not have some notion that somehow or other somebody is going to pick it up magically from somewhere else.

The second comment I had was to SPARC. I wanted to make the comment that I think it's very important that we call for transparency and accountability. I think what we also need to do when we're talking about accountability is include the measures of accountability. You cited the Canada health transfers, but when we looked at Bill C-39, which was passed to do the financial piece of it, Bill C-39 did not include any accountability measures. Although the provincial governments report annually on health care, if you look at the annual health report it has very little substance. So it's very difficult to talk about benchmarks, productivity, efficiency, or any of those kinds of things. I agree that we need accountability, but we actually need to put some teeth into it.

My question is for Ms. Young. You may not be aware, but I'm on the parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women. The parliamentary committee made some specific recommendations around gender-based analysis. I have two comments and a question for you around that. I pulled off the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives website a piece on what's important about productivity. When we start talking about productivity in a very narrow way, we miss the whole range. When we look at the UN Human Development Index, it says productivity is one of a number of elements of other factors such as unemployment rates, income variability, uncertainty in social supports, and so on.

We talk about gender-based analysis. When the finance department came before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, they talked about the fact that the Department of Finance very narrowly looked at gender-based analysis in their own department. But the budget, as we well know, is made up across departments. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations, when we're talking about a budget analysis, about the kinds of elements that must be included across government departments to ensure that we have an adequate gender-based analysis? You probably have about two minutes to answer that question.

Ms. Margot Young: I think I can answer the question fairly quickly by saying it's actually not something at this point that I am prepared to give you, but I can refer you to a number of resources in which it's done very effectively.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I am familiar with the resources. I wanted something read on the public record.

Ms. Margot Young: Sorry about that.

Ms. Jean Crowder: That's fine.

Actually, there are a number of factors, and those include things like analyzing how they impact on men and women differently, what the unintended outcomes are, and what kinds of implications it could have for a longer-range social policy.

• (1550)

Ms. Margot Young: Let me add to that, because I can say yes, of course, most obviously it's in the intended consequences and the unintended consequences for men and women, but it's also taking into account the variabilities among women, for example, looking at some of the most vulnerable groups of women to see what the impact on them is. We get a very different sense of what gendered impacts are when we look, for example, at the impact on aboriginal women or on single-mother-led families.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I think you also mentioned productivity in your presentation.

Ms. Margot Young: I did not mention productivity.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Did you mention productivity?

Mrs. Sarah Slack: I did, yes.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Can you speak a bit about productivity in the broader range? One of the things we're talking about on productivity and the bottom line is economic generation in Canada. We're talking about things like adding to the tax base so we can fund other programs. Can you make some comments on productivity in the social context?

Mrs. Sarah Slack: I think one of the important things to note is that if we have healthy citizens, if we have citizens who have child care they can rely on, we're going to have women going to work not worrying about their children and being able to focus on their productivity while they're there. Productivity in that narrow economic sense is all about efficiency. We would like to submit that paying attention to our social infrastructure and social inclusion will lead to the kind of Canada in which there are people who don't have to worry about all those things while they're in their workplace. We want healthy Canadians. We want Canadians to have access to child care.

We also need to think about ways in which immigrants and newcomers to Canada can contribute productively to our economy. When they come to Canada and don't have their credentials recognized, that's not an efficient way to welcome people to Canada. There are a number of ways in which social inclusion links to productivity in a narrow economic sense, but we think that if this committee understands productivity and conceives of it in a very general, more holistic way, ultimately we're going to get better results.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I think the challenge we face is that we often deal with these things in silos. For example, when we're looking at funding railways for the port authority, what we fail to look at is all of the workers who are then employed, and not on other parts of our system like employment insurance or other systems. We don't have an integrated approach to the way our policies are developed.

Ms. Margot Young: May I add something? I know I'm coming in over the time, but having defaulted on answering your question, I now have an answer that I think is important.

There are at least three very simple and basic questions that need to be answered for gender-based analysis. There are only three. First, do women benefit, or are they hurt by these changes? Are the benefits or costs of these changes equally shared by men and women? Are the priorities of the government, in good times or bad, explicitly or implicitly gendered? The last, the fourth that I'm going to sneak in, is it's important to look at the difference between allocation and actual spending, because that's very revealing.

The Chair: As a woman, you're taking advantage of a man's good heart. You have to look at that as well.

Mr. Bell.

Mr. Don Bell (North Vancouver, Lib.): First of all, Mr. Winter, you appreciate that MPs travelling out here.... I'm very happy we're holding this here; it gives me two more days or a day and a half more in my home area.

To your group, I'm very much aware of the work your organization has done. I want to ask you, particularly in the life sciences area, what links do you have with similar organizations in the U.S.? You talked about private ones but there are genome centres as well, are there not, and Texas is one, I think?

Dr. Alan Winter: In fact there are a number of projects we have in collaboration with the U.S. centres. One of them...you mentioned Texas. There's a large international consortium that is dealing with sequencing the bovine, or sequencing cows, and looking at some of the issues that are there. Obviously, BSE is a large issue. In that particular case, as one project, we're involved here in Vancouver. The cancer agencies, the Genome Sciences Centre with Baylor University in Texas, is an example. There are other ones. Obviously, the large genome centres—for example, in Washington University—would be linked with some of our projects. In addition to that, the Gates Foundation, for example, has funded three major projects in Canada that are linked to some of our projects as well.

Mr. Don Bell: We had the cancer agency and research here earlier today, and the cluster that we have of cancer research in B.C. tied with your organization is a real benefit, I think.

