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**EVIDENCE**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Barry Devolin**

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## Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Monday, June 16, 2008

• (1535)

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.)):** I call to order meeting number 34 of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

We had decided that we would have Statistics Canada and Indian Affairs come before us today. We're going to start with Statistics Canada and then go on to the Department of Indian Affairs.

First of all, I hear that congratulations are in order for one of our colleagues on this committee. Mr. Chris Warkentin and his wife have just had a baby girl, so that's why he's not in today. We're very happy for him.

I know that some members are waiting to speak on Tsawwassen and Bill C-34, so that's why some of them aren't here. I think some members will be coming and going, so no offence, but we have some rotating members who are on the speaking list.

I think we'll start with Ms. Badets. Go ahead.

**Ms. Jane Badets (Director, Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada):** I'd like to thank the committee and the chair for inviting Statistics Canada here today to present results from the 2006 census on aboriginal people, that is, first nations, Métis, and Inuit.

I'm here with my colleague Cathy Connors, who is the assistant director of the aboriginal statistics program at Statistics Canada. We will be pleased to answer your questions at the end of this presentation.

I'm just following the overheads. I'm on number two. The presentation today will cover the following topics: the growth and diversity of the aboriginal population, based on 2006 results—where they live, their age structure. The census is a rich source of information on aboriginal languages and languages in general, so I'll present some information on that topic. As well, I will cover housing conditions, some information on education and labour force characteristics of the aboriginal population, and conclude with what further data Statistics Canada will be making available this coming year.

There is certainly far too much information available from the census on these topics to present to you in the short time I have available. So the objective for this afternoon is that I present mean trends to illustrate some key findings. Much of this information is now available for researchers and users of the data to explore these topics in greater depth.

Before presenting the data trends, I would like to talk first about concepts. Statistics Canada has four concepts for identifying aboriginal people that relate to specific questions on the census questionnaire. The first concept is aboriginal ancestry, which comes from the ethnic origin question that asks, "What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person's ancestors?" Secondly, aboriginal identity is a question that asks, "Is this person an aboriginal person, that is, North American Indian, Métis, or Inuit?" Third is whether a person is a treaty or registered Indian as defined by the Indian Act of Canada. And the final question is whether a person is a member of an Indian band or first nation.

Users of census data can use different concepts or a combination of these concepts, depending on their information or program needs. For this presentation I will focus primarily on aboriginal identity. This includes people who said they were an aboriginal person and/or a registered Indian and/or a member of an Indian band or first nation.

The aboriginal identity concept meets the data needs of a vast number of data users across Canada, based on extensive consultations we do with governments, aboriginal organizations, and other data users for each census. It is based on self-identification, has been asked consistently since the 1996 census, and covers the three aboriginal groups mentioned in the Canadian Constitution.

The census is the most comprehensive source of demographic and socio-economic information on aboriginal peoples in Canada. It provides information on the specific aboriginal groups or for communities across Canada and allows for comparisons with the non-aboriginal population.

The data from the census are subjected to many processes and verification to meet Statistics Canada's high standards in regard to data quality. Despite all efforts, some people are missed by the census. For example, in 2001 it was estimated the census missed about 3% of the total population.

In terms of coverage of Indian reserves and settlements in 2006, there were 22 of what we call "incompletely enumerated reserves" for which no census data are available. This is down from 30 in 2001 and 77 in 1996.

So while we've seen improvement in the coverage in this aspect, there are data quality issues for some individual reserves.

Data for communities such as first nations cannot be released for two main reasons. One reason is that the population of the community or reserve is too small to release for confidentiality reasons. The second reason is that the data for that community do not meet quality standards, which are applied to all community-level data from the census.

We are currently working with our colleagues at Indian and Northern Affairs and other partners to better understand the data quality that we do have for individual reserves.

I should also note that in this presentation I'm going to show you data. I'm going to show you changes in percentages and proportions between censuses, which have been accounted to adjust for these incompletely enumerated reserves where we have no data. That is to say, we only include those reserves, for example, that participated in both the 2001 and the 2006 censuses when I make those comparisons between these two time periods.

● (1540)

In 2006, 1.2 million people reported having an aboriginal identity—that is the short pink line on the graph—compared with 1.7 million who reported aboriginal ancestry. That's the long blue line. There has been a steady increase of people reporting either aboriginal ancestry or aboriginal identity over time in the census. These increases in recent years can be attributed to demographic factors, one example being higher birth rates, and to non-demographic factors, for example, increased numbers deciding to identify as aboriginal. It could also be the result of changes in the way we ask questions.

We recognize that the aboriginal population is diverse and that their conditions vary by region and by group. We will provide, where possible, group-specific information.

There were close to 700,000 first nations people in Canada in 2006, accounting for 60% of the aboriginal population.

I should note at this point that I'm going to be using the terms “first nations” and “North American Indian” interchangeably.

The largest group was first nations or North American Indians reporting as registered or treaty Indians—about 565,000. First nations or North American Indians who did not report as registered or treaty Indians numbered around 133,000. The second largest group was the Métis, at around 390,000, and they accounted for about a third of the total aboriginal population in 2006. The Inuit were around 50,000, and they represented 4% of the aboriginal population. The remainder, 34,000, were people who reported more than one aboriginal group or other aboriginal responses.

Of the three aboriginal groups, the largest increase in population between 2001 and 2006 was observed for the Métis, with a growth rate of 33%. The increase in Métis can be attributed to demographic factors, but it is more likely due to increased numbers self-identifying as Métis. The second highest growth rate, 28%, was with the first nations or North American Indian population who did not report as registered Indians. The Inuit grew by 12%. Finally, the first nations reporting as registered Indians grew by 12%. In comparison, the non-aboriginal population grew at a much lower rate during this five-year period.

As of 2001, the vast majority of aboriginal people live in Ontario and the west. Although the largest number live in Ontario, they made up a small share of the provincial population at 2%. On the other hand, aboriginal people made up 85% of Nunavut's population, mostly Inuit; one-half in NWT; 25% in the Yukon; and 15% each in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Half of all aboriginal people lived in urban areas in 2006. Winnipeg was home to the largest aboriginal population, which, at just over 68,000 people, accounted for one in ten Winnipeggers. Edmonton had the next largest aboriginal population. Aboriginal people made up a larger share of the population of several smaller urban centres, especially in the west, in such places as Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; Thompson, Manitoba; and Prince Rupert, B.C. One-third of the population in each of these centres was aboriginal.

Like the total aboriginal population, most first nations people live in Ontario and the west. However, they made up 3% or less of the populations of Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia, respectively. First nations people accounted for three out of ten people in NWT, two out of ten in Yukon, and one out of ten in each of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The proportion of the population living on-reserve in 2006 varied by census concept from 43% for the total population who identified as North American Indian, what we're referring to as first nations, to 54% who reported first nations or North American single ancestry. Depending on the program or information need, users may wish to use these different concepts, or a combination of these concepts, to look at the on-reserve population.

If you were looking at how the proportions changed over time, you would need to take into account the incompletely enumerated reserves for each census. If you did this and compared the 1996 and 2006 censuses, then the proportion of first nations identity population living on-reserve in 2006 would be 40%.

Like the first nations population, most of the people who identified as Métis live in the west and in Ontario. Between 2001 and 2006, the Métis population grew fastest in Alberta, at 22%, followed by Ontario at 19% and Manitoba at 18%. These growth rates could be due to people deciding to self-identify as Métis, rather than to purely demographic factors.

● (1545)

In terms of the Inuit population, three-quarters, or 78%, lived in one of the four regions within Inuit Nunaat—“Nunaat” being the Inuktitut expression for “homeland”—that stretches from Labrador to the Northwest Territories.

In 2006 about half the Inuit lived in Nunavut; 19% in Nunavik; 6% in the Inuvialuit region; 4% in Nunatsiavut; 5% in rural areas outside Inuit Nunaat; and 17% in urban areas outside Inuit Nunaat.

