



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

FEWO • NUMBER 004 • 2nd SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, November 26, 2007

—
Chair

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Monday, November 26, 2007

• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)): Order.

Committee members, we have a very full agenda, as you can see. We have to discuss our future business and a very small item on budgets, where I'll give you information on what we made need for gender budgeting. Then we have two motions.

I'm wondering if the analyst has distributed those reports.

Have the reports been distributed to all members?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Danielle Bélisle): They've been sent electronically.

The Chair: They've been sent, the official reports—official language, justice, and...on the court challenges program. So the studies are by three committees.

If all of you have these—and members, if I say too many things at the same time, just tell me to stop—I'd like to propose the following. When we come to the court challenges review or discussion, we should look at the three reports we have received from the clerk and determine if there are things that we need to study further. If there are, then we will tackle the motion of Madame Demers at the same time.

Okay?

I think everybody has received their work plan. What I'd like to bring to the attention of members of the committee is that our meeting today is the fourth, and that we will have five more meetings until December 12, including today's. We've already done meetings one, two and three, in terms of the election of the chair, passage of routine motions, and discussion of future business, and so on. So when we go through the work plan today, we are now talking about a very tight timeframe of five weeks before the House breaks.

The Clerk: Five meetings.

The Chair: Yes, sorry, it's five meetings before the House breaks.

Let's come up with something that's win-win such that we know what we have done, where we are moving.

In order to do that, this afternoon, thanks to the efforts of the clerk and the analyst, we have been able to get Ms. Beckton, the coordinator, Status of Women Canada; Ms. Dawn Nicholson; and Ms. Cindy Paquette. They are going to be here at 4:30. So we have one hour in which to discuss our work plan and the court challenges program.

What the analysts have done is this. Because we wanted some information sessions on the gender budgets, we had to be prepared to contact the witnesses and ensure that they were there for Wednesday. Otherwise we would have a very free Wednesday.

Simultaneously, we've been talking to the minister's office.

Madame Boucher, perhaps you could give me some idea of Minister Verner's timing. As soon as we finish this, if you could take an opportunity to update us, we would appreciate it.

If anybody has any connections to the justice minister—I tried to speak to him, but he was busy with the other justice bills—please, we'd like to have the three ministers: heritage, justice, and immigration. So we're looking at the government side to help us out.

Now, the next meeting that's going to take place is the meeting for Wednesday, November 28. We have Dr. Kathleen Lahey and Dr. Lisa Philipps. These are Canadian experts.

We would like to do video conferencing. We have the budget for video conferencing—we had already submitted the budget—so the clerk booked them. We had discussed that the analyst would give us the experts—these are Canadian experts, and we have international experts as well—so we could start the meeting rolling.

Once we understand from them what it is that gender budgeting really is all about, both from a Canadian perspective and an international perspective, then the last meeting, which is on Wednesday, December 12, we can sit down and put our heads together and say, “So what are the parameters around which this gender budgeting is going to take place? What form is this study going to take?”

I think it's important for all of us to be focused, because we really don't want to be all over the map. It'll take us three years, otherwise, to study, and we don't want to do that.

So that was the last meeting. We are hoping by that time that we would have enough witnesses to come and give us an idea.

Once we develop the parameters, then we start getting the names of witnesses from everyone saying, “So if this is the parameter, then this is who we want as witnesses”.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay.

Does anyone have any questions on the work plan?

Yes, Ms. Minna.

• (1535)

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

To the clerk, I know that my office gave a number of names. I see one of them on the list, Kathleen Lahey, but I don't see yet the others—Armine Yalnizyan, for instance, and I forget the name of the other person to do with income splitting.

I'm just asking the clerk.

The Chair: No, no, Ms. Minna, you have the right to ask the question.

We were looking for experts. The analyst had explained to me, about the names of the Canadian experts, that they had not confirmed by the time this thing was prepared. Now they have agreed to come. Dr. Isabella Bakker is willing to come on December 3, and Ms. Armine Yalnizyan is willing to come on December 5.

I'm going to leave it to the clerk to determine how to get the international experts, because one can only do teleconference and the other two can do video conferencing. One is from Australia, the other is from England, and the third one is from South Africa.

