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# **Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, May 10, 2006**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Colin Mayes**

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## Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Wednesday, May 10, 2006

• (1530)

[Translation]

**The Clerk:** Honourable members of the committee, I have received a statement from Mr. Vellacott confirming his resignation as chair of this committee.

[English]

Your first item of business will be to elect a chair.

[Translation]

I am ready to receive nominations.

[English]

Mr. Albrecht.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** I'd like to nominate Colin Mayes.

**The Clerk:** It has been moved by Mr. Albrecht that Colin Mayes be elected chair of the committee.

[Translation]

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

**The Clerk:** I now invite Mr. Colin Mayes to take the chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** I would like to make a statement first. I have had experience as a mayor for a number of years. I know that is somewhat different from chairing a committee. I do appreciate the confidence you have shown in me. I would just ask that all members of this committee respect the position of chair. As well, if members have any issues to deal with me personally, I would ask that they do that in private, please.

I would also like to thank Mr. Vellacott for his resignation. His resignation proves that his first concern was for this committee and for the mandate of this committee, which is to address the issues that affect aboriginal, Métis, and Inuit communities across Canada. I want to thank him for that.

Now that we have that resolved, let's move on to the business of this committee. Thank you.

In terms of our agenda, we have an opportunity for witnesses requested from the department to talk about the...

Mr. Lemay.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** I will give you time to find the interpretation channel, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

It's not an urgent matter.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, first allow me to congratulate you on your election. As we have all seen over the past few days, assuming the chairmanship of a committee is no easy task. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, and, I would imagine, on behalf of the other members of the committee, I would like to wish you every success in your new position.

Our research staff were asked to provide us with a document, which they have done. Now we have to do our homework, and by that I mean, we have to fill in the said document. The plan is to send it to your offices. I know that this is not on today's agenda, but I would suggest that each member of the committee send his or her list of priorities to the clerk. The clerk will compile a master list of your priorities, numbered from 1 to 19. He will share the results with us at the next meeting; doing it this way will save us a lot of time. That is my first suggestion.

My next point is not on the agenda either; however, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development will be making a statement in the House today concerning a final settlement on the matter of residential schools. I think that members of this committee ought to recognize the government's efforts, and thank the minister who has worked diligently to resolve this matter, which has been in limbo for too long. We ought to congratulate the government, and, once again, ask it to issue the cheques to the former students of the residential schools, who are now elderly, as quickly as possible. This being done, we will be able to turn the page on this shameful episode in Canadian history.

Once we have dealt with these points, we can hear from the departmental officials. Thank you.

• (1535)

[English]

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

Mrs. Crowder.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would suggest that since under routine motions the chair has the ability to pull together a subcommittee to review agenda and future business, perhaps it would be a good idea to have one and report back to the main committee at the next meeting.

**The Chair:** Certainly.

Before we move on, would it be in order and the pleasure of the committee to deal with the issues brought up by Mr. Lemay, by a motion that as a committee we fill this out and turn it into the clerk? Could I have a motion to that effect?

It is moved by Mr. Lemay.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Do we have a timeline on that, Mr. Clerk?

Mr. Lemay, would you like to have this in by the next meeting?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** If possible, I would like to have a copy of the final version of the ranked list of priorities by our next meeting. That would allow us to get to work.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** So that's understood.

I wanted to finish with the second issue Mr. Lemay brought forward regarding the minister and the residential schools settlement. Does this committee wish to send a letter to the minister congratulating him and his ministry on finalizing this agreement?

Mrs. Neville.

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Certainly I would like to congratulate the minister on finalizing the agreement in principle that was put forward by the previous government. This is indeed a very important document. I know that many of the survivors, who are still here from the aboriginal schools era, have been waiting for this settlement for a very long period of time. This is a day of celebration for those here, and they are finally being accorded the respect they have been waiting for. So yes, I would certainly endorse sending a letter to the minister on behalf of the committee.

**The Chair:** Is there a consensus on that?

Mrs. Crowder.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Although I'm very pleased with the announcement around residential schools today, I guess my concern is that there is still another step in the process. It would have to be a qualified congratulatory letter, because until money is actually in people's hands....

It has to go to the courts for further approval. The letter would have to be qualified. It could still be months before people have the money, other than interim payments. I think there's a cautionary note here as well.

**The Chair:** Mr. Russell.

**Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Indeed it is good news that we have moved forward on the Indian residential schools agreement. I'd like to acknowledge a number of people in this room who were involved in this file for many years and who fought very hard for some resolution of this blot on our collective history. If we thank the minister, we need to also thank in some way all of those aboriginal people who've spent their lives looking for justice through many administrations.

I had the privilege to chair for six years the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, where I met some of the most beautiful human beings I've ever met. Some of them are in this room today. It's a very emotional time when you see these people who are good friends, who have fought hard. We must acknowledge the work of the aboriginal people in moving this file forward as well. Without them it would never have happened, and my hat is off to them.

Thank you.

● (1540)

**The Chair:** Mr. Lévesque.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** If we send a thank you letter to the minister, it should also state that we want to see the first cheques issued as quickly as possible so that the matter is fully settled. In other words, our thanks must be accompanied by an expression of the committee's strong desire to see the issue fully resolved as quickly as possible.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Perhaps I could turn to the parliamentary secretary and ask him that question.

Mr. Bruinooge.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC):** Mr. Chair, we on this side also are very pleased with the minister's announcement today. I apologize for being almost late; I was in the House during the time he was making the announcement.

Just from hearing some of the sentiments, I think I can say that we are all in agreement that it is a great day, but perhaps some of the other views we'd like to bring forward in terms of timing might best be reserved for next week, when the minister will actually be meeting with us. That might be a good opportunity to bring those forward.

**The Chair:** Madam Neville.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** I accept, Mr. Chair, what the parliamentary secretary indicates, but part of the agreement is a good faith clause that will fast-track the agreement to the elders. I would very much like to see, in the letter you send, that the committee endorses it and that we hope the elders will receive this shortly.

I realize that there will be a payment schedule for those who are not elders, but I think it's important that the fast-track good faith agreement be honoured and move forward quickly.

**The Chair:** Is it the pleasure of the committee that I forward a letter on your behalf making that statement, plus the statement that Mr. Russell said about thanking not only the minister and his department but all those who were associated with the resolution of this agreement?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Ms. Crowder, did you have something else?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Just on the agenda item, it would be helpful, if we were going to have this priority list submitted, for the subcommittee to look at that in advance of the meeting. It's just a scheduling matter.

**The Chair:** Okay, we'll take note of that with regard to a meeting of the subcommittee to review the priority list. We'll make sure we get those in to the clerk as quickly as possible.

If we're going to deal with this at the next meeting, which is Monday of next week, we should set a time for that committee to sit and review these priorities. What's the pleasure of the committee?

Mr. Albrecht.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Mr. Chairman, one of my concerns on this committee is the amount of time we spend in deciding what to do and in posturing. Even this regrettable matter of the chair, I think, has really sidetracked us from what our mandate is, which is to work with our aboriginal and Métis and Inuit people.

I think we've charged the committee with a duty to come with the agenda they bring to the committee, and I think we should just get on with it instead of spending more time here.

We've asked our staff people to come today and do some briefing sessions with us, and again on Monday, and I think we're losing important time. We've already been three weeks, and really, what do we have to show for it?

I know the members of this committee agree that we want to work on behalf of our aboriginal brothers and sisters, and I'm certainly committed to doing that.

**The Chair:** Jean.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** As a final point, we don't need to take up this committee's time setting up meeting times for the subcommittee.

**The Chair:** Right.

The subcommittee will review the priorities and then bring back the list of which ones were a top priority by the members. So we will do that.

Maybe those on the committee would just make it known to the clerk when they're available, and he can arrange to have us come together before Monday. Okay?

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Mr. Chair, I'll recommend that we proceed with the department briefing.

• (1545)

**The Chair:** All agreed?

Okay, thank you.