In terms of the age structure, the aboriginal population is still a much younger population than the non-aboriginal population. This is shown, in slide 14, within this age/sex pyramid. In 2006 half of aboriginal people were under age 25, as compared with about one-third of the non-aboriginal population. Another way to look at this is by median age—that is, the point at which half the population is older and half the population is younger. The median age of the total aboriginal population was 27 years in 2006, as compared with 40 years for the non-aboriginal population. By group, the median age for first nations was 25 years, 30 years for Métis, and 22 years for Inuit.

With regard to languages, the census recorded more than 60 first nations languages spoken in Canada. In both 2001 and 2006, about 30% of first nations people in Canada could carry on a conversation in a first nations language. It was higher on-reserve than off-reserve, at 51% versus 12%.

The Inuit language, Inuktitut, was the strongest of the aboriginal languages despite some decline in its use. Around two-thirds of Inuit reported Inuktitut as their mother tongue in 2006. About half spoke it regularly at home, and about seven out of ten reported being able to speak the language.

The next three to four slides touch briefly on housing conditions, education, and labour force.

In terms of housing conditions, despite some improvements over the past decade, Inuit, most of whom live in the north, and first nations people on-reserve live in some of the most crowded conditions in the country. “Crowded” is defined in the census as more than one person per room. And by “room” we mean the main rooms in the dwelling.

Another housing indicator is the extent that people report living in a home needing major repairs. In general, a higher proportion of aboriginal groups reported living in a home in need of major repairs than was the case with the non-aboriginal population. Inuit and first nations people on-reserve are more likely to report living in a home in need of major repairs. Unlike crowding, the need for major repairs has not improved for these two groups over the past decade.

From the census we also collect information on levels of schooling. This graph provides an overview of selected educational levels for both the aboriginal population and non-aboriginal population aged 25 to 64. Compared with the non-aboriginal population, there was a considerable gap between the proportion of the aboriginal population with university credentials, 8% versus 23%. On the other hand, a slightly higher proportion of aboriginal people had an apprenticeship or trade certificate than the non-aboriginal population, 14% versus 12%. Of course, this information can be looked at in more depth along different aboriginal groups.

Finally, in terms of the employment situation at the time of the census, 2006 showed slight gains in the employment rate for all aboriginal groups, but there still remains a gap with the employment rates of non-aboriginal people. First nations on-reserve and the Inuit

had the lowest employment rates in 2001 and in 2006, compared with other aboriginal groups and the non-aboriginal population.

That concludes my presentation. There will be further information coming out on the aboriginal people this coming year. In the fall of 2008 we will be releasing the results of two aboriginal surveys that were conducted following the 2006 census. Both surveys collected information on first nations living off-reserve, Métis, and the Inuit. The Aboriginal Children's Survey is a new survey that collects information on children aged zero to five. The Aboriginal Peoples Survey will provide information on children aged six to 14, and the population aged 15 and over. As well, in the fall, data will be released from the Labour Force Survey, for the first time providing national data on the labour market conditions of the aboriginal population, excluding reserves.

That concludes my presentation. Thank you.

● (1550)

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you very much.

I believe Mr. Beavon is giving the next presentation.

**Mr. Dan Beavon (Director, Research and Analysis Directorate, Strategic Policy and Research Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** I'd like to thank the standing committee for the opportunity to appear.

I'm Dan Beavon, and I'm the director of strategic research and analysis at Indian Affairs. I have a group of about 24 researchers, who are probably the heaviest users of aboriginal data, including census data, in Canada. Our group has published, I think, in the last five years at least seven books in the academic press and dozens of articles in different peer-reviewed journals, as well as dozens of studies that we put up on our Internet site as well.

I'm going to turn the presentation over to Eric Guimond. He is one of my senior researchers, and a demographer. He is also a former Statistics Canada employee and probably understands the census data better than anyone else in Canada.

I'll turn it over to Eric.

[Translation]

**Mr. Eric Guimond (Senior Research Manager, Research and Analysis Directorate, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** I will be speaking to you in French.

Like Dan, I would like to begin by thanking you for inviting us to join our colleagues from Statistics Canada to talk about the 2006 census.

My presentation will certainly complement that of Ms. Badets. We will provide some brief updates, and highlight some aspects of her presentation. I will also present a quick update of our analyses of the main products available. With regard to those products, you have—or at least most of you have—seen them as part of a presentation we made here some two years ago.

The first point I would like to draw to your attention was already raised by my director. We are extremely big users of census data. There is a very simple reason for that: the census is the sole source of comparable data for aboriginal populations in Canada. Since the 1996 census, the quality of figures provided by Statistics Canada is superior to the quality from years past, and that makes it possible for us to monitor the living conditions of aboriginal populations far more effectively.

With regard to the 2006 data, analyses underway in our units include the growth of aboriginal populations in urban areas, as well as migration and mobility. I will give you an overview of the results obtained to date. The results of analyses on educational levels and housing conditions will be provided later. I would also like to mention the human development index, and the community welfare index, which we spoke of at length during our first visit.

We always have to look at definitions. As my colleague pointed out, there are several ways of defining aboriginal populations on the basis of the census. Nowadays, most federal departments, as well as Statistics Canada, agree on a definition that I would call a hybrid definition. It uses three indicators: whether a person is a registered Indian, whether the person has an aboriginal identity, and whether the person belongs to an Indian band or first nation.

The figures published by Indian Affairs and Statistics Canada differ in their distribution. By this, I mean distribution respecting groups within the aboriginal population. The total number published by Indian Affairs is the same as that published by Statistics Canada—1.172 million individuals. Statistics Canada divides them into three groups: first nations, Métis and Inuit. Indian Affairs divides the larger group as follows: status Indians, non-status Indians, Métis and Inuit. That makes it possible for us to monitor the living conditions of aboriginal groups in much greater detail.

The definitions selected can have major repercussions on how data are interpreted, and following the initial interpretation, how the same data are interpreted by non-experts. On the next slide, I will show you an example of the impact the choice of definition can have. On January 15, Statistics Canada published the initial figures on the aboriginal populations from the census of aboriginal populations, and indicated that 40% of first nations people resided on an Indian reserve in 2006. That is the bar you see on the left of the graph. So 40% of first nations people lived on reserve, and 60% lived off reserve. That estimate includes a non-status Indian population, almost all of whom—97%—lives off reserve. For the 40% in question, there was some confusion in the media, and some aboriginal organizations, and without any doubt among some percentage of the population. What do those figures mean?

We noted that, in the media—among other places—figures were interpreted as indicating a mass exodus from Indian reserves. Yet, as I said it at my last visit, and as the new 2006 census data indicate, there is no mass exodus from Indian reserves. People are not leaving

Indian communities in large numbers to live in the cities. Those three circles you see on the diagram indicate the migration numbers for 2001 to 2006. In reserves, there is a positive influx of over 6,000 individuals. That means 6,000 more people moved into the reserve than the number of people who moved out of the reserve.

People interpret the spectacular growth in the number of urban aboriginals as being a reflection of mass migration away from the reserves. But if we look at the number of migrants more closely, we see that migration accounts for only 5% of the growth in urban aboriginal populations.

● (1555)

This may seem like a low and somewhat unimportant figure, and again seem like something that concerns researchers who spend too long locked in their cubicles. However, it remains that poor interpretation of the reasons for urban growth, the attribution of urban growth to mass migration from the reserves, would mean that policy formulated would be geared to the wrong thing. The policies would be geared to an erroneous interpretation and circumstances that in fact do not exist.

We have to be careful of the way we interpret urban growth. It is not linked to migration. As Ms. Badets says on the following page, among Métis in particular, the primary component of the urban aboriginal population explosion is due to changes in self-reporting of ethnic identity from one census to another.