You can all appreciate that we have limited time, so I'll move along to the Vancouver Aquarium. I'm interested that on page 8 of your presentation you made reference to \$100 million needed to renew the facility. You said you're on your way with support from individuals, the Province of B.C, and Canada-B.C. Infrastructure. Maybe not now, but at some point it would be interesting to know how much in total you've raised of that \$100 million that you need. Are you on your way to—

• (1555)

Mr. John Nightingale: We've raised and spent about \$20 million of the \$100 million. That's the education centre that's under construction. The whole point is renewing the next major step. The world's coming to Vancouver in 2010. B.C. showcases itself very well, if you get out of the city. A lot of the international visitors won't. The rest of Canada's story.... I mean, the winter Olympics—when you think about winter in Canada, you often think of the Arctic. It's an amazing part of Canada, and it's the area where climate change is having its impact first. We find a tremendous resonance among Canadians not to lock nature up and store it away, but to sustain it into the future. So presenting that story, presenting the rest of Canada's story to those millions and millions of world visitors, is what has led us to try now to revitalize our Arctic Canada area and the B.C. wild coast prior to the Olympics.

Mr. Don Bell: I was curious as to how far along you were.

One comment I would make, by the way, is when we have these Canada-B.C. infrastructure programs, it's always interesting to have a group come to us, as the federal government, and say “We'd like you to contribute; we have money from the province.” Then we find out the province's money, whatever province it is, is federal money that's gone to the province. Now they're using our money to ask us to match it. The province says “If the feds will match it, we'll match it”, and then match it with our dollars.

Mr. John Nightingale: Well, this keeps the provinces ahead of the feds nine to one.

Mr. Don Bell: Well, that's good. We'll try to catch up.

Certainly the Vancouver Aquarium is one of the three best-known tourist attractions. When we think about Vancouver to the world, it's the Vancouver Aquarium, which happens to be in Vancouver, and the other two of the three are in my riding, the Capilano Suspension Bridge and Grouse Mountain. All of them share anywhere from 800,000 to a million visitors a year, so it's very important.

Another part of my riding that is of interest is the Vancouver port. We're talking about the gateway project, and the province has certainly shown some initiative. For the federal government, Minister Lapierre has indicated that this is going to be a key part of federal government programs out there.

Obviously, support for the Asia Pacific Foundation.... We had a public meeting when we had ministerial consultations out here, and we're talking, as you know, about the gateway initiative.

I was interested in page 9 of your presentation from the port regarding the issue of grade separations. From my background in

municipal government, I know that's a real issue. You talked about the importance of that in terms of getting support from municipalities for a port infrastructure so it doesn't interfere with or in effect bisect communities. I don't know if you wanted to add anything, Jim, to that.

Mr. Jim Cox: We'll, I'll just reiterate. The port generates tremendous economic benefits, but it also imposes costs on the communities within which we operate. The rail traffic and the vast majority of the goods that come into and go from the port go by rail. We need to work with the communities to solve these problems where there are road and rail infrastructure issues. It's a great opportunity for the province and the ports and the federal government and the municipalities to jointly solve these problems. If we don't solve them, we're not going to be able to move the goods; we're not going to be able to pursue this opportunity.

Mr. Don Bell: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bell.

Mr. Cox, the Quebec caucus had our meeting in Quebec City, and we had the same problem with the port authorities there. We have the same problem in Montreal, and when we go to Toronto I think we'll end up seeing the same problem. So I think it's a problem with all the ports.

I just have a quick question, Mr. Jules. In terms of your idea to give less money to the Department of Indian Affairs, do you have any backing? Does anybody support you, like some of the other aboriginal or first nations groups—for example, the Assembly of First Nations? Do they support this idea? I haven't heard it before.

Mr. Clarence (Manny) Jules: I'm not suggesting that there be a reduction in funding to the Department of Indian Affairs. What I'm suggesting is that we begin the onerous task of dismantling the Department of Indian Affairs through a legislative process so those sectors the Department of Indian Affairs controls over my life will be turned over to first nations institutions.

• (1600)

The Chair: Do any of the other first nation groups feel the same way?

Mr. Clarence (Manny) Jules: Well, I'm a first nation, and I think it's a widely held view right across the country that we can do the job better than the Department of Indian Affairs.

The Chair: From the aquarium, Mr. Nightingale, as to the \$100 million, you're going to have to help me here. Through what program and what ministry can we find this \$100 million? I don't think we can put this in our report, because if this aquarium gets \$100 million, I hate to see what the rest of Canada is going to ask for.

Mr. John Nightingale: I don't think we're asking for \$100 million from the federal government.

The Chair: No, I understand that.

Mr. John Nightingale: Our work with the federal government encompasses a number of ministries ranging from Fisheries and Oceans to Environment to Indian and Northern Affairs to Industry. One of our challenges has been how one finds it within existing program channels. Depending on the outcome of municipal infrastructure programs or further generations of federal-provincial infrastructure programs....

The province has helped so far, and they've said they're going to have to talk to the federal government and the local government about some kind of appropriate coming to the table. Our goal was to make our case known. I don't know if we have a solution in terms of an exact funding pathway within the current federal programs.

The Chair: Thank you.

What we have in Quebec is the DEC, the development agency, and out west you have the western development agency. I would imagine within that ministry there would be an envelope. I think through Quebec there's an envelope for certain types of infrastructure programs, but it's not easy.

Anyway, thanks.

Like Ms. Crowder said, it's tough, but time is limited and I think the group in this panel were a little bit more diverse, so it was a bit harder to address all the groups.

Thanks again for taking time.

The meeting is adjourned.

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