So we have the department briefing. We have Daniel Ricard, senior assistant deputy minister, policy and strategic direction; Sandra Ginnish, director general, treaties, research, international and general equality branch; Eric Guimond, director, strategic research and analysis directorate.

Welcome to the committee.

Mr. Lemay.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** Mr. Chairman, before giving the floor to our esteemed guests, I just want to check that we are giving ourselves until tomorrow evening to send our lists to the clerk. Is everybody in agreement? We have until tomorrow evening, that is to say, until Thursday evening. Afterwards, the clerk will contact us. Do not wait until Friday, it will be too late.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is that all understood by the committee? The list of priorities has to be in by tomorrow night.

Who's going to lead off?

Mr. Ricard, welcome.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Ricard (A/Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Strategic Direction, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, it is our pleasure to acquiesce to your request that we appear before you this afternoon to provide you with an overview of aboriginal demographics.

Without any further ado, with your permission, I would like to ask Eric Guimond to make the presentation that we have prepared for this meeting.

**Mr. Eric Guimond (A/Director, Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Thank you for inviting us to present you with our research on the demographic aspects of aboriginal populations today.

I would like to introduce to you my colleague Sacha Sénécal, who has a doctorate in social and Mohawk psychology, and who will help me with the technical aspect of the presentation.

To my right and left are the French and English versions of my presentation. We have also brought printed material and several other documents related to the presentation.

[*English*]

Before I start, I would like to make a suggestion. It's going to become quite clear very early in the presentation that this is about data, a lot of data. I suggest that when there are questions that we deal with the questions as they arise, rather than wait, because there are lots of topics that are going to be covered, and if we wait until the end, it becomes difficult to backtrack to certain of these topics. That would be a suggestion on my part.

**The Chair:** I'll try to pay attention to the committee and the screen at the same time so I can see the hands.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** As I mentioned, there are many topics, and the ones we will be discussing today are just a few that I've selected, based on invitation. Many of them are quite basic but fundamental.

First we're going to talk about the aboriginal people and the standard information on definitions, size, age structure, and geographical distribution—very useful but fundamental. Also fundamental but basic is information on population growth and components of that growth. Finally, about half of the presentation focuses on the well-being of the aboriginal peoples.

The Constitution recognizes three groups: Indians or first nations, Métis, and Inuit. The Indian population could be subdivided into two groups. Status Indians or registered Indians are those individuals who are eligible under the Indian Act. Then you have the non-status population, which consists of individuals who self-identify as Indians or first nations but are not eligible to be registered under the Indian Act.

The Métis are persons who have mixed ancestry but have also developed their own customs. Their identity and customs are recognized as separate from Indian and Inuit.

Finally are the Inuit, or persons whose ancestry can be traced back to the original inhabitants of the Arctic.

I just want to point out two aspects of identity that are implied in this definition. There's an aspect of self-identification, but there's also a notion of recognition by others—other communities and government. So there are two aspects that are part of one person's aboriginal identity.

Now these definitions, groups, and boundaries are clear-cut, but the reality is far more complex. In this diagram, each box represents a particular dimension. Statistics Canada uses four concepts to measure the notion of aboriginality. These concepts are aboriginal ancestry, aboriginal identity, status Indian or registration, and a fourth one that is not represented here, first nation band membership. The only reason it's not represented here is because when you deal with four dimensions, it's difficult to represent that on a plane. So each box, each colour, represents a dimension.

In everyday thinking, we like to approach things in very distinct, clear-cut categories and boundaries. As is illustrated here, individuals don't necessarily display the three dimensions of ancestry, identity, and status. Some have one dimension, some have two, and some have three. In the case of aboriginal ancestry, there are 1.3 million individuals according to the 2001 census, and this number should grow with the census that's going to happen next week.

The aboriginal identity category shows just a little below one million. The status Indian category shows a bit more than half a million.

The subsets are not symmetrical either. The one that includes the three dimensions is the largest, with around half a million people. Then you have subsets that are really small, like the one with 8,775 individuals. Those are individuals who only have legal status as Indians, but no ancestry or identity. Some might find that confusing and awkward. The previous version of the Indian Act allowed non-first nation women who married first nation men to acquire legal status, so most likely those women are represented here.

Here I'm only talking about aboriginal ancestry and aboriginal identity. I could have broken it down further into three ancestries, three identities, and different combinations. When we start really

digging into these ideas of boundaries and definitions, we find out that it's a very complex and dynamic concept. I just want to illustrate here that we're not dealing with clear-cut definitions and boundaries.

• (1550)

How will this translate in your work? Sometimes you'll see numbers about the population, and the next document you read contains another number. Then you start getting confused about all these different numbers because very often they relate to different concepts. So I want to alert you to that situation.

Yes?

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.):** On the note on the side it says some individuals can belong to more than one dimension. Are you counting them only once in this?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes.

When a demographer such as myself looks at old reports and sees all these definitions coexisting...I've noticed over the last ten years that there's been some convergence around one particular definition, especially in the context of programming. It's what we call a blended definition. It's the numbers StatsCan has been releasing for the 2001 census and will be releasing again. It's a definition that blends the notion of identity, registration, legality, and also the first nations band membership. Based on that hybrid definition, we have a little less than a million individuals in 2001, of whom 57% are registered Indian, 27% Métis, about 10% non-status Indian, and less than 5% Inuit.

The other aboriginal category includes those individuals who don't have legal status, do not self-identify, but are band members or have declared multiple aboriginal identity. It's possible to declare being first nation and Métis on the census, so the other aboriginal category is this mixed bag.

• (1555)

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Where does Bill C-31 fit?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Bill C-31 would fall within the registered Indian category.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** I noticed that the source is Stats Canada. Between Stats Canada—identity, registration, band membership.... Is that the compilation of these numbers?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Based on census data, yes.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** So if people don't have band membership or self-identify, then they're not included?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Those without membership, registration, or identity are not in that pie chart.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** So that's why there's a difference between the numbers you reported and those that some other aboriginal organizations have reported.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** That's a totally different issue.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Okay. That's a different issue, which you'll get to.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The numbers presented here today are based on census data, because only census data provides information about all aboriginal groups.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** So that relies on people actually completing the census form and being prepared to self-identify. So this would under-represent?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** In terms of population count, yes. I didn't add the issue of data quality here and the differences between the two major data sources, which are the Indian register and the Census of Canada. But I would be glad to come back and give you a long, detailed presentation about these issues.

I'd like to mention one thing about the quality of the census. When you miss individuals, obviously your population count will be too low. But with respect to characteristics, the proportion of those with university degrees, employed.... When you look at the national or provincial picture, those indicators are not affected substantially by the non-participation of individuals. In a nutshell, those who participate and those who don't tend to share similar characteristics. So if they're not there, that won't affect the averages you're measuring.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Are some of these numbers used to determine funding, for example per capita funding?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The funding issues I think would be better addressed by the people who actually work in the program area. It's not something I've developed any expertise in, to be totally honest.

The next slide is the classic demographers tool, the age pyramid. Most of you probably know, but I still want to highlight it, that the aboriginal people's age pyramid is a very young pyramid, a very young age structure. Fifty percent of the individuals are under the age of 25. For the rest of the Canadian population you're talking about one-third of the population. I could have broken it down by different aboriginal groups, but the story would have been the same. I can say that the Inuit has a younger age structure because of their higher fertility than other groups, but the pyramids would look almost the same in terms of structure.

A young pyramid, a pyramid that has that shape, the blue pyramid, is indicative of a population that's growing fast, and has the potential to continue to grow fast because it means that more and more young adults will come into parenting age.

Yes?

**Mr. Gary Merasty (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, Lib.):** On a couple of the previous slides, I think Jean brings up a good point on the under-representation of the census. I know in my area, for example, the census numbers are low. There is one band, for example, Peter Ballantyne, that has seven communities in the multi-community band and I think they got to two. I see your point on averages, but on actual numbers.... There is a direct correlation at the very least when it comes to the status population on funding. That definitely is an issue.