Between 1996 and 2006, the urban aboriginal population increased by 59%. That increase is much higher than the increase in the non-aboriginal population, which is only 13%. Many people immediately interpret that as meaning that urban aboriginals have many more children than non-aboriginals. The birth rate among aboriginals is indeed higher, but as I said earlier, the determining factor in the growth observed is a change in self-reporting of ethnic identity. In fact, the more detailed analyses I have already published at Statistics Canada show that, for Métis, almost two-thirds of population growth between 1986 and 1996—and we could even say from 1986 to 2001—are due to changes in self-reporting.

As I was saying, earlier, the misinterpretation of urban population growth could result in over-emphasis of migration from Indian reserves to cities. It might also lead to pressures for a policy shift away from first nations and Inuit communities. Using the community wellness index, it has been recognized that those are amongst the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities in Canada. Misinterpretation of the urban population growth could therefore have a significant impact on policy orientation. That is why I am so insistent on the importance of definitions.

Regarding the quality of data, my colleague has pointed out that there has been a very significant improvement in what we call collective participation, participation by communities. The number of communities who refused to participate dropped from 77 in 1996 to 22 in 2006.

However, individual coverage remains a significant challenge. With regard to small communities and the quality of information, we have no specific information for 166 Indian reserves, a number that represents a significant percentage of all reserves. However, those 166 Indian communities account for 67% of the Indian communities with which there are data issues. Indian reserves are therefore significantly over-represented in comparison with all communities for which there are data quality issues.

With regard to carrying out the census, the Department of Indian Affairs has been a financial partner for a long time now. For the 2006-2010 cycle, our department is providing \$1.2 million a year. Negotiations for the next cycle will soon begin. With regard to the dissemination of analyses I spoke of at the beginning of this presentation, this fall there will be a detailed presentation on urban population growth, migration and mobility, as well as on the human development index. Lastly, in the winter of 2009, we will tackle the community wellness index, and produce far more detailed analyses on educational levels and housing conditions. All those analyses will be presented at our next conference on aboriginal policy research, which is to take place in March 2009.

Thank you for your attention. I would be happy to take your questions in either French or English, as you prefer.

•(1600)

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you very much.

I don't think I'm going to try to ask you questions in my mother tongue, because I don't think anyone will understand me.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** But thank you for the offer.

As I said earlier, quite a few of our Liberal members are missing today because they're in the chamber waiting to speak on a bill. But we have Mr. Mark Eyking sitting in for some of our members, so we'll start off with him.

If you have any time left over, I'll ask one question at the end.

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm glad to be here today, and I'm glad to have the presenters who are here today, because they are very fitting to my concerns.

You often mention a focus on the native population in western Canada. I represent the largest aboriginal community in eastern Canada; it's the Mi'kmaq community of Eskasoni. Eskasoni is expanding quite fast. It has a considerable population; I think it's heading for 10,000 in the next few years. I have three other native communities in my riding, but when you look at Eskasoni, it is pretty well a snapshot of what's happening across the country, with the opportunities and challenges they're facing.

Whenever I visit the chief and the council there, the first thing they bring up is the problem they're having with the increase in their population and how the services and housing are not meeting the increase in their population.

So I have two questions. The first one would probably be to Statistics Canada, and it would be about all of Canada. Do you have any numbers that would say how many inhabitants there are per dwelling, on average, across Canada in native communities? And how does that compare with non-native communities? That would be my first question.

And my second question, I guess, would go to Indian and Northern Affairs. It seems to me that they are failing to react to this, though they've known for years how fast this population is increasing. They would seem to be failing to react to this growing population in providing adequate housing—and not only adequate housing, but also the services like water and sewage that are needed to accommodate that adequate housing.

Those are my two questions.

•(1605)

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you.

I forgot to remind the questioners that it's a seven-minute round for this one.

Ms. Badets.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** I'll just answer your first question. I don't know if I have that right offhand, as it is something that we would have to provide. But what we did show was the percentage living in what we call crowded dwellings, that is, dwellings with more than one person per the main rooms in a household—and that is for across Canada and compared with non-aboriginal housing.

So you can see that first nations on-reserve are more likely to live in crowded conditions—although there have been some improvements in that area. Now, it may vary across regions, and we recognize that, and the census data could provide you with that. But the figure was about 3% for the non-aboriginal population. For first nations on-reserve, it was 33% in 1996, down to 26% in 2006.

So that gives you a sense of the gaps there.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** So 26% are overcrowded?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes. And you can look at that with census data. You can look at it by region or by community as well.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** And of course, compared with non-aboriginal, I mean—

**Ms. Jane Badets:** The non-aboriginal is 3%.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** That's 3%, okay. So there's quite a difference.

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** I don't know if we can fully respond to your question, because we're probably not the most appropriate persons from our department to do so. On the research side, we're the ones who try to speak truth to power. We're the group that does the population projections, which we then provide to the program and policy people to address these issues you've raised.

More recently, in addition to doing the demand side, we've been working on the supply side in terms of forecast. And Eric has been working with CMHC on developing models of the demand for housing.

I don't know if Eric wants to add something to that on the CMHC research that he's been doing.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes, it's extensive research on housing needs, covering all aboriginal groups, both on- and off-reserve. It's been a project long in development—for well over two years, because of the extent of the data that need to be covered and analyzed. And it's also done in partnership with our housing folks at INAC.

So we have, right now, some draft reports in hand that we hope to be able to circulate in early fall.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** But that's research. I'm not trying to be smart here, but I could almost tell you what the research is going to give you, and it's almost what Statistics Canada already has of what's needed out there.

In conjunction with the research, is the department...? You mentioned Canada Mortgage and Housing. Does it have enough funds available in its budget to meet what Indian and Northern Affairs is looking for? Is it the right partner?

I know these questions might be a bit sensitive, and you probably can't answer them, but I'm not too excited about hearing more research is going to be done. I'm looking for somebody right now to change what's happening, to get ahead of this curve.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** You're referring to the supply side. As my director points out, we're not the best people to answer that question.

But on the demand side, the literature was pretty silent in terms of the detailed information that was required to handle family doubling, overcrowding, and population growth. I agree with you that things could be researched to death, but that was the missing piece in this particular area. In terms of work that needs to be done, this was acknowledged by the national aboriginal organizations about two years ago when the project started.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Okay, Madam Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you very much.

I have about 40 seconds.

• (1610)

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** I'm sorry.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** That's okay.

I'm very interested in what you identified as self-identifying aboriginal people, especially the Métis. I had a friend who was first nations and was married to a non-aboriginal. She told me that her son had self-identified as a Métis because he was of a mixed

marriage. That made me think this might be one of the reasons you have a 33% growth in the Métis identity.

I just wondered whether there were some definitions in the self-identity part of the survey in terms of the category you would fall under.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** That's a good point, and we do hear that.

We do quite extensive consultations and we do, certainly, qualitative.... We do testing leading up to each census as well, just to check the validity of this and how people respond.

In general, self-identification is a little bit fluid, and we know that. We do not have a definition of Métis on the questionnaire. There's no real consensus of what a Métis is, so it is left to the judgment of the individual.

We've just finished a series of what we call regional discussions with aboriginal organizations and aboriginal people across the country on the questions leading up to the 2011 census. So we are looking at, not so much for the Métis, certainly giving some more indication on that question—for example, how status or non-status are supposed to respond. That's something we've heard; people are not quite sure. That's something we take into account. We certainly look at each census and try to adjust as we can. But unfortunately there is no universally accepted definition for the Métis.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you.

We'll go on to the Bloc and Mr. Lévesque.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being here this afternoon.

I am holding a report on the aboriginal population compared to the non-aboriginal population for Canada as a whole. I would like to know whether you have a breakdown of Métis, Inuit and Indian populations, by province.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** No, that is not part of today's presentation. But our publications contain a great deal of information on that issue.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Am I wrong in saying that the number of aboriginal people in Quebec amounts to some 9% of all aboriginal people in Canada?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** In Quebec?