We will have to leave it to our able-bodied clerk to do the management of that, and she'll come back to us. Once we have those parameters, then we go forward.

Any other questions?

Madame Boucher, can you give us an update on Madam Verner?
[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoulu, CPC): I have spoken with Ms. Verner. The Minister told me that she absolutely wanted to appear before the committee before Christmas. She believes it is very important that she come to talk to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women about her new mandate. The Minister's office is currently trying to get things moving so that she can appear before the committee.

As you know, we have asked her to appear before the three committees for which she is responsible: the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, the Standing Committee on Official Languages and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Because I have spoken with Josée and talked about it with Nathalie, I know that she will probably be able to make herself available during the second week of December.

[English]

The Chair: The second week of December?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes.

The Chair: Can we potentially put it on our work plan then? To move forward, we need the ministers. It's important that we get a solid confirmation—December 10 or 12?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I am going to talk to her about it again tomorrow. I have to spend the day with her: we are on duty. So I will be able to talk to her about it tomorrow. We will make the connection with Nathalie. However, I can tell you that she wants to appear at the committee before Christmas.

• (1540)

[English]

The Chair: Madame Boucher, just so you're aware, our international experts we've targeted for December 10. I want the committee's feedback on international experts. For example, for Ms. Rhonda Sharp, at the moment it would probably be ten o'clock at night for her.

What I'm trying to say is that we may want to move our meeting on December 10. What I may propose is that, if the minister's willing to come, we have two meetings on December 10.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: She will probably be able to appear on Wednesday, December 12.

[English]

The Chair: Okay, fair enough.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: That is what we are working on most, because we had seen it in the plan. I know that she wants to appear here before Christmas. It will probably be on December 12.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

As the clerk asks, what happens if the House adjourns before or on December 12?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: That would surprise me, but we are going to do everything we can to make sure she can appear. At present, we anticipate that we will still be sitting on the 14th. I do not think that proceedings will adjourn before that. For the moment, we are going to work on having her appear on the 12th. If we have further news, we will try to find a solution quickly. For the moment, the best date for Ms. Verner is December 12.

[English]

The Chair: Can I ask another question, then? From the government side, who can get us ministers Finley and Nicholson?

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): We'll try.

The Chair: Patricia, yes, you'll try?

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Yes, Madam Chair. If I may, do you wish them to appear before the break, as well?

The Chair: If we could. We have those three reports, so we might as well get—

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: So staying away from December 10, though.

The Chair: How about December 5, would it be possible?

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: I don't know.

The Chair: Could you try?

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Davidson, if I may, there is Minister Finley; Minister Nicholson—

A voice: And Day.

The Chair: Well, Minister Day is security, and I don't think it'll have that much of an impact. The other three ministers will have a far greater impact: Minister Nicholson because we're coming very close to the Olympic Games and we want to hear something from Minister Nicholson; Minister Finley because some of our recommendations on this trafficking dealt with the immigration issue, and from what I heard on her show, she has some ideas around this; and thirdly, Minister Solberg, so that will be the economic security.

We'll be able to at least get some issues organized and out of our way.

Yes.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Have they been asked to come? Has anything gone to them?

The Chair: Yes, the clerk phoned. Remember, you asked me the question. The clerk had pre-phoned, then I sent out letters and we have had another follow-up.

So if there's a little push from your side, it will help.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Could I please have a copy of the letter you sent? I can use that as reference.

The Chair: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

The Chair: That brings me to an update on how much it would probably cost us if we have to do a video conference and it's already budgeted for. If we're doing a teleconference it will cost \$100. If we're doing a video conference, it's \$100 per hour for four hours for two people, etc., about \$2,600. It's already part of our budget submission that we submitted to the liaison committee, so we are within our parameters. We might use it. We might not use it.

Just so that the committee members know, that is the approximate money we're looking at.

Are there any problems?

The Clerk: I would need a motion to adopt that.

The Chair: I need a motion to adopt a budget.

Mr. Stanton moves that the budgets for video conferencing and teleconferencing be approved.

The Clerk: In the amount of ...?

The Chair: Mr. Stanton, I'll repeat the total figure for the gender budgeting study.