On the pyramid, and I just want to point this out, you'll notice a gap in the labour force age between the two populations. It has huge implications for post-secondary, HRSD, and education funding.

• (1600)

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** We're talking about 300,000 aboriginal kids right now in the education pipeline who are between the ages of 5 and 19 and who will enter the labour force over the next 15 years.

**Mr. Gary Merasty:** In the pipeline, but there are also others outside the pipeline.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** I want to make sure I understand. The pyramid you are showing us in fact represents registered aboriginal people.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** These are aboriginal peoples who have a legal status, who are therefore registered, or who have identified themselves as such, or are members of a first nation. This is the hybrid definition I referred to on the previous slide.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** If I live on a reserve, am I included in that category?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes, sir.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** If a person does not participate in the census, how do you complete your data?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** This graph is based on census data and only includes data provided in completed forms.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** So, there may be missing data, as there surely is, because we know that only about 30 to 40 per cent of aboriginals fill out their census forms.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** This is census data from 2001 collected from aboriginal communities. If one day we decide to have a more detailed discussion on the matter of data quality, I would invite my colleague from Statistics Canada to join me.

In 2001, only 30 communities did not participate in the census. That was a significant improvement compared to the 1996 and 1991 surveys, when, if memory serves me, 77 and 78 communities did not participate.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** That's very important. I want to be sure that I understand. In fact, you are referring to registered communities. Let's take a theoretical example. How would the Winneway community in Témiscamingue, which does not exist in the data of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, go about registering?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Every Canadian must fill out a census form. In the coming days, every person will receive a form which must be completed by May 16th. Census officials will go into native communities to help people fill out their forms. So, every Canadian is included in the census.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** I understand that very well. I was a lawyer in a previous life.

I would like to ask you the following question. Are these programs based on the age pyramid, on census results, on information, really, provided by those who responded?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** I will repeat what I told your colleague a few moments ago. What I am interested in are output measures, or consequences. I want information on people's level of education on their housing conditions, and so on. You, on the other hand, are referring to data used to develop programs. I once again urge you to put those questions to people who are directly involved in that type of activity.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** Fine, I understand.

[English]

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Can I just ask a short question?

Your next slide shows a snapshot of the populations by province, as they exist today. Do you have a comparable graph province by province?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** I don't have it here with me.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** But you have it?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes, we can generate it very easily.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** I'd be interested in seeing that, please. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay, Mr. Lévesque, and then we have to move on.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** You mentioned a few moments ago that 30 communities did not participate in the census. Do you have a list of those communities?

• (1605)

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The lists are public. Statistics on native populations are transmitted to Statistics Canada when they are made public. They are usually available as an appendix in Statistics Canada's publications, as well as on their website.

But we have a copy. So, if ever it's more difficult to...

[English]

**The Chair:** Do you think related to that...because we might have some answers as the further presentations come forward?

I'll just entertain one more question, and that'll be it.

**Mr. Gary Merasty:** Just as a qualifier, Mr. Chair, there are 30 communities, but also multi-communities. The census people sometimes think that having gone to one of those multi-communities they've covered it. So the number is actually higher than 30. I think that's just information we should pass on to the census people, that Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation has seven communities and Lac La Ronge Indian Band has six communities—and La Ronge is not the only community. So I think there is some lack of understanding on that front.

Sorry, that's all.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** This particular slide illustrates the geographic distribution—again based on the 2001 census.

Very quickly, most of the aboriginal population resides west of the Great Lakes. First nations and Métis are in the western provinces and the Inuit are in the northern regions. The province with the largest aboriginal population is Ontario as of the 2001 census. Things might change with the 2006 census, because provinces display different growth rates of populations, and there's also interprovincial migration, which obviously plays out in how the population distributes over the entire country.

Again, focusing on geography, this time we're looking at the distribution of population on and off reserve. For the off-reserve portion, we distinguish between rural population, urban non-CMA, and urban CMA. CMA means census metropolitan area. Another way of looking at this is that CMA means large city and non-CMA means small city.

So there's great variation in terms of residential distribution across aboriginal groups. For the registered Indian population, while acknowledging some undercounting of the reserve population, about half of the registered Indians live on reserve. For the non-status and Métis populations, 70% are in cities. For the Inuit, it's about 70% again, but in northern rural communities. For the non-aboriginal population, or other Canadians, about 60% live in large cities. So there are quite significant differences here in terms of where people live.

It is interesting and important when one starts highlighting results from the census, or any data sources, especially when one uses a national picture, because if I'm going to give an average for the education of other Canadians and then for registered Indians, these two populations live in quite different circumstances, so I'm often going to be comparing apples and oranges, to use an overused expression. There's a need to really break down geographically the analysis and data to understand the differences and disparities across the country between aboriginal group, and even amongst aboriginal groups. That's a point I wanted to make here.

**Mr. Gary Merasty:** I have to apologize, because in my previous life I was accused of being overly focused on statistics to make some arguments and advancements.

Now, on this Canada slide, aboriginal population in Saskatchewan is showing 130,000. Yet when we look at the registered Indian population put together by the membership clerks and held on the Indian registry, that's almost the entire number. So the true demographic reality of Saskatchewan is about 200,000 aboriginal people. There are more than 100,000 status Indian people there. It's commonly accepted with Indian Affairs in the region that there are approximately a little over 100,000. That leaves maybe only 20,000 or 25,000 Métis—that's not true as well—and other categories of aboriginal people.

The point is that these numbers are, I think, under-representing the actual. Again, perhaps it's because of the census problems, although improvements have been made.



On the next slide, I think the on-reserve population in the registered Indian population is much higher as well. The previous statement was that 30 aboriginal communities were missed, all of them first nations, plus the multi-community ones, which raises the number. The percentage, in my opinion, would be much higher than 50. There have been statements made politically about the on- and off-reserve population, and there has to be a better understanding of that population.

• (1610)

**The Chair:** Mr. Bruinooge.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Perhaps we could allow Eric to complete his presentation and then proceed with some questions.

**The Chair:** He requested that any questions that came up be asked during his presentation so that he didn't have to backtrack.

Let's move along now and see how we do. You can limit your questions, unless you feel they're very significant.

Thank you.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The next slide gives you an idea of the distribution of first nations reserves—it's again based on census data according to population size, all the reserves according to census geography, and how they distribute according to their size. Seventy-five percent of first nations reserves have fewer than 500 inhabitants—so we're dealing with really small communities—and well above 300 of them have fewer than 100 residents.

The second topic of this presentation: population growth. On this particular slide we have two pieces of information. Let's first focus on that blue line. What is this blue line? It's the evolution of population size as illustrated by the census. I recognize there are issues of undercounting and qualitative data, but these issues tend to be constant over time and will not necessarily distort the shape of the curve, which I'm interested in here. It's based on ancestry data, the only data we can have an outlook of 100 years.

So what does this graph tell us? At the start of the previous century, around 130,000 individuals reported aboriginal ancestry; in 2001, 1.3 million, ten times the population of 100 years ago. Now 100 years can be broken down into three distinct periods of demographic growth: one of slow growth, 1901-1941; one of rapid growth—it doesn't seem so rapid here, but I can tell you it is—from 1941 to 1971; and then 1971 on, and that's an explosion. The curve is looking at the ceiling right now, and it's going up fast.

If I compare it to Canada overall, in terms of overall growth for those 30 years, 1971-2001, Canada increased by 37%, again based on census data: the aboriginal ancestry population increased more than 300%—that's eight times the rate.

So this is very important. Definition is an important aspect of our work, and also an important aspect for people who do work in programming and policy development, but population growth is also an extremely important aspect; it's an important driver. For those who have read David Foot's *Boom, Bust and Echo*, 60% is explained by demography. Well, that's a lot of demography.

Moving on to the next slide, growth again, I'm focusing only on the last 15 years of the 100 years I just showed you. Now we're talking about data. Each bar represents an annual growth rate for a

five-year period—each bar—so we have it for each group, registered Indian, non-status, Métis, Inuit. For example, the bar on the far left, the red one, for the registered Indian, indicates an annual growth rate of about 6.5% during the period 1986 to 1991. That's what each bar means. If I look at the entire chart, these growth rates vary a lot from group to group, from period to period, significantly.