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Yes, in Quebec, compared to the rest of Canada.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** The figure is 1%. That information is provided on slide 8.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** So if I understand correctly, aboriginals amount to 1% of the Quebec population.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes, that is correct.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** I would like to know what percentage of the total aboriginal population in Canada the Quebec aboriginal population represents. Is it about 9%?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** I don't have that figure.



**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** There is a significant funding problem relating to housing and education in Quebec. We have problems in persuading students to complete their studies, because they have trouble with their teachers. The teachers, who are generally white, go to work on the reserves. The reserves have the responsibilities that are normally entrusted to school boards, and pay equity has also been an issue, as have working conditions. Unfortunately, aboriginal communities put pressure on the teachers because funding is insufficient.

Do you have any projections or reports on that?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Are you talking about funding?

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** I am talking about the percentage of funding, of the money, allocated to education.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** No, but perhaps my colleagues... I don't know.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** The census data also indicate that the lack of housing among aboriginal people, particularly on reserves, is catastrophic. Has anything improved in the reserves since 2006? We noted a slight improvement between 1996 and 2006. Have there been any improvements on the reserves since 2006?

• (1615)

[English]

**Ms. Jane Badets:** We don't have the data since then to look at. It's really the census that is recording this.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** According to...

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** It's a bit early to establish whether there have been improvements or not. When you talk about the improvements noted in 2006, you refer to analyses we had put forward some two years ago on the community wellness index, which comprises a housing component. There was a significant improvement in housing conditions then. That indicator needs to be followed. This winter, we will again be in a position to compare new figures with the 2006 data. We will see whether there has been any improvement in housing, education, the labour market and income between 2001 and 2006.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Do you do projections, for example on what housing will be required, taking into account the birth rate on reserves and in the towns? In urban settings, the problem may be different, but it is easier to follow in the reserves.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes, and as I was explaining a little earlier on, we currently have a major research project underway with CMHC and the people responsible for housing at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada. The project is intended to assess the current housing needs, because there is overlap, that is to say that several families live in a single home. There is also overpopulation. It is also targeting the next 25 years both on and off reserve, for a status Indian, non status Indians, Métis and the Inuit. It is a very significant needs analysis project.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** In some provinces, the funding comes directly from the federal government, and in others, it comes through the province, which in turn gives the funding to first nations and Inuit people.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** For the moment, we are not able to do an analysis of the supply. From a research perspective, we are certainly

able to do an analysis of the housing demand, but a balanced analysis of supply and demand must be done, both for housing as well as for educational programs or other programs offered by the department. It is another way of approaching the supply and demand issues.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** In Ms. Badets' first report, the issue of non-status Indians' identity is discussed. How can we identify non-status Indians and how can we validate this information?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** For non-status Indians, we can use self-identification. It is the same thing as for the Métis issue that we discussed earlier. People must answer a question on their identity. Do they identify themselves as North American Indians, as Métis or as Inuit? That is the language that was used in 2008; that is self-identification.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Does that mean that tomorrow morning I can declare that I am of aboriginal descent?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** That is correct.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** It would be in a municipality.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** And you would believe me?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The answers are accepted at face value, they are not manipulated. That is why four indicators are used: origin, self-identification, registration in the Indian register and membership in a band. By combining these aboriginal dimensions, we can create more precise figures.

By the way, this means that Statistics Canada, in terms of its counting and listing of aboriginal populations, is really unique in the world in the quality and effort that they devote to truly defining who is aboriginal, and this is done from every possible angle.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you very much.

We'll now move to Ms. Crowder, please. Seven minutes.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Thanks for coming today.

I may have to suddenly leave, because I'm speaking some time shortly.

I have a couple of questions.

You talked about the fact that these statistics are very important because they often drive policy decisions. In your presentation, Mr. Guimond, you talked about the number of reserves where either the data was suppressed because of the low coverage or because of the number of reserves where there was no enumeration taking place. Do we have any sense of two things: one, the number of people who are included in those reserves where there is no enumeration; and two, the number of people, where enumeration does take place, who actually choose not to participate? Because you're not enumerating, you probably don't know, but there must be some sense of the percentages.

•(1620)

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes, we do have that information. We have an estimate for what we call incompletely enumerated reserves. It was, I think, about 37,000 in 2006.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Around 37,000 individuals?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** On the incompletely enumerated?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Incompletely enumerated, yes. There are two things that may happen here: we normally ask to go on reserve and we're refused, or we may get on and then we're asked to leave. That's why we call them incompletely enumerated. The estimate is about 37,000.

In terms of where we may not release full information—what Mr. Guimond has talked about in terms of the number of reserves—we do usually have a population count for those. It's not that we may not get any information on those first nations communities or reserves, but we may not get the complete information. We may not get their characteristics, but we should get a population count. So we do have that information. We may not get the full census information, but it's degrees about which we have information on these other—

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Are these in-person enumerations?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes, it's door to door on-reserve, and it's 100%. Usually in the census for other areas we'll do a sample of one in five, but when we're in remote areas in the north and on-reserve, it's 100%, and it's door to door.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Because I'm not a statistician, I will ask this: I have this document entitled *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada 2006*. Wherever it refers to aboriginal peoples throughout this, does that mean that you're talking about this group of people you're outlining?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** So everywhere it says “aboriginal”, it includes the whole population.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes, that's the whole population.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** So when comparing aboriginal census data over time—it's page 9, if you have the document—where they're saying “data showing changes in percentages and proportions between censuses have been adjusted to account”, can you tell me what that means?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** We have many questions on this.

What it means is that we don't adjust for that 37,000, so we haven't done that adjustment. But when we compare, let's say, the 1996 census and 2006 census, we take only those reserves that participated. So that's the base—

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** On the comparative data.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** That's right, only on the comparative data.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** So when you're not doing comparative, when you're only looking at 2006, do you extrapolate from the information that you have, to include the 37,000?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** No, we don't even do that.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** So if there are parts of the country where people simply don't participate, there could be a significant piece of

information missing, because the characteristics of those populations could be different from those of the rest of Canada.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** They could be, yes.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** I'm not saying they are or aren't, but they could be.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes, it's about 37,000 we have no data on. It's usually on larger reserves in Ontario and Quebec.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** I'm sorry, I'm jumping around a bit because I only have seven minutes.

On page 3 of INAC and page 6 of Statistics Canada, the numbers add up differently.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Why the difference? The registered Indian from StatsCan is different from the registered—

**Ms. Jane Badets:** I'll say what we did, and I'll let my colleagues from Indian and Northern Affairs explain what they did.

We took this identity question. They are those people...the definition that I think I gave on page 3. So aboriginal identity—

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** I'm sorry, are you saying that INAC and StatsCan use different identity definitions?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** We use the same concepts; it's how people want to put those concepts together for their own policy or information needs.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** If that's the case, “without registered status” is the same—

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Maybe I'll let Indian and Northern Affairs explain.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** You come up with more, which is good as a policy decision.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Not necessarily more, because the total aboriginal population is the same—1,172,000.

We use the same three questions to build up, if I may use that expression, to that 1,172,000. It's how we break it into separate groups afterwards. Statistics Canada puts the emphasis on self-identification. We first put the emphasis on registration. Within that 1.2 million—I'll say 1.2 million to simplify—individuals, who are those who are registered Indians? That's the number on the pie chart I showed you.

•(1625)

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** How can “registered” be different? I don't understand. You're saying self-identification registration versus actual numbers of registration.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** No, no, it's all census based. A person can be a registered Indian, have no first nation ancestry, not declare first nation identity, and not be a band member, because of the Indian Act before 1985.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Right. Bill C-31.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Exactly. That's how you end up with some of these differences. It's where you put the emphasis first. At INAC we put the emphasis first on registration, for obvious reasons. Then within the rest of the aboriginal population we break it down based on identity.

Why are there four? There are four big NAOs, and five if you include NWAC.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Okay, I think I'm clear on that.

I want to come down to—

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Jean, you've used up your seven minutes, as we speak.

We're going to the government side now. I think Mr. Clarke is starting.

**Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

This is a bit interesting for me. As my colleagues know, I come from a first nations background. My home first nation is Muskeg Lake.

But this is very interesting. Having been in the RCMP for 18 years—and the majority of my postings were on first nations reserves—I've seen the housing situation and some of the over-crowding. I've also seen it first-hand in Muskeg Lake, where I have family and relatives living on the reserve. I know the customs of first nations families. If a family member comes to a home, we don't turn them away. Our home is always open. We'll try to find a bed for them to sleep in.

In my 18 years as an RCMP member going from community to community, I've seen some of the homes. There was quite a difference from one home to the next. One home might have an elderly couple, one or two people, and it was roughly about 1,100 square feet. On the other extreme, I might see a family with five kids, but they also have extended family, brothers or sisters or parents, living in this home. A lot of these family members will migrate to the cities to look for homes or just to move away from the reserve to experience another aspect...maybe to find jobs for themselves.

The main question I have is what accounts for the decline in the percentages of those living in crowded homes over the past decade. To me, I see the decline as good news. What would your take be on this?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Well, we're here to present the data and certainly to put it out there for users to look at. I'm sure, as my colleagues from Indian and Northern Affairs have mentioned, that they were going to do much more research on this. These are very high-level trends, so it's a good question. It's probably one that needs to be looked at in more detail.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you.

Does someone from Indian Affairs want to respond to that?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** I think you partly answered your own question when you referred to the mobility aspect. Throughout the years, in the research we've done on migration mobility, we have found that there's a lot of what we call in-and-out mobility. Housing is one element that triggers such mobility among the first nation populations, in particular.

There's a possibility also that regionally there might be some decline in fertility levels over ten years, so that could contribute also to lessening of that crowding. That would be somewhat speculative on my part, because I haven't actually looked at the data. But that could be another source of explanation with respect to that decline.

• (1630)

**Mr. Rob Clarke:** Just to follow up here, from first-hand knowledge, again, I've seen first nation residents who have their own homes on the reserve. I've seen them leave their homes to migrate off the reserve. Do you have any statistics that would indicate the number of residents who had homes at one time, left, and then came back looking for newer homes or for suitable housing?

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** We've published lots of research on migration and mobility patterns. For the last 40 years there's been net movement from urban areas back to reserves. The reserves themselves are quite stable. The first nation population on reserve has the lowest mobility rate of any group in Canada. The highest mobility rates, though, are the actual populations in urban centres. Most of the mobility is occurring within cities and between cities.

The movement between reserves and cities exists, but the net amount has been consistent for the last 40 years back to reserves. This leaves one to try to understand the push-pull factors that make reserves more preferable to live in than cities. We have done some analysis of the reasons people move. We get that not from the census but from the Aboriginal Peoples Survey. There's a variety of patterns. Twenty-five percent of the people, for instance, who leave reserves are looking for better housing. But 25% of the people going back to reserves are looking for better housing on-reserve. There's a housing problem off-reserve as well for aboriginal populations in this country.

Another reason people leave reserves is for education and employment. There's a variety of push-pull factors that make the situation very complex.

Back to your question about diminishing crowding, it's not only a function of the population, it's also a function of the supply of housing itself. So one would have to look at the supply side over that time period as well to assess that pattern.

We've done work for the Community Well-Being Index, in which crowding is one component. That data goes back to 1981. We looked at the patterns over time. Again, it's a function of both the supply and demand sides, which makes it a bit more challenging in terms of that particular analysis.

**Mr. Rob Clarke:** What cities are you seeing that have increasing aboriginal populations or that are experiencing an increase in population?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** I would say Winnipeg is the largest.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** It's Winnipeg, then Edmonton. It's really in those cities or urban centres out west where we've seen the most increase. It is even in the smaller ones, like Thompson, Manitoba, where about one-third are aboriginals. That's where we've seen the increases.

**Mr. Rob Clarke:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you.

We're now going into the second round. This one will be the five-minute round. We'll go from the Liberals to the government to the Bloc to the government to the NDP. We've put your names down for the other rounds. You're welcome to share those times if you don't use the five minutes.

We'll start again with Mr. Eyking.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

My first round of questions was about housing and water and sewage facilities. My second question would be this.

The UN does a survey every once in a while and comes up with the human index. There are various parts of the human index when they do an analysis of different countries. Of course housing is one of the main things, but health and education are also in that "humadex". My question to Stats Canada—maybe also directed to the work the other people are doing—is, what is coming out of your research on levels of education and availability of education? Similarly, with the health part, what are we finding out about availability of health services and the health rating of the aboriginal community?

What do you have from Stats Canada on those two areas?

• (1635)

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Well, concerning education, in the census we have their highest level of education; that's in slide 19. I don't have all the levels of schooling, but you can see that there is a gap at the university level between aboriginal and non-aboriginal: 8% of the aboriginal population had university credentials.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** I'm sorry, I didn't hear it. Was it 8%?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** In 2006, 8% had a university degree or certificate, compared with 23% of the non-aboriginal population, whereas you may have just seen that there is a slightly higher proportion of aboriginals with what we're calling an apprenticeship or trade certificate or diploma: 14% among the aboriginal population, compared with 12% among the non-aboriginal population. If you look at the slide, you can see the other levels of education. Of course, this varies by group as well.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Do you have high school figures also?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes, and 21% had completed high school among the aboriginal population, compared with 24% among the non-aboriginal population.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** So 24% of the non-aboriginal population in Canada reaches high school?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes; that is, of the population aged 25 to 64, that was their highest level of schooling.

That's what we have on education. There's more information from the census. I think also, from the post-census surveys—those surveys

I talked about at the end—coming out in the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, we will have more information on education and health.

On health, I don't have first-hand what the health status is. I think it is from the aboriginal surveys. I don't know whether my colleagues from Indian and Northern Affairs can help me on that one.

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** It's my own work, which replicated the work of the United Nations Development Programme in the Human Development Index. I first published this in 1998. Actually, the front page of the *The Globe and Mail* on Thanksgiving Day that year said Indians live in squalor.

That work is in my last book, published just half a year ago, called *Aboriginal Well-Being: Canada's Continuing Challenge*. It takes the Human Development Index and the subsequent Community Well-Being Index that we developed and looks at the data cross-sectionally and across time from 1981 to 2001. We'll be doing updates to update it with the 2006 census, but that takes considerable time, because we need to have the micro-level data in order to do the calculations for the Community Well-Being Index, and it won't be available until December of this year or possibly January. That is our highest priority for redoing that work.

But to answer your specific questions, since 1981 we have seen the well-being of aboriginal populations in this country, specifically for registered Indians and for the Inuit as well, improving over time. At the same time, conditions have been improving for the general population, but the gap has been narrowing—not as fast as we would like to see.

With respect to the two components—you talked about education—education was the component in which we saw the gap close the fastest, but that's probably because we set the bar very low. Two-thirds of the educational component of the Human Development Index is weighted towards basic literacy. We used grade nine level of attainment as a proxy for basic literacy. The other one-third was high school graduation. We have to recalibrate all of our indices now, because they changed the education questions in the 2006 census. They no longer ask what your highest grade-school-level attainment is. This means that we have to raise the bar, which may mean that the gaps we've seen closing may not narrow as fast as we've thought in the past.

• (1640)

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you. Your time is up. You were just getting started, right?

Now we have Mr. Van Kesteren from the government side, for five minutes.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Thank you, Chair, and I thank the panel for coming too.

I was up around your home, actually, last summer.