The video conference may be \$2,600, but witnesses' expenses, with 30 witnesses at an average cost of \$1,200, is \$36,000.

So the total budget, Mr. Stanton, is \$39,102.

• (1545)

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): That's fine.

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

The Chair: Thank you.

Committee members, how would you like to proceed with the court challenges program? I know that everybody is keen on getting

it out of our way. We have received three reports from the clerk on the three committees that studied the court challenges program.

We have before us a motion. I would like to have the committee's consensus on a moving forward strategy.

Does anybody wish to speak on how we move forward?

I guess you haven't had enough time to analyze what is missing from the other three reports. When I was at the liaison committee—and Ms. Davidson can vouch for it—we were told that official languages was asking for \$17,000 to study the court challenges program.

When I brought it up that we were under the impression they had already studied it, they said, no, this is in the pipeline.

So there's some confusion going on. I think the report we have is a very...

Pardon?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: That's good.

[*English*]

The Chair: We have a small report that we have received, which is a two-pager.

Committee members, I am all for suggestions as to how we move forward.

I have asked the analyst to give us an objective overview of the three studies, because not all of us have had a chance to look at the report and say here is what it is. Then we will have a better idea of how to move forward.

Clara, please.

Ms. Clara Morgan (Committee Researcher): Ms. Ratansi asked me to look over what was done in the three committees.

The Standing Committee on Official Languages did submit a report and submitted a recommendation. In accordance with its mandate under the Standing Orders, it recommended that the government continue funding the court challenges program at the level set in fiscal years 2005 and 2006 to ensure the continuation of this program.

They had several witnesses in. I don't know if you want more details about who the witnesses were, but there weren't any specific women's groups represented. Generally, there were some groups represented such as the Quebec Community Groups Network, the Canadian Constitution Foundation,

[*Translation*]

the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick.

[*English*]

These kinds of groups were represented at official languages.

The report they presented in May 2007, "Communities Speak Out: Hear Our Voice", had a section, section 4.5.1, on the court challenges program. In it they recommended that the government reinstate the court challenges program or create another program in order to meet objectives in the same way. That was another subsegment.

The Canadian heritage committee had also studied the program, and they had several communities in as well. They did have the National Association of Women and the Law, and they had REAL Women in, so they had two women's groups represented, but they didn't specifically address women's perspective. It was more the general impact on various groups. They just issued a report, with a recommendation stating that the government should continue funding the court challenges program at the fiscal 2005-06 level.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights also studied the court challenges program, but they also did not have a specific women's perspective. They had such organizations as the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, but again it wasn't focused as consistently as perhaps the status of women's committee might in addressing the issue pertaining to women specifically.

That's what I had looked over for the committee.

• (1550)

The Chair: I think Madam Minna had her hand up, followed by Madame Demers. Then we can see where we go with this.

Go ahead, Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm not going to go to the wording of the motion just now, because I think there's maybe something that could make it a bit clearer, but I'll go to the overall thing.

The reason I put this forward and support it is that as was just mentioned, other committees did some reports immediately after the program was eliminated and of course there were some recommendations, but really there's not been a proper look at the impact on women. I think that's what we're discussing here, impacts such as the McIvor case and other cases that have affected women specifically.

The Official Languages Act is looking at a particular aspect of it, and to some degree I think there's also legislation that indicates something about the role they have to play there, but I think doing a quick study on the court challenges program shouldn't take us a great deal of time, especially since we're going to be dealing with women and justice as part of the gender-based study.

Because it's a project and a legislative piece unto itself, we could take it as a piece. Its ramifications are quite major. I was looking at the work plan; obviously it's challenging before Christmas, but each meeting is two hours. We could add a meeting or two at some point before Christmas to fit in the court challenges part, or certainly to start it, and then hopefully finish it once we get back. But I still think it's a piece that would help us a great deal, both in terms of what we're already doing in terms of gender-based study as well as in terms of the impact it's having on women in our country with respect to women's rights.

For that reason, I still think it's worthwhile to do.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Madame Demers.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Morgan, you referred to the reports of various committees that have dealt with the same subject, the Court Challenges Program.