What's that blue line across that I just put there? It's a reference for you to better appreciate how exceptionally high these growth rates are. This is what I call the maximum natural increase.

At the national level—forget about migration from the outside that would contribute to the growth of the aboriginal population—there's nobody coming from the outside, or very few, so the only way this population should be growing is through births, and then minus deaths: that's what natural increase is, births minus deaths—the theoretical maximum that the population can display is 5.5% a year. That's why you see that bar across at 5.5% a year.

• (1615)

What does that mean, 5.5% a year? It means 10 kids per woman. That's impossible right now—in first nations, Métis, or the Inuit population. That's not what we're seeing.

Just to illustrate, we see rates that are in excess of that 5.5% a year for the registered Indian, for example, in the first period, likewise for non-status Indians, and for the last two periods for the Métis. Another way of illustrating how extraordinary this growth is would be to say at 5.5% a year, the population would double every 13 years. At 5.5% a year, over 100 years that population would be 200 times its initial size. That's unsustainable, by the way; it won't last.

Just to illustrate again how extraordinary the growth has been for some of these populations, for some periods, I want to point out that for the Métis population, the rates are really high—they're higher and higher—from one period to the next. I'm looking forward to the 2006 data to see if it's still on the rise.

I just said earlier that it's a good idea to break it down by geography sometimes, because the national picture hides a lot of disparities. Here I've broken it down by reserve, off-reserve rural, and off-reserve urban. Again, these are annual growth rates—the same as the previous slides. What do we see? Where's the demographic explosion? It's off reserve and it's primarily in urban areas.

What are the components of this growth? Well, there are four.

The first one is the national increase, which I've already spoken to. In reality, the fertility rate for first nations women is around 2 to 2.5 children per woman. The Inuit would be around four. The Métis and non-status would be probably around two or a little below. That doesn't explain the growth rates we've seen.

So, yes, the national increase contributes to the growth of the populations, and we've seen it on the pyramid. There are a lot of kids. But that's not the only explanation.

Now, when I talk to colleagues who are not really versed in aboriginal research, they say, "What about migration?" Well, nationally, obviously, that's not a component. Subnationally, the provinces, territories, cities—it might be a component. But it's not. It's not a big driver.

In fact, when it comes time to explain urban aboriginal growth, migration is a myth. When you look at census data, there are questions on migration, where you were living five years ago, so you can have an idea of migration—to and from. Reserves have more individuals going to them than leaving.

The blue bubble that you see on the screen and in your printed decks indicates almost plus 11,000. That means there are 11,000 more people who moved to the reserve than left. As a consequence, you have people leaving the rural off-reserve area going back to the community, or leaving the city—3,000—going back to the community. So this mass exodus is a myth.

The urban areas have been losing population to migration since 1986. I have colleagues that have far more experience than me in looking at this. If I remember well, it goes back to the seventies. The reserves have always displayed a positive net migration—always. There are always more people coming than leaving.

It's important to emphasize that point here, because when people start thinking about designing policies and programs for aboriginals and they think these folks are coming from Indian reserves, it biases how they approach these individuals.

• (1620)

It sets their minds, in terms of what their characteristics are and what the issues are. That could affect policy development significantly.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** On this graph, it says "Off Reserve - Rural" and "Off Reserve - Urban". Am I to understand that these populations have migrated back to a reserve?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The figure you see — I apologize for the rather technical term — indicates the net migratory threshold in these areas. So, if you look at the migratory exchanges in off-reserve rural areas, which involves calculating the number of out-drifters and in-drifters, you end up with a net loss of 7,665 individuals.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** Fine.

When did all this begin?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** This was measured over five years, so for the period from 1996 to 2001.

You have just made an excellent observation. I've just realized that I forgot to include the reference period. Thank you.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** So, if I understand what you're telling me, since 1996, the expressions "Off-Reserve - Rural" and "Off-Reserve - Urban" represent Indians — I don't like that word — who leave urban or rural areas to go back on reserve. Is that correct?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** In fact, there are movements to and from reserves. When I tabulated all my results with regard to people moving onto reserves and those leaving reserves, the result, for rural areas, was a net loss of 7,000 individuals. However, there are many more migrants than I indicated. This represents the result of all movements.

If you are interested in the volume of migrants, that is, in the number of people who move, I can provide you with that information. Of course, those numbers are much higher. Indeed, the issue of frequent movements by native people, in particular in urban areas or between urban areas, is a whole matter onto itself.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** In my opinion, this is very important. I will formulate a hypothesis. You can leave Montreal and go to Quebec City or to Toronto, but not necessarily to Kahnawake or Kanosatake, right?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Not necessarily, but I don't exclude that possibility. In fact, the majority of movements take place off-reserve. And there is a lot of movement.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** So then, why are you telling me that there are over 10,000 individuals on reserves?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The on-reserve population has indeed increased by 10,000 individuals because of the number of people coming to and leaving reserves.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** So it's not as a result of the birth rate.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** That's right. It only comes from migration, from migrants. These are only people who have moved.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** They moved between 1996 and 2001?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** Aren't you going to have fun a few weeks from now.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mrs. Neville.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** I'm interested to see reference to the myth, and the myth has some currency right now.

Are there figures that substantiate those who indicate that the migration is from reserves to the urban areas? I guess I'm asking you how this myth came to be.

• (1625)

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** That's a personal opinion. The myth is based on living conditions. A non-aboriginal person living in the city, watching TV, watching a documentary or story in the news about living conditions in first nations, can obviously notice the differences. Their thinking is that when folks have an opportunity, they will move. That type of thinking then evolves into, "Well, if I see huge population gains in the city, that's probably because of the idea I had about an exodus". They associate the two.

I will come to exactly what is the source of this population explosion.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** I have another quick question.

When one does the self-identification in the urban setting, I'm assuming it is self-identification and that's it.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** We're coming to that. That's good.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** I would like clarification, Mr. Chair. I've heard a number of times 1996, but this document says 1986. Which is it?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Since 1986 the urban areas have displayed a net loss. When we look at different census periods, I can go back to 1986. Over the last 15 years, their net migration for the cities is negative.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** I heard 1996.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The bubbles refer to 1996-2001. That's my mistake. I forgot to add that.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** 1996 is five years.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** So on there it says 1986, but it should be 1996? No? Forget it; I'll get it somewhere else.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** So migration is not a big component of the growth overall, obviously, but neither is it in cities.

The third component is Bill C-31. In 1985 there was an amendment to the Indian Act to eliminate the discriminatory clauses that had resulted in the loss of status and entitlement for the majority of first nations women and their children. When 1985 came along, changes were made to the Indian Act, and these women and their children were allowed to be reinstated.

So we can look at these numbers. This amendment, Bill C-31, had an impact on the registered Indian population. There are three impacts it had: the registrations, the births associated with individuals who registered, and the reinstatement of the women who could have had children after that, some of whom would have status. So that's also an impact of Bill C-31, as displayed by the green section here on the pie chart.

Yes?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Have you done any projections on the potential impact of 6(2) of section 31?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** We've done a lot of work on Bill C-31.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Have you done work on projections?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** We have many documents, and all of them are available on our website. The only ones that are not available are the ones that are still in editing or translation.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** So the potential impact of subsection 6(2) you've examined from a demographic perspective? You've got those documents, and we can have access to them?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes, they're on our website.

**The Chair:** I missed Mr. Russell, so if he wishes to he may speak now.

**Mr. Todd Russell:** I'm just wondering. You collect your data based on the census, right? The questions on the census have changed over time, as I understand it, in terms of capturing the aboriginal population. Would that not also account for an explosion

in certain areas? I'll come back to that. There are still aboriginal people there, but that accounts for, I think, the high spike.