I have some really quick questions. You have a birth rate in your statistics about the population increase. Is that due to an increase in actual birth rates?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes, fertility is higher among the aboriginal population than the non-aboriginal population, but it's not the main driver.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** You also recognize, of course, that when you say it's six times the increase of 8%...actually, our demographics are falling in Canada, so it's really not six times eight. It's more than six times, because our population increase is due to immigrants, correct? So it's much higher, actually, than six.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The aboriginal population is increasing through another form of migrants, if I may use that analogy: those who change their self-reporting of ethnicity from one census to the next. That's a big driver, especially for the Métis. Up to two-thirds of the growth is due to this.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** In terms of major repairs, you don't break down ownership. Is there any particular reason you don't do that?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** We do have that—ownership—from the census.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Why did you not include that? I'm just curious.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** There was no particular reason, other than—

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** I could probably give you 100 reasons.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** I was limited to the amount of time I had today.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Can we get that?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes, you can get that.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** I'd also like to know the percentage of home ownership off-reserve and the percentage of home ownership on-reserve. Can we get that as well?

Then there were statistics on overcrowding. Do I understand correctly that this means if a home has six rooms and there are six people, anything over and above that is crowding? "Rooms"—does that include bathrooms?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** No, it does not include bathrooms, halls, or rooms used solely for business purposes. It's the main living rooms.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Do you have comparisons between non-native and native? I'm just guessing, but I would think....

Again, I was up in Iqaluit, and you really can't build a house much bigger than four or five or six rooms, because it would cost you.... We stayed at a place that was worth half a million dollars or something, and it wasn't that big.

Do you have comparisons between native and non-native in those same areas too?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes, we do.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Do you have that in your statistics?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Not today, but that's something that would be available.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** I think that would be true also in the north. The homes here are much bigger, so subsequently the same thing might be true. If not, that would be interesting, but it would be interesting too to see how much that brings it out of average.

Would overcrowding be more prevalent in the north, compared to southern populations? Do you have those stats?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** What we reported was that certainly 36% of the Inuit lived in a crowded dwelling. That was in 1996, and that's since dropped to 31% in 2006.

I don't have the non-aboriginal population for the north, though. I'd have to look at the north specifically from that.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Will you get that for us?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** That's all, Chair. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** There's a minute left. Mr. Kramp, do you want to take it or wait for the next round?

**Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC):** I'll start, and then go back, possibly.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** All right.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** I have two questions.

A few years ago a report came to public accounts regarding aboriginal education. It was as a result of the investigation by the Auditor General, and of course the results were just shocking. At that particular point there was a statistic that said it would take roughly 20 years to bring the aboriginal educational community up to a par with the regular citizens. It said it would take 15 years to do it. Yet five years later, after that first thing, now they've said it's going to take 25 years.

In other words, we're not making progress; we're actually regressing. Why is that? Is that the terms of reference of the two studies, or is it actual fact?

● (1645)

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** It depends on where you set your bar. If you set your bar low in terms of basic literacy, as I said, we're closing the gap. If you set your bar high in terms of university attainment, the gap has actually been widening and continues to widen, such that you'll never close the gap.

We have an article we just published in *Horizons*, which is the federal government's policy journal. One of my staff, John Clement, did an analysis of cohorts over time for university attainment. What we see, for instance, is that in the registered Indian population, it's the same proportion that's been graduating from university for the last 20 years. So we see no improvement whatsoever, whereas for the rest of the Canadian population, we've seen increases proportionally every five years, such that the gap continues to widen.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** I'll come back to the other question later. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Five minutes for the Bloc.

Mr. Lévesque.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** It is the first time I have been so blessed, Madam Chair.

Given the demographic explosion that is happening in these communities, is Statistics Canada in a position to let us know whether or not these young people will have access to schools, and in sufficient numbers? If that is the case, will we be able to estimate how many extra schools will be needed, for example by 2010?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** I would like to provide a small clarification. In fact, the population is growing quickly and families are having many children, but they are not having more than they did in the past. As a result, there is not really a population explosion, there is no baby boom as compared to what the situation was in the past. There are more and more births because this population is very young. Therefore there are many births.

The issue of supply in terms of education is very important, because it must correspond to the demand that is linked to the demographic growth and to the number of children reaching the age of five or six. And there again, the work is along the same lines as what we are trying to do regarding housing. We are discussing it with our colleagues responsible for programs.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Indeed, let us discuss housing for the aboriginal population, including on reserves. I am wondering, furthermore, if an area like the village of Kitcisakik is taken into consideration when the issue of on-reserve housing is being discussed. This village is located in the La Vérendrye wildlife refuge. Furthermore, there is another reserve that is not recognized as such at Notre-Dame-du-Nord. It is more an aboriginal village than a reserve, but it does not receive anything more than a reserve.

Does the census take into account the teachers that go to these areas, the housing needs of these teachers and of the other people coming from outside to provide services?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** I think I can safely say that the census does not deal with that aspect. In fact, your question is very specific. It goes beyond the scope of my knowledge and abilities in this area, particularly as far as education is concerned.

Moreover, I know that these situations vary enormously from one community to another across the country, having met with many people and discussed it over coffee. Unfortunately, that is the only answer I can give you for the moment.

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Do I have any time left, Madam Chair?

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** You have some time left, two minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Given the offer made by Mr. Éric Guimond earlier on, I will give you the opportunity to perhaps ask him a question in your mother tongue.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Actually, I'll use English.

My question is, what would be the reason some communities do not want to participate in the surveys? When we put out the other legislation with the financial institutions, it was very well supported by the bands; they wanted to be able to get the right statistics in order for them to be able to lobby for increased funding.

Is it because of who is doing the survey that they feel they might not be in ownership of that information? I'm just wondering what would be the reason some of those bands would not participate.

• (1650)

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Well, you'd probably have to ask them individually. What we often hear is that they feel they've already given the information to government. There may be a feeling that they may not be fully trustful of the process. So there may be a variety of reasons. It may be they feel a sovereignty, that it's their territory.

Our approach and Statistics Canada's approach have been very respectful. We do ask permission to go. We've been doing this for many years, of course, and as you see, those who absolutely refuse are declining. We have found that our success in that has been to work with the communities over time to develop statistical capacity, to provide them training, to show them how they can use their information for their own needs, for their own community. We have a series of what we call aboriginal liaison officers across Canada, and they work in between the censuses as well with these communities to show them the importance, to get the information back to them.

So we've found it's very progressive and it's taken time, over time, to convince people, but that's the best way, and we'll continue to do it. That's what we have found that works best, and we'll see where we are for 2011.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you.

I think Mr. Kramp wanted to continue on with the next government round.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Thank you very kindly.

The one figure I'm really looking for more explanation on, and I think we as the government are going to have to have some information on, of course, is the exponential growth—basically a 500% increase in the last 25 years, which is just unbelievable. Obviously we recognize some of the reasons, and birth rate is one. They are coming to a decision that they wish to be included in that particular demographic as aboriginal.

Do we have a breakdown as to the actual numbers of reasons as to why? What percentage is birth? What percentage might be due to a charter eligibility? What percentage might be due to judicial decisions on land claims? There are a number of reasons people might all of a sudden find it more fortuitous, more advantageous, more moral, more real—matrimonial property rights, and so on. Why do we have such a significant growth? As an example, does the population growth, the natural birth rate, account for 200,000 or 100,000 of that million-plus increase?

The reason I'd like to know is, where are we going with this? Are we on a pattern to continue this escalation at the same rate, with no sign of abatement? Or do we have a number of aboriginal people who are basically...? Have we topped out on those who wish to be included in that demographic? How do we as a government plan unless we know where we're going?

We need your help on this. What are your thoughts?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** In terms of a detailed list of factors influencing people's decisions to report themselves as first nation, Métis, or Inuit at a particular census and not for another one, it's impossible really to know. One can very generally speculate, and I think you were going in that direction. One factor is, well, I was in the closet with my aboriginal affiliation; now I'm coming out and I'm saying I'm first nation, Métis, Inuit. Or it might be opportunistic. Or it might just be popular, trendy, kind of cool around the coffee table at Christmas to say, "I have a first nation ancestor", and start reporting it in the census. Those three elements play into it.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Most of these are all intangibles, though, and so it's very difficult for a department, for INAC, for the Government of Canada to try to come up with a realistic proposal of how to deal with this file unless we have a better handle on the reasons for the dramatic escalation. We have to have some form of predictability, other than that the arrow's going up on a 12-degree angle. We're going to have to have more information on this.