I have a question about the list of witnesses, because you were not able to address it. I am wondering how balanced it was. Were there as many "pro" as there were "con"? Were there only groups who supported the program, who were sorry to see it eliminated? Were there groups who said that the program was not necessary? Was it balanced?

Ms. Clara Morgan: Yes, a few.

There were more people in favour of the program than people who were against it. People were also represented who were against the program.

Ms. Nicole Demers: We have the reports. True, we have not read them. Do they refer to the testimony of the groups that were against the program?

Ms. Clara Morgan: There was testimony, but it is not set out in the report.

Ms. Nicole Demers: It was not in the testimony.

Ms. Clara Morgan: I have read the testimony of the people who were against the program, however.

Ms. Nicole Demers: I agree with Ms. Minna. Even though this is a special sitting ...

[English]

The Chair: As I was discussing with the clerk and the analyst, it would take two meetings, and we can have very balanced viewpoints. We want four witnesses, four for and four against and perhaps we will find out what it...because what we need is the essence and if we can get the essence and balance it out, that should be fine.

The only thing, if I heard Madam Minna correctly, is you wanted to make some changes to the motion that Madame Demers has presented.

Hon. Maria Minna: No. That's fine.

The Chair: That's fine.

Madame Demers, can you read your motion in—

• (1555)

The Clerk: Madam Davidson wishes to speak.

The Chair: I am so sorry; before you do that, I'll go to Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just wanted to say that I concur that it needs to be a quick study in light of the fact the three groups have already studied it. One thing I was interested in was the dates on which it had been done before.

I think if we do a quick study now—it's been several months since any of these have been looked at—we could do a balanced study and try to limit it to two meetings at the maximum. We could get as many balanced witnesses as we can, get it done, and look at it now.

I think all the reports said reinstate, but one of them also had the rider of reinstate as it was or with something that would perhaps do it. I think that's something we need to look at.

The Chair: Was that official languages?

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: I think so, yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Davidson.

Madame Demers, would you like to read your motion?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The motion reads as follows:

"That after the Standing Committee on the Status of Women will have studied the 3 reports from the other committees on the Court Challenges Program, that the committee studies the impacts of the cut over the Court Challenges Program on women and more particularly those belonging to the minorities and aboriginal women."

[*English*]

The Chair: Madam Karetak-Lindell.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): I wanted to ask if I could ask for a friendly amendment. When you see the phrase "women of the first nations", it does not include Inuit and it does not include Métis.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: With great pleasure, Ms. Karetak-Lindell.

[*English*]

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: If you say "aboriginal women", then that will include everyone under the umbrella.

The Chair: Fair enough.

Madame Demers, would you read the motion, please, with the friendly amendment?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I am only going to read the last part.

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes, just the last one.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: It reads as follows: "... the Court Challenges Program on women and more particularly those belonging to the minorities and aboriginal women."

[*English*]

The Chair: No.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Aboriginal women?

The Chair: Yes.

[*English*]

Aboriginal women.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Are First Nations women and Innu women not aboriginal women?

[*English*]

The Chair: It makes a difference.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Are Innu women not recognized as aboriginal women?

The Chair: No, aboriginal women.

[*English*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: First nation is first nation.

The Chair: Aboriginal women—

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maria Minna: All women.

[*English*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Okay.

I'd like to go with what you've specified:

[*Translation*]

"... and aboriginal women."

[*English*]

The Chair: All those in favour of the motion, please raise your hands—

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Could I ask a point of clarification, being a newcomer visiting today?

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. James Lunney: In your motion, Madam Demers, you're asking about the impact of this particularly on women from minorities and on aboriginal women. So you don't want to study the impact on women in general in Canada, but specifically focus the study of this committee on women from minority groups—from, say, perhaps the Sikh community or the Hindu community or first nations communities.

Is that the intent of your motion?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Really it is all women, but more specifically First Nations and Innu women, who suffer even more from the consequences of the elimination of this program.

I am sure that the other committees that have already studied the impact of the elimination of the program did excellent studies. They have made recommendations to the various departments concerned which had done the study. I believe that at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women we should also make a recommendation, so that it is not lost in the rest of the recommendations. A committee can recommend another program, but will it be only for official languages? Otherwise, it will not make a recommendation.