My point is that if the department is basing programs on population and need and that type of thing, and they had these erroneous numbers in 1986 or 1991 or whatever, and then we're getting real numbers, then our data is getting better but the programs don't seem to be adjusting for this more accurate data. So we have a real problem with program design, for instance, on the Métis. Would you say that's a fair statement?

• (1630)

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** You touch on a few aspects here. The first one is the consistency in the definitions.

Yes, I agree with you, there have been changes from 1871, the first census, to right now, 2006, but since 1986 there has been relative consistency in the way that data has been captured by Statistics Canada in their censuses. There are improvements, and these make the numbers fluctuate, but for these improvements to make a really strong impact they would have to be spectacular. There's no indication, from the work done at Statistics Canada on the quality of data, that shows either spectacular improvement or deterioration in the quality of data. In my own studies at the university, I've done some simulations with regard to this. You would have to have spectacular improvement or real deterioration of data for there to be a big rejigging of the counts.

In the last point you made, you were referring to the Métis and to the fact that now the data's better. We have more people declaring that they're Métis. However, just looking at the next slide in your deck, you can see the fourth component of the demographic growth, of the explosion, a phenomenon that has been called "ethnic mobility". Basically it refers to changes in self-reporting for those periods that we're looking at. It also refers to children born in multicultural families. The father could be first nation, the mother could be European, and perhaps the child could be declared Métis. It could be.

So ethnic mobility refers to changes for an individual through time. If an individual has multiple ancestries, for whatever circumstance he'll change his declaration of identity. It could be through intermarriage, with people of different cultural backgrounds having kids. That will have an impact. Ethnic mobility is the big component for first nations and Métis, especially in urban areas.

There's another way to illustrate the impact of ethnic mobility. If I'm a first nations child in a closed first nations community, obviously I need two first nations parents. Outside the reserve, a first nations woman might be with a non-first nations man, but the child might be first nations. This first nations man might be with a non-first nations woman, and they can have a first nations child. In communities, people will not intermarry but "in-marry", so two first nations individuals for one child. Outside, you can create two families with the same two individuals, and then two kids. So intermarriage can potentially double the growth.

In cities you have a lot more intermarriage, as illustrated by a lot of the reports on Bill C-31 that we were referring to earlier. There's a lot more intermarriage, hence rapid growth. Then on top of that you have people who have multiple identities who, for one reason or the next, will change how they report themselves. That's a very big contributor behind the growth. If ethnic mobility didn't exist through the generations, could we be talking about Métis today? No.

There are no definitive answers. I'm sure some of you, maybe even all of you, are already thinking, how can that happen? What's the explanation behind ethnic mobility? There's no definitive answer. There's no data. I cannot ask people who've changed their reporting through the census: why did you do that? But there's work that has been done in the U.S. and Australia. These phenomena have also been observed for the aboriginal populations there.

• (1635)

There are three factors, predisposing demographic factors. First, there is age. Until I'm about 18, it's my mom or my dad who's going to fill out the census, so they'll report me in a certain way. When I start filling out my own census form, I might change the way I report. So that's age.

There is multiple ancestry. There are also social factors. When there are events, there's media, which increases awareness. That also increases pride, very often, and will push people to—pardon the expression—come out of the closet about their aboriginality.

And then there are legal factors. There are different pushes to define who has access to certain programs and benefits. These pushes will trigger movements of individuals, who will try to position themselves relative to what's there or what's not. Bill C-31 was a good example. I don't know if anyone noticed, but there was a bar going in a negative direction for non-status Indians. That was most likely because of Bill C-31. Some individuals tried to reposition themselves. They were non-status and then they became status, so there was movement. For those who were non-status before, there was a suspicion that they might be Métis now, because they were non-status because of their mixed ancestry, and some interpret mixed ancestry as a direct connection to Métis. So you see, that's a legal factor at play here in terms of how people report themselves.

So that's a big one, ethnic mobility. It's not often studied in demography courses. It's a little on the margins, on the fringe. Sometimes people have thought I was a bit on the lunatic fringe in talking about it.

Okay, the third topic is well-being. This chart presents the human development index. What is this index? It's an index developed by the United Nations Development Program to measure the quality of life of countries and compare them. We've heard through the years that Canada ranks among the top countries in the world. And it still ranks really high. In fact, for a few years, Canada ranked number one.

The methodology is relatively simple and allows for calculations for the registered Indian population and Inuit, which we've done. The HDI is made up of three elements. It's simple. One element is health, which is measured as life expectancy. The second element is education. We want to have an idea of knowledge. This has two

subcomponents: one is functional literacy, and one is higher levels of education, which is measured as graduation from high school or higher. The third component is the measure of access to goods and services, and here we use income per capita. The index goes from zero to one. So the blue line on your chart represents the HDI for other Canadians, the red one is registered Indians, and the green one is the Inuit.

The first observation—it's obvious—is that well-being for registered Indians and Inuit is significantly lower than for other Canadians. But there are two other messages that this graph conveys. First, well-being of registered Indians and Inuit is not stable or going down, and this is another persistent myth. Second, over the entire period, the gap relative to other Canadians has been closing, but not as much in the last five years, the 1996 to 2001 period. In fact, for the Inuit, it seems to have widened a little bit. We're at the third decimal place, so we might just be within the margins of error there, but it's safe to say that there haven't been huge improvements over the last five years.

So there are three messages. The gap, relative to other Canadians, is improving, and it's improving faster than for the rest of the Canadian population. Therefore, the gap is closing.

• (1640)

What's the driver behind these improvements? It's education—not health, or life expectancy, or income, but education—albeit education at the lower end of the spectrum. You have more and more people who have grade 9 education, which is a measure of functional literacy.

That's about it. So that's the national picture for the HDI.

**Mr. Todd Russell:** Why is there no Métis line on this slide?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** It's because we have no measures of life expectancy for the non-status or the Métis, and that's one of the components. We can't measure it, but we're working on it. We're putting a lot of effort into it with our Health Canada research colleagues and also with our Statistics Canada research colleagues. So there are ways of dealing with that, but there's no direct data.

Life expectancy is based on vital statistics. Vital statistics are collected for all Canadians, but in the vital statistics there is no aboriginal identifier, so you can't distinguish who is aboriginal—meaning first nation, Métis, or Inuit—and who is not.

For registered Indians, the data come from the Indian registry. For the Inuit, we use a different approach, what we call an “ecological approach”, where we identify the areas where Inuit are 95% of the population, and then we grab the data for all of that area, including the 5% who are non-Inuit. Yes, it's not perfect, but if we didn't do that, we wouldn't have anything to show. We're trying to apply the same technique for the Métis, but it's a lot more difficult because they don't live in dense, concentrated areas like the Inuit.

But based on the other indicators—functional literacy, grade 9 plus or high school plus, and income per capita—I think it's safe to say non-status and Métis are positioned between the registered Indians and the Inuit on one side and other Canadians on the other side. They're somewhere in the middle. So when we get the life expectancy measure and we do calculate the HDI, I expect the HDI for the non-status and Métis to be somewhere in-between.

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell:** I just have a very quick question. You don't take the cost of living into account in these figures?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** No.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Can you tell me why the life expectancy of functional illiterates is higher than the life expectancy of persons who have a high school diploma?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Are you asking that question on the basis of numbers you are seeing?

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Yes. For instance, those who have a high school diploma...

I've made a mistake. I've just realized that in fact it refers to the number of people. I'm sorry.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The number refers to the proportion of people who have a high school diploma. The first line refers to the life expectancy in years, whereas the two following lines refer to the rate of functional literacy and the proportion of people who have a high school diploma. The last line refers to dollars.

Let's move on to the next slide.

These measures can be produced for men and women. What you see here is the gap between the index for men and the index for women for each of the two populations, namely registered Indians and other Canadians.

I will ask you to concentrate on the graph to the right which refers to 2001. The gap is of 0.002 per cent for women in 2001 in the category of other Canadians.

But for first nations registered Indians, the gap is 0.029 per cent. The gap favouring women is therefore 15 times greater within first nations as compared to other Canadians. It seems that this situation is unique in the world.