Do you think it would be reasonable to look into this reasoning so we could come up with a bit more...? Can we define those factors you just mentioned in a better manner?

• (1655)

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The registered Indian and Inuit population growth is not shooting to the ceiling right now. The Métis and non-status Indian population is, because it's based on self-declaration. It's the absence of criteria. This was part of an earlier conversation with respect to the finding of what is Métis. And non-status Indian is again based on self-identification. There are no solid criteria.

So a population there is a pole of attraction for those who want to report an aboriginal affiliation but are not recognized elsewhere. The example you have given is a really good one.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** But we have a 20-year line here, so this 20-year line.... Sure, for these last five years it's a bit more dramatic, but still it's a 20-year positive line. But the line obviously is in excess of birth rate, so we need to have a better handle on this.

I make the suggestion that this might be something for this committee to look at, with a view to making a recommendation at some point so we could either give direction to government and/or seek your assistance to get to the bottom of this.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Ten years ago I published for the first time on that very topic of growth, highlighting the importance of focusing on that growth. I totally agree with you.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Thank you.

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** I'd add one more thing. We do have another independent source of data with respect to the population counts. Our department has an Indian registry, which is what we use for our actual forecasts of the population for our models, and that falls under section 6 of the Indian Act. It goes back to the legacy of Bill C-31 in 1985, but we maintain a legal database of who is legally entitled to be registered as Indian or not, and that's not a question of self-identification.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** I just wanted to add one thing. We have a demography division and we do look at the growth in terms of demographic versus non-demographic factors, but the non-demographic factors are unknown.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** I can probably add to that. Many people would never have identified themselves as aboriginal in the past. What that tells me in self-identification is that some people are now feeling proud to admit they're aboriginal, and I think that says a lot about the last 20 years. People would never have self-identified, because we were made to feel it was nothing to be proud of. I think a change in attitudes would be a factor in this case.

We're down to the NDP, but since we don't have anyone from the NDP here, I've got Mr. Storseth, and I don't know if anyone else wants to speak. That would take us into the third round, but I'll go into the government round again for Mr. Storseth. Five minutes, please.

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. You look good in that spot.

I want to thank you for coming.

This is a door-to-door census, door knocking. It's not sampling, correct?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** On-reserve and in the north, it is 100%, but outside those areas it is a sample, one in five.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** I'm looking at this form, and it's well known that this disproportionately affects the identification of some of our poorer and homeless populations. They're harder to count. In 1996 we couldn't get into and do a census stat on 77 communities. How many communities are there, all told?

• (1700)

**Ms. Jane Badets:** In terms of reserves and settlements, about 700. It's 633.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** So you're talking over 10% of the communities we couldn't get into, to be able to include their data all told, in that time period.

Is it possible that we are now having significantly larger numbers because of the advance in our survey techniques and our ability to get into some of these communities, that we're having far more accurate numbers in those communities in on-reserve populations? They're far more accurate now than they were in 1996, but that's only logical, right?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** In terms of being purer—communities we'd never get into and don't have any data for—we credit our success to our program of aboriginal liaison officers working with the communities over time and showing them how to use the information for their own benefit.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** That is a logical conclusion and helps us go to the next step. Mr. Guimond has already talked about the fact that birth rates are not the sole contributor to the increase in the population. Where I think we're fairly accurate is in the increase in the off-reserve population that's been identified.

The community I'm from in the Edmonton area has a tremendous increase in off-reserve aboriginals. We also have a tremendous increase in Winnipeg, another city that I'm very familiar with. This is predominantly not because these people wouldn't identify in the past—although the chair does have a point with some of that. The culture is being embraced. A lot of these people who are coming from the reserves into the communities are very strong in their culture and identify with these communities.

I think the bigger question here is why we're having such a dramatic increase in our urban aboriginal population. The numbers are foggy in the first nations communities because of our problems in getting into them in the first place, but what is not unclear is the fact that we have a dramatic increase in our urban aboriginal population. What are the contributing factors to that? I've seen studies that show they have a higher standard of living, better education, and better housing than on reserve. Are these contributing factors to such a dramatic increase in the off-reserve aboriginal population?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** It's certainly not migration that's contributing to the explosion we're seeing of the aboriginal population in urban areas.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Do you have some documentation for that?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes, it's shown in my presentation in those three bubbles.

Looking at the data, less than 5% of the growth in the urban aboriginal population is driven by migration. The rest is due to fertility—which we know is not 10 children per woman—and changes in self-identification.

In the western provinces, Winnipeg in particular, we've seen huge increases in self-identification. We're going to do a much more detailed analysis of the migration patterns for a city like Winnipeg and show, in a nutshell, that all of a sudden a population appears in Winnipeg, but they were already residents of Winnipeg. That goes along the same direction of what the chair was saying earlier about pride in self-identification. Those individuals who all of a sudden have this pride are those from mixed parentage, with a first nation mother and a non-first nation father. They were raised in both cultures. All of a sudden it's okay to say they're first nation, so they self-declare. It's the same thing for a person who belongs to the Inuit community or a person who is Métis. It's self-identification.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** You're already maxed out at five minutes, Mr. Storseth.

Mr. Eyking gets the floor again for five minutes.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Thank you again.

The research and statistics show that there is some improvement in aboriginal life in the communities, but I think we all agree there's a long way to go and we'd like it to go faster.

Mr. Beavon, I'm very interested in your work on the human index. You must know a little about the rest of the world on the human index if you're doing research on that.

According to the numbers, there are a million aboriginals in this country. If they had their own country, how would it compare to other countries in the world on the human index? Would it be

something like Egypt, Kenya, Laos, or Haiti? Where would they be in the scheme of things if you took their standard of living, how they live, and compared it to another country?

• (1705)

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** I think they are in the middle developed range; they're not third world conditions. When I first published the work in 1998, the countries I compared them with were countries such as the United Arab Emirates or Brazil, not that anyone here necessarily knows what the living conditions for the average person are like in those two countries. For the off-reserve population, they would be in the top tier, better than some European countries. For the on-reserve and for the Inuit populations, it's much lower.

Eric and I have a new article, and actually we have a chapter in the book, but there's also an article we had published with BioMed Central in *BMC International Journal of Health and Human Rights* in which we compare the indigenous populations in Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand to the general populations in each country. Unfortunately, I found that the tribes in the U.S. are a little bit better off in comparison with our conditions here in Canada, but the indigenous populations in Canada and in the United States were substantially better off than those in, say, Australia or New Zealand. New Zealand really lagged in terms of health; their life expectancy was much worse, and the Maori really lagged in education.

Currently I'm talking with other countries, Russia and a few other countries, about trying to replicate this work for their indigenous populations as well.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** There are other countries watching what we're doing, even though we have a long way to go, but are they seeing that we might be a little more progressive than some other countries?

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** What they've seen is that we have a tool that allows for comparisons of different regions or sub-regions or subgroups within the countries. This is something that the United Nations have been doing ever since they developed that indicator back in 1990. If you're interested, we can always come in and do a specific presentation on the Human Development Index in detail, or we could ship you a copy of our book.

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Okay.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** I want to follow up on something that Mr. Storseth brought out.

We know there were many children who were taken away from reserves and who probably never did identify themselves. Would you know what percentage of those self-identified, who maybe as adults found out they were of aboriginal ancestry? Do you ever keep stats on the adopted children who come from our aboriginal communities? I know it's not that big a number, but would it be enough to make some changes in the self-identity section?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** I'm not aware of that. I don't know whether we could look at it in that sense at all.

Do you know of anything in the surveys?



**Ms. Cathy Connors (Manager, Aboriginal Surveys, Statistics Canada):** The Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the Aboriginal Children's Survey collect information on residential school attendance, either by the individual or by members of the individual's family. There could potentially be some analysis done, using that survey, when the data are released this fall.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you.