So when we make a recommendation to the minister regarding the Court Challenges Program, I want to be certain that she knows that it is so that women and women's groups benefit from it also.

•(1600)

[English]

Mr. James Lunney: Again, I'm still not clear what the intent is.

Does everybody understand that this is the intent of this motion, to confine the study just to women from minority groups?

The Chair: I think you've brought something to light here. I'll let Ms. Minna speak—I know what you're saying—and then I'll come back to see if we can find some solution to it.

Yes, Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: Madam Chair, actually, I think that was what I was going to try to change earlier, but then I thought maybe that wouldn't matter as we were all understanding this. But maybe we need to be clear rather than just assume that we understand.

I wonder, Madam Demers, if you would agree—so that the motion is clear—to a friendly amendment that would replace “on the groups of women” with “on women and in particular those who belong to minorities such as”. So we're saying we want to focus a bit, but it's women in general, just to make sure there's no misunderstanding.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Women's groups, and more specifically aboriginal women.

[English]

Hon. Maria Minna: Without saying “the groups of women”, it would say “women and in particular those who belong to certain minorities”.

The Chair: It would be “minorities and aboriginal communities”, because in English it doesn't read right.

Hon. Maria Minna: Right, “minorities and aboriginal”, yes.

The Chair: Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: That is also what I am wondering.

Do we also want to include all women? All women may have suffered this sort of thing. We also have to work with minority groups, but are we including all women? I would like to stress “all women” and women who belong to minorities, but also all women in general.

[English]

Hon. Maria Minna: Yes, it makes sense. Otherwise you're missing the boat, yes.

The Chair: Madame Demers.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, when I explained my motion last week, it was clearer. It is less clear now. We are talking about women's groups, more specifically groups for women who belong to minorities, and among those minorities, aboriginal people. It was women's groups, and more specifically minorities.

[English]

The Chair: Madame Demers, when it's translated into English it raises more questions than it answers.

Ms. Nicole Demers: You're right.

The Chair: Therefore, if I hear correctly, the suggestion has been that the committee study the impacts of the cuts over the court challenges program on groups of women, particularly those belonging to minority communities, and aboriginal women.

Oui?

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: That's fine.

[English]

The Chair: Does that now make sense? Is it now more—

Yes, Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: When you say “groups of women”, you're automatically excluding some women. I would just say “in general, the effect of the court challenges program on women, and in particular...”, and then you add specifically.

The Chair: Okay, “on women”.

Hon. Maria Minna: Forget the group part, because “groups” starts to break it down, and which groups, then? You have to decide which ones. Rather, it should read “on women”.

The Chair: And then specifically those who belong to minority communities—

Hon. Maria Minna: Yes, “on women and more particularly”.

The Chair: Okay.

Hon. Maria Minna: So if you drop the group part, that clears it up.

The Chair: Okay.

Madame Demers, is that clear?

Ms. Nicole Demers: I'm very agreeable.

The Chair: You are very agreeable, and now you will have to read it in French again.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: The amendments that we have proposed are entirely acceptable to me.

[English]

The Chair: Madame Demers, we are now going to get that reread *en français*, and then you can see if you are fine with it.

[Translation]

The Clerk: The motion reads as follows:

That after the Standing Committee on the Status of Women will have studied the 3 reports from the other committees on the Court Challenges Program, the committee study the impacts of the cut of the Court Challenges Program on women and more particularly those belonging to the minorities and aboriginal women.

•(1605)

Ms. Nicole Demers: Yes, that's good. I think that's good.

[English]

The Chair: Now I can take the vote.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Now we need names from everyone. Don't make it too long a list so that we have—

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Is this for the court challenges?

The Chair: For the court challenges.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: We are still looking at two meetings, though, Madam Chair?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes, two meetings will be sufficient.

[English]

The Clerk: It's up to the committee to decide.

The Chair: You have two meetings, and if you have six witnesses, you will be fine.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: We're to think about the witness list.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Yes.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: When do we need witness lists by?

The Chair: We'll have a busy day on Wednesday, but could you give it to us by Wednesday so that we can fill in as many blanks as we can?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Before Wednesday?