After studying the data, we did not find anything showing a significant gap between men and women. The gap can be explained by two factors. The first is life expectancy, because the gap is very wide between first nations men and women. The second factor is education.

•(1645)

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** Wait a moment: I want to understand what you are saying. There is a significant gap between men and women, but to whose advantage?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** It is to the advantage of women.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** Do first nations women live longer than first nations men?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Much longer.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** Is this the case on or off-reserve?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Both. Women are more educated, but this does not translate into higher incomes. Nevertheless, I think that's another issue.

[English]

I mentioned earlier that looking at the national picture hides huge disparities. This is the HDI for the registered Indian in 2001 only—for the on-reserve population, the off-reserve population, but also the other Canadians, the other residents in these provinces or territories.

The first observation from this chart is that it varies from coast to coast. The lowest figures in terms of HDI for the registered Indians are in Manitoba and in Saskatchewan—on reserve. It's also in Manitoba and Saskatchewan where there is the largest gap relative to the rest of the population and where we have the largest proportion of the population that is aboriginal. If I had broken it down by gender here, which I did on the previous slide, you would see that the men in Manitoba display a very, very low HDI. Again, it's education and life expectancy.

So this highlights the need to really break down the data geographically, to identify specific disparities, specific issues. The national picture masks important differences.

We also have done it for the Inuit by regions where they live, so in Newfoundland, Labrador, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Quebec. Again, we see important variations across regions, and Nunatsiavut and Nunavik show the lowest level of HDI for the Inuit.

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Just on the education component, is there a breakdown in terms of where the education actually takes place? Is it on reserve, off reserve, mixed? Do you have data for that?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** We cannot have data from the census about where they get their education. The issue of tracking students is one the department is looking into in terms of better data, because we have the provincial system, which is off reserve, and then on reserve. So there are efforts being made there in terms of bringing the information together so we will have a better sense of the students' progress.

I was just saying it's important to drill down geographically. In our unit, we've used the HDI methodology and expanded it a bit so we can apply it at the community level. That's the community well-being index, which is very similar in terms of methodology—similar, not exactly the same.

Again, it's an index that goes from zero to one. It has components. It has an educational component, exactly the same as the HDI. It has an income per capita component. But we cannot indicate life expectancy at the community level.

We're talking about small communities. In some of these communities, in certain years, there are going to be zero deaths. Zero deaths means infinite life expectancy, and we know that's not the case. It's because we're dealing with small populations, small numbers.

So we've replaced this health indicator with one of housing, which is an important aspect of living conditions in aboriginal communities. This housing component is made up of two elements: one of quality and one of quantity—quantity being crowding. We measure crowding. In terms of quality, there's a question on the census that asks about major repairs. So those aspects were factored into the measure, similar to the HDI, the same kind of methodology.

The last one is labour force participation, and we have four components in this case. This is mostly a socio-economic indicator. The HDI included a health component that we cannot build in here. The community well-being index is a socio-economic well-being index of communities. From the HDI nationally to the provinces, we're now drilling down to the communities.

These yellow bars represent other Canadians. I'm going to build up the complexity of this chart so you'll see. That's why it looks a little empty right now. The yellow bars represent Canadian communities that are not first nation or Inuit, based on their score. The score runs across, and you have a proportion of these communities.

By the way, we've calculated this for all Canadian communities that have a population of at least 65 individuals—not just first nations or Inuit, all communities. These are the other Canadian communities, their distribution. You'll notice that they're mostly towards the top end of the scale. They have high scores.

On the next slide I've added first nations, the red bars. The first observation is that these communities have lower scores. Okay, we knew that from the HDI anyway. What more do we learn here? We learn that there are huge disparities between first nation communities. In other words, the difference between the lowest score and the highest score is bigger than the difference between the average first nation and the average other Canadian community. There are more disparities across first nation communities than between first nations and other Canadians. That's a finding.

If you look at the bottom 100 communities, 92 are first nations. Only one first nation community ranks among the top 100, and that's Burrard in B.C.

On the next slide we add the Inuit. For the Inuit, there are far fewer communities. As indicated on the chart, "N = 51", meaning the number of communities. They're mostly concentrated towards the middle of the scale. You have some that are towards the upper level, but they're mostly concentrated, more densely grouped, similar to other Canadian communities. There's a little less disparity than we saw with the first nation communities, but also we're dealing with a smaller number of communities: 51.

• (1650)

When I got the invitation, I was told that participants, members, really like maps, so indulge. I'm a demographer; I'm not a geographer. But I do recognize that when people start thinking about why there is such a huge difference between first nations communities, the first answer that most people give is, "It's because of geography, because of where they are." And I say, "And what else?", and they respond, "Oh, it's because of where they are." Okay, I get it. And what else?" They respond, "Because of where they are." There is a fixation on location.

This map shows high-moderate level of CWB, community well-being, for first nations. The blue stars indicate a high level of CWB.

Yes, a lot of them are in the south. There are a lot of them in southern B.C. Some of them are around the Great Lakes. Some are between Ottawa and Quebec. The one north of Quebec is not exactly south, by the way. It might look south based on where it is on the screen, but it's not exactly south.

You will also notice blue stars right in the middle of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, northern Alberta, Yukon, northern British Columbia—and I can go on like that.

It's not directly associated with where they are. There are some communities that do fairly well.

Just to illustrate again the disparities that we saw on the previous chart...I was saying that the difference between the lowest and the highest is really big.

There is a tribal council in Alberta. There are two communities, same tribal council, same band. They can see each other from across the river, these two communities. One ranks among the top 10 first nations in the country; one ranks among the bottom 10—same band. They can see each other from across the river.

So these disparities we saw nationally, when we look at all the communities, we even see them at the band level or tribal council level. I just wanted to point that out.

We thought the data was not good. We actually sent one of our researchers there to look and the person came back—yes, the data was good. There are huge differences between these two communities.

• (1655)

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Mr. Chair, I have just a quick question.

I'm sorry to interrupt your presentation.

Is there any economic analysis based on this allocation of the blue stars, I guess you could say? Is there an economic reason—perhaps business occurring—

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Based on standard distribution of the communities—the red bars that we showed earlier—the moderate are those close to the average first nations score. Those considered high are those that have higher scores relative to that average. Those that we categorized as low here are those that are really below the average first nations score.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** My question is more in relation to whether there is a business interest, perhaps, in the area that might be providing additional employment in some of those areas that you've identified as high.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** You mean if we've looked at it actually from an economic perspective, what would be the explanation for higher CWB scores?

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Right.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The first step of the research agenda—because it's our research agenda—is to actually measure. It took us two years. We had direct access to the microlevel data from the census—special access—but it took us two years.

The second phase is to look at the reasons, the determinants, the correlates—why? And yes, I'm with you with that. That's the direction this research needs to take, but we're not there yet.

**The Chair:** Mr. Mark.

**Mr. Inky Mark:** In my riding, a lot of the reserve communities have adjacent to them a Métis community. Is there much research in terms of a differential between Métis themselves, as well as status and Métis?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The issue of Métis communities still has to be—

**Mr. Inky Mark:** They're side by side.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes. When you refer to a Métis community, you probably refer to a fairly substantial density of Métis population. Here we didn't study population; we studied communities. There are Indian reserves, Indian settlements, *villages Cris*.... Those are geographies recognized as such, and we've looked at the well-being of those areas.

When you refer to these populations, they're not necessarily associated with an identified geographic area, as in the case of the Métis. So that's the challenge right now in terms of developing a CWB Métis. We have populations, we know where they are, but association with a specific geographic area.... Can this area be designated as a Métis community? Okay, then that's the score. But this step hasn't been fully taken yet.

• (1700)

**Mr. Inky Mark:** Currently, I have quite a few Métis communities developing right alongside reserve communities.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** As I said, the CWB has paid for all municipalities. Then the issue is coming up with a list of Métis communities.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Some communities around Ungava Bay and Hudson's Bay are not indicated on the map. Is that because the people did not participate in the census or because these are Inuit communities?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** That explains why I chose the slide.