We'll give Mr. Lemay a chance, if he has questions, and then we'll go back to Mr. Storseth.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** I am sorry to be late. I wanted to be here for the beginning of the meeting, but a Conservative member of Parliament decided to cause some problems in the House, by tabling motions against his own government on Bill C-34. I find that unacceptable, but it is not important.

Having said that, Statistics Canada's definitions of aboriginal populations seem clear to me: aboriginal descent, aboriginal identity, registered or Treaty Indian, member of an Indian band or a first nation. I find it is both easy and clear. However, I think there is a real problem when we are talking about the Métis. No one here is going to make me believe that there are 27,000 Métis in Quebec.

How does Statistics Canada define the Métis? Is it as specific as it is for first nations? If so, I would like to know what the definition is, because if not, anyone could tomorrow morning—for example myself, Marc Lemay, member of Parliament—declare himself to be Métis. Is that correct?

• (1710)

[English]

**Ms. Jane Badets:** We collected four different concepts. One is on ancestry, so someone could report that they feel they have Métis ancestry. They could report it in the census questionnaire. On the identity question there are three answer boxes: North American Indian, Métis, and Inuit. So someone could declare it there. Those are the two ways in which someone on the census questionnaire could say that he or she is Métis.

We do not give a definition, because there is not a universally accepted definition of Métis. It is self-enumeration and self-declaration.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** If I understood you correctly—as someone who is very famous in Quebec, René Lévesque, would say, —in the next census, someone could self-identify as a Métis and tell the government that he has declared that he is a Métis to Statistics Canada, and it would be recognized. That is right. If that is the case, I can understand why there are problems.

I would like to ask you a question. Why ask such a question? Why did you add the Métis category? Who asked you to do that? Was it the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada?

[English]

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Well—

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** The departmental officials may answer as well.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The Constitution recognizes three groups of aboriginals: the first nations, the Métis and the Inuit.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** I will stop you there, as we are not talking about rights here. We know that the Métis are mainly found out west, that is to say in Saskatchewan, in Alberta, in Manitoba, and some are in northwestern Ontario. I do not understand. On what basis are they Métis in Quebec?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** The report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recognized that there were different groups of Métis in this country, and not only in the regions that you listed. There are some on the west coast, in the Atlantic region and in Labrador. There are some people who have mixed ancestry, Inuit and non-aboriginal who have chosen to self-identify as Métis.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** However, there is no definition of a Métis at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada. That is currently subject to debate.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** That is right, there is no single definition, as my colleague was saying. There is actually a debate as to what the definition of a Métis should be even within the Métis organizations. As long as there is no consensus on the definition, there will be this fluidity that we have seen in the statistics. That will continue to be the case.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** If someone has declared that they are Métis to Statistics Canada, will the department recognize them as such?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** As far as access to programs is concerned, I couldn't say. However, I know that the Powley decision also makes reference to community recognition of this Métis identity. It is not just an issue of self-identification, but also of recognition by a community that this person truly is Métis. There are therefore those two aspects, but I am not an expert. You would have to ask a lawyer to get more clarification.

**Mr. Marc Lemay:** I am a lawyer, thank you.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Mr. Storseth.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** In your report, Mr. Guimond, you include Métis settlements. Is that correct?

• (1715)

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** No, those are just first nations communities.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** In your report, you have a significant number from rural western Canada who have left the reserve. One of your arguments is that they are now going into the cities.

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** Yes, some of them are.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Then your argument is that many of them are going back to the first nations communities. But these people have left the first nations community during the last five or ten years and have gone to an urban or rural area. The reason I have a problem with some of your context isn't that I doubt your abilities; it is that I live in these communities and I see that there is a dramatic increase in first nations people moving off-reserve—into urban Alberta, Edmonton in particular.

Ms. Badets, you're shaking your head. Are you in agreement with that?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Well, we haven't yet looked at the mobility data out of the census. We need to look at this for 2006. I'm not sure we've all had a chance to do that.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** But you'd agree generally with that statement? Although I agree that self-identification is probably up, and that's probably the reason as well, I don't think it can be disputed from the visual, hard facts of living in the communities that there are a number of first nations people moving off-reserve into urban...let's say in Alberta, in particular. Is that something everybody can agree on?

Do I see shaking of heads?

**Ms. Jane Badets:** I know on our part we just haven't yet looked in depth at the data from the 2006 census. We'd have to look at that to see what it shows.

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** I would add that we have looked at the patterns back to 1966, and yes, there have been significant numbers of aboriginal people leaving the reserves for cities. But there have been slightly greater numbers going back to reserves.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** You're saying that since 1966 there have been greater numbers coming back to the reserves?

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** That's correct.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Do you have data from the last 10 years?

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** Yes, from the census. We haven't done the full analysis of the 2006 census, but I don't expect the patterns will be any different from what we've seen in the past.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Now, I find that difficult, when we talk about the census data being relatively inaccurate in the first place. I mean, it was only in 1996 that we were talking about 10% of the total communities not even being surveyed, right?

And when you're talking about statistics and analysis, it seems to me there is a huge number of people we're leaving out, especially when you're talking about urban aboriginals in downtown Edmonton. I find it hard to believe that the survey analysis is all that accurate. Quite frankly—and this is a totally different argument—I think we should be going to more of a sampling analysis, which would be far more representative of these populations. That's my opinion, but we don't need to get into that.

But I want you to explain to me how we are seeing people leave from Kehewin, in my area, to come to Bonnyville and Edmonton to have jobs and to own their own homes. It's right there. You see it every day when you live in these communities, yet you're trying to tell us that the data show a different trend.

Can you explain that to us?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** First of all, there's a bit of a disconnect between what I'm saying and what you're referring to. You're referring to a particular experience, a particular city. I haven't looked at the data specifically for that city.

When we look at migration from an urban perspective, we're looking at all of Canada, so that includes Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, Winnipeg, etc.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Do you have data more specific to Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and Edmonton?

**Mr. Eric Guimond:** That can be produced.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** This is where the greatest numbers of first nations communities are.

**Ms. Jane Badets:** Yes, that's correct. I think what we're trying to say is that's probably what we need to look at, because we can't—

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** You have to have analysis from the past.

But let me add another thing here—

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** I'm going to let you finish. I don't mean to interrupt, but the chair, doing her job, is going to interrupt me soon, so I just want to get in.

Would you agree that my argument does seem somewhat logical, that we have to look at that aspect when we're looking at the analysis of the data?

**Mr. Dan Beavon:** It is logical, and we have done that in the past.

One of the reasons you see larger growth in cities is that it's more logical. If you have 100 people and they all intermarry—they do a family formation—you produce 50 couples. That's if they all intermarry. If they outmarry, if that same 100 people marry another 100 people out there, you produce 100 couples.

You have much higher rates of what we call exogamy or outmarriage in cities. In small communities people intermarry among themselves, among their same groups. So it's not just fertility; it's also the patterning that goes on with your partner. When you're in an urban centre, the probability of having a partner who is not aboriginal is much higher because you have more people to choose from. That's why you have this spectacular growth in urban centres, from natural increases. It's not so much from the fertility, it's from the patterning of who you choose as a partner.

• (1720)

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you.

I don't know if Mr. Storseth read page 5 of the Indian and Northern Affairs submission. It states: "Implied in the mass exodus myth is the belief that characteristics of urban aboriginal populations are those largely associated with migrants from Indian reserves. This misunderstanding...". I think you missed that part.

**Mr. Brian Storseth:** I would just like it on the record that I have read page 5. From living in those communities, I fundamentally disagree with some of the findings.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell):** Thank you, Mr. Storseth.

And thank you very much to the presenters today. I know in the last week of our session it's sometimes difficult to know if people are going to be here or not or when we're going to adjourn. So I thank you for being able to come in today to present to the committee. And thank you to the members, who asked very interesting questions.

I'm going to adjourn the meeting now, because it's almost 5:30.      The meeting is adjourned.  
Thank you.

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