[English]

The Chair: As the analyst has brought to my attention, perhaps we can decide whether we can study this in case we have the people who are giving us a gender budgeting overview. If the meetings cannot take place for the court challenges program, can we do it... until January?

It is getting very tight.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Especially with the reports.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I assumed it would probably carry over into the winter.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I don't have a problem with that

Hon. Maria Minna: I think our final discussions, suggestions, or recommendations probably wouldn't happen until we got back. I'm sure we can do the hearings before Christmas.

The Chair: So are we in agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Clerk: I'm not sure we're doing hearings before Christmas either. I'm getting names on Wednesday and there are two weeks left, and you already have quite a bit booked. It depends on whether members are ready to put in the extra time, and I have to be able to get rooms.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: For January, I don't have any problem.

Hon. Maria Minna: January might be difficult.

The Clerk: Then in January, as soon as you come back....

Hon. Maria Minna: Let's try to have at least one or two before we leave, Madam Chair.

The Chair: What we can do, Ms. Minna, if we look at our timetable here, is either leave the gender budgeting aside or leave the ministers aside, neither of which may be acceptable.

There is one meeting possible on December 5. We could target December 5, but you have to get the witnesses going as well. So they have to juggle a lot of things.

If you want two meetings in one day, especially when we're doing the gender budgeting analysis and we have international expertise—they are going to be doing it in the morning, and we could do another meeting in the afternoon—we can juggle, but I'd have to leave it to the clerk to determine how to juggle it, because they have to know who the witnesses are and when they are coming. They're playing with a tight timetable and a timetable of witnesses, to accommodate the witnesses.

The Clerk: If I may, we just tried to change one meeting, once, at a time when there was no meeting, and we couldn't get people to come to that one meeting. Remember? This Monday we went for a survey and we asked that, and we couldn't get agreement.

The Chair: We'll have Ms. Minna and then Mr. Stanton. Did anybody have a hand up and I overlooked it? No?

Okay.

Hon. Maria Minna: Madam Chair, earlier I suggested that we could possibly add one or two meetings. I understand that Monday morning is difficult because everybody's flying in from the four corners of this country, and that makes it hard. But once we are here, usually on a Monday afternoon, because we have to be here for this committee, and after that, on a Tuesday morning or what-have-you, we certainly would be able to....

If there were openness on the part of the members to have one or two extra meetings, or even an evening dinner meeting, we could tack that on. Then the clerk could come back to us and suggest which of those two meetings it would be and when it could be. That was my earlier suggestion. I thought people agreed to that.

• (1610)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: My observation, Madam Chair, however we put this, is that because we're looking at two meetings, we should try to keep them together, or at least try to keep them within the same session or the same week-to-week. Let's not have one now and one in January, because you lose that continuity.

The Chair: Okay.

So can I leave it to the clerk to determine how they will fit it in? They'll probably ask you questions as to your availability. Accordingly, they will get that going.

Is that fair enough?

Now, the second motion we have is from Ms. Neville. She told me that she's going to be late, so she asked if I could please hold the motion until she comes to speak to it, because she has to speak to it.

Ladies, are you from Status of Women Canada? Okay.

Is Madam Beckton here?

A voice: She's not here quite yet, but it's only 4:10.

The Chair: I know. It's just that if they were here, we could start, that's all. I am a person who believes in time management, so if somebody's here, I'll take them.

At the moment, as I see it, we're in agreement with the work plan. We're in agreement on having extra meetings if we have to, in order to accommodate the court challenges program. We have also approved the budget.

Yes, go ahead, Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I just have a question, Madam Chair. For the gender budgeting study, if we have some suggestions for witnesses, can we just give them to the clerk?

The Chair: Oh, absolutely, and that was what the clerk asked me. She asked if we could have a list of witnesses.

I would say that it would be premature for us to have witnesses, because we do not know the parameters we want to study. If we know the parameters of what... You see, once we hear expert witnesses and figure out more from Manitoba's experience, perhaps we'll get a very good idea of what we want to do as a committee, and then we can say which experts we want.

You can always give names. That's not a problem. If you have names, please provide names. This will help us build our data bank, and that would