In fact, we thought it would be a good idea to have two maps: one for first nations and the other for Inuit communities. You will find the same type of information on this map concerning the 51 Inuit communities for 2001.

[English]

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** I will conclude my presentation with the last slide.

Before I start explaining this chart, in any exercise, when you look at the past, you look at old reports like Hawthorn, and RCAP. When they tried to assess differences between first nations and other Canadians, Métis and other Canadians, or Inuit and other Canadians, they would base it on education. Then they would come up with an indicator, for example, proportion of university graduates. They would look at the labour force and the percentage of unemployment. They would look at income. They would use income per capita—usually they would use median income. Then they would look at housing and use a measure of crowding. They would compare the populations to the rest of the Canadian population. Then they would identify a gap in terms of well-being for that particular dimension of well-being.

But because we're using different measures across dimensions, we're unable to assess where the biggest gap is. Is it in education, health, housing, and so on? We're using different scales. We're using Fahrenheit and Celsius. Measure variations in Celsius; measure variations in Fahrenheit. If I don't have the equivalency table, I don't know. I can't compare.

The CWB, because it re-scales everything from zero to one for all dimensions of well-being that are included in the index, allows for these inter-dimensional comparisons. In other words, here I'm better able to see in which dimension of well-being the gap is the largest between first nations and other Canadians, and Inuit and other Canadians.

Two-thirds of the gap can be explained by housing and income. Personally, I think one should focus a little bit more on housing, because income is a measure of income per capita, and the gap is to some extent driven by differences in fertility. First nation and Inuit families have more kids, hence more dependants, which lowers their income per capita. But these differences in fertility are acceptable. There's no well-being issue there per se—just in the number of kids.

There is also the fact—you saw the age structure—that the aboriginal population is entering the labour market. Other Canadians are exiting the labour market. When you enter the labour market, your expectations in terms of wages are not at the same level as when you're leaving. In other words, you make a lot more money before you leave the labour market than when you just come in. So there are differences there in income that are related to differences in age structure, and we shouldn't necessarily read the income gap here as being discrimination in the labour market.

Housing is a lot clearer. There's crowding and repairs. The gap, as illustrated by the chart, is important. It's much larger than education. For registered Indians, it's three times the gap in education. But I'm not saying that the gap in education is not huge. The gap in housing is three times larger. This is relative. We're working with relative scales here. To have a true measure of the education gap, I suggest you go back to the education measures. How many kids come out of high school? How many kids come out of university? But in assessing where it's the largest, this is possibly the best attempt so far.

•(1705)

With that, I conclude my presentation, and I thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lévesque, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** This one refers to workers. But does it refer to the number of workers available for work or to the number of people who are in the labour market?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** It refers to the number of people in the labour market. It also indicates the proportion of people who are employed, as well as those who are unemployed.

[*English*]

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** I'd like to just come back to Bill C-31 for a minute. I'm curious. I had somebody bring me down the projections, and according to the projections the department has done, the number of people who do not qualify for registration is expected to increase from the current level of about 21,700 to nearly 400,000 within two generations.

I presume those kinds of demographic projections go to the policy-makers for some kind of review in future policy decisions. Is that the process?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** All the information, yes. All the research we produce is out there and is shared with our policy colleagues.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** You just produce the numbers and then somebody else makes policy as a result of them.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** We produce the numbers, and then we give a lot of importance to communicating them in an understandable, palatable way to the policy folks. But after that, yes, it's up to them.

**The Chair:** Mr. Merasty.

**Mr. Gary Merasty:** I think the whole Bill C-31 issue is huge. I know it's at various stages within the court process, the various challenges to Bill C-31. I think it's very important to this committee to track when we talk about some of the related issues, and seriously address Bill C-31.

**The Chair:** Mr. Albrecht.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** I have a question on this one here, where you show the comparison of population of aboriginal ancestry. Does the 37% for Canada include the aboriginals in its number?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Okay. That's all of Canada, so it's not a contrast; it's inclusive of. That makes that population growth even larger than what it looks like at first glance here.

Okay, thanks.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The overall weight of the aboriginal population is around 3%, so it won't—

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** It's a small number, but the actual percentage would be skewed even higher if you excluded them from the first.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** If we focused only on other Canadians, yes, the percent growth would be a little smaller.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Thanks.

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

Brian.

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** Thank you very much for your presentation.

One of the questions I have is what the improvements are that you have planned for the collection of this data.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** We're data geeks. We use data; we don't collect it. For that we depend largely on Statistics Canada, because in a nutshell, the census is the name of the game when it comes to aboriginal data. There's also the aboriginal peoples survey. I know there are efforts right now, in terms of finding the right support for that exercise. It's a post-census survey. There was one in 1991, one in 2001, and there are attempts to have one in 2006, this fall.

I think it's important also to start looking at the vital statistics I was referring to earlier, because as soon as you add an aboriginal identifier the possibilities in terms of research on the health sides explode. The data is there for everybody; it's just that we can't identify who's who. So you could look at causes of death, suicide, hospitalization, cancer, diabetes, low birth weight, high birth weight—you name it. It could all be done through that first attempt, because then it will trickle down through the health information system.

But that's not us. We can only encourage, as researchers, and show the value, which we do.

•(1710)

**The Chair:** Mr. Lemay.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** Is there any way to find out who has registered as a registered Indian, as a Métis, or as a non-registered Indian? Is it possible to verify whether what people say is actually the truth?

I'm asking the question because I feel your data is very important for the future development of the department.



**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Once again, it is a matter of quality as opposed to a demographic explosion. Could the issue of quality not explain the demographic explosion in part?

Regarding variations in the non-participation of some communities, I took this factor into consideration while evaluating the impact of ethnic mobility. Also at issue was what we demographers refer to as undercount. It is inevitable that certain segments of the population would not be included in the census. For the overall population, this undercount hovers between two and three per cent. I took all of these factors into account while estimating the effect of ethnic mobility.

The value or validity of a declaration cannot be measured. I would find this fact very perplexing if it occurred in Canada alone. However, as I was saying earlier, for the same periods, the same phenomenon has been observed in the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand, to a lesser degree. Ethnic minorities are also undercounted in China and the former Soviet Union. This phenomenon is widespread.

Earlier, I identified three demographic factors that are predominant, including social and legal ones. For example, China has a one child per family policy. Families belonging to the ethnic majority in China can only have one child. Very small minorities can have two or three children. In the past, people tended to identify themselves as members of the majority, because this gave them access to certain jobs. The same people are now saying that they should perhaps go back and declare themselves as members of their minority group, something they didn't do before. In other words, they are coming out of the closet because this gives them the right to have two children.

In the former Soviet Union, passports were identified as the probable source of these variations. Here, past events like Oka have drawn a lot of attention. In fact, when we count the number of times the words "aboriginal", "first nation", "Métis" or "Inuit" appeared in newspapers over the years, the highest numbers correspond to peaks in growth rates during the 1990s. There are also factors that are legal, or political in nature, such as the introduction of Bill C-31.

I do not exclude opportunism as a motivating factor for some people who make declarations. However, as this occurs among aboriginal minorities in other countries around the world, I believe that this phenomenon is indeed present and very real.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** All right.

According to what you carefully explained to us on the last slide concerning housing, can I go so far as to assume that Inuit and aboriginal housing is part and parcel of the problem, but also of the solution, so that quality of life can be improved? Overcrowded housing is the cause of all types of tensions.

• (1715)

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** If the indicators are improved then the result will improve and the gap will be smaller. What is missing here it how the various dimensions of wellbeing are connected.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** What do you mean?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The higher my level of education, the better my chances of procuring employment. The better my job the higher

my income. The higher my income, the more options I have in terms of housing.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** Except if I live on a reserve where housing options are extremely limited.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** We're coming to the second part of our research project, that is the determinants. Why is well-being where it is? I don't want to guess. I am a researcher, so I am motivated by and obsessed with facts.

[English]

**The Chair:** We have Jean Crowder.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Do you do a correlation then between health and housing, for example?

I know you talked about the determinants. For example, we know that with tuberculosis, overcrowding is a factor.

We have an incident right now with Garden Hill, where there is overcrowding and no running water in many of the houses.

So do you do any kind of correlation between inadequate housing and health?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** It could be part of it. We haven't done it thus far. As I said, we really were focused on actually producing this first index, this first measure, because it's the foundation of everything else, understanding the well-being of first nation, Inuit, and Métis communities.

We could do that type of analysis, but it has been done elsewhere: the relationship between the quality of housing and health, the quality of education and health, the quality of housing and education. If you have four kids in the same bedroom, it's kind of hard to study for your exam the next day. These research questions have been studied in the general population.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** That's in the general population, not first nations, Inuit, and Métis.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** No, but the relationship has been demonstrated.

From a research perspective, I always welcome new research ideas. It would be interesting. Would it add significantly more to our knowledge than actually focusing on other aspects such as distances from major centres, or proximity or interactions with neighbouring non-first nation communities? To me, it would be more valuable to invest in that type of research right now than to repeat for first nations similar research that was done for the general population—in this particular context, but not always. I'm not saying that's always the case.

**The Chair:** Are there any other questions?

Mr. Bruinooge.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** On that note, are there any things or ideas you'd like to suggest to the committee in order to perhaps improve the way you're able to do your job in the future?

**A voice:** More money.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** That's second. The first is more data.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** What about the concept of you utilizing...I wouldn't say a random sample, but something similar to polling techniques? I know a lot of scientific analysis of random samples is done. Could that be useful at all to you in perhaps indicating certain trends in certain areas?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Do you have anything in mind when you talk about sampling? Are you referring to sampling individuals or sampling communities?

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** I guess it would be a combination of both. I'm just thinking more in terms of polling. Being from the political persuasion like the rest of my colleagues, we have some understanding of polling. I know there is an element of scientific analysis done with regard to that. Could that be useful to you? Has that been considered?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** There is the northern poll that is being worked on right now in the department. We have a few questions in there that hopefully will help shed some light on how northern people define well-being.

Yes, we used the HDI methodology—which we've massaged a little bit, but it's still very close to the HDI methodology—but we did that in our ivory tower, with our own perception of what well-being is. Through this particular poll, we want to try to get an idea of, okay, this is what community well-being measures, but what is well-being for northern residents? What does it include? What does it not include?

That's informative. That's important, because that will give us direction in terms of the next stage for the research as to what the important elements are that need to be focused on.

On that particular idea of why we picked these indicators, it's because these are indicators that you'll find in most indices around the world. We've done some literature review on that. So the components of the CWB are cohorts of almost all the indicators. Even if they have 50 components, you'll find in there the ones we have.

• (1720)

**The Chair:** Mr. Merasty.

**Mr. Gary Merasty:** You made a comment, which I agree with more than 100 percent, that the current methodologies and current data that you take and work with sometimes bury the real picture in different regions of the country—and even more deeply in different tribal councils, and even more deeply in different communities. So what you end up having after you take the highs and you take the lows is a below-average figure, and then you paint the picture of the conditions, because that's the way the data works. Politicians tend to take that and, unfortunately, may not use it in the best way, or take it too literally without understanding its depth.

A bigger issue that is related to the parliamentary secretary's question is not what you need, but what we can provide to the aboriginal communities to do their own research and development. Right now they do not get research and development dollars.

I'll give you an example. We did this education indicators report of our tribal council of 33 schools, who are almost 50% of the on-reserve population in Saskatchewan, and there was no money

anywhere to do it, so we took money from health and from another program and another program to actually do what was important. We came up with some demographic pictures, but not until we got done did we get some funding for it. It's important at the end of the day, because then communities take ownership of their research suggesting what they need to do to come up with solutions for their own issues.

Another example is the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority, which established a surveillance unit in northern Saskatchewan that talked about TB rates and immunizations. Once the 50 or so communities there realized they had the lowest immunization rates for newborns, having that data in hand, they designed a response because they took ownership and responsibility. Now those northern first nations communities have the highest rates of immunization in the country, even higher than the province of Saskatchewan.

So it's not what we can provide, but that we provide the first nations, Métis, and Inuit communities the ability to come up with their own solutions once they have developed the data. Then as a data geek I'll take that data and do much more wonderful things with it and get much more accurate pictures.

So research and development funding is absolutely critical. Without that, you never get to see the best practices, because they're always buried so deep.

**The Chair:** Good point.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** I'll comment on that also.

I think I'd agree with my honourable colleague. To some extent, I think the bigger issue is perhaps actually putting more funds in the hands of those who make decisions at the band level, so that the leadership can say, well, I'd perhaps like to research something, but as the elected leader I think this is the direction we need to go in. So it would be a combination of both research and putting the tools in the hands of the aboriginal leadership.

**The Chair:** Ms. Karetak-Lindell.

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell:** I'm very pleased to hear that you're looking at different ways of analyzing the data you get because when you ask who defines "well-being"... I was just telling Todd we like to say we didn't know we were poor until someone told us we were poor. We like to say that in the north because technically that's true. As long as we were healthy, happy, and the caribou didn't bypass us and we could get a good living off the land, that was okay, until someone came in and decided that because we didn't have grade 12 diplomas, because we didn't know how to do this, this, and that, and we didn't have social insurance numbers, we were like a third-world country. So you really need to be careful about what conclusions you come to because of data.

We've seen studies like these many, many, many times. I have to say, and maybe out of disrespect, I call them the *Globe and Mail* doom and gloom types of statistics. That's what I've seen before, and it paints a very dire picture.

Yes, we need a lot of help in the communities, but it always fails to really bring out the hope and optimism of the people, the people who are working so hard to improve life. You don't get that in statistics and data, and that's why I always say, as Gary said, you have to be very careful. It's good for us to get statistics so we can then use them to get better services, better health care, better education, and understanding, but it really depends on how you present the data.

I'm very thankful for what you gave me, and some of it I'll probably have to digest a little more because some of the terms...if you're not using them all the time, you're not sure you're getting the actual picture. Anyway, thank you for the information.

• (1725)

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** You're welcome.

I agree with you, it's important to have a balanced approach when one looks at data, and not just look at the dark, gloomy side. One of the ways we do it—and I've done it here, to some extent, because of time—is we look at things over time. We don't just focus on a snapshot because the snapshot will automatically focus on the differences, on the gaps. That's why, when I was talking about the HDI, I said, yes, okay, there's a gap, but wait a minute, there's an improvement, and that's a message that balances that dark and gloomy idea; this gap is closing. So I totally agree with you that it's important, when we present data, to have a balanced perspective, because there's information from both perspectives to be gained and shared.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Lemay is the last one, and then we will run out of time here.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** I think that my question is appropriate, Mr. Chair. What is the next step? I understand that you want more information, but what are you going to do now?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Currently, our work is focusing on the impact of migration on community well-being. We are also conducting an economic analysis of supply and demand on the labour market. The Canadian population is aging, and there will be a high demand in terms of jobs. The aboriginal population is young, so it has much to offer.

We're also interested in housing needs, but we're taking a prospective approach, in other words we will make projections with regard the population and housing for all aboriginal groups throughout Canada, both on and off-reserve, etc. We are working in cooperation with CMHC, in particular. This is a very broad overview.

Obviously, we are continuing to dig into the issue of community well-being. We hope to obtain case studies that more closely examine the factors related to the success of some communities and the fact that some communities are not as successful as others. Such analyses are more qualitative, with, for example, focus groups, and this requires resources. That is why they are mentioned in the second bullet on my list.

• (1730)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you. We'll wrap up now.

Thank you, Mr. Guimond and the other department heads, for being here today.

Make sure you get your priority list in, please, so that we can deal with those before the next meeting.

Thank you very much. The meeting is adjourned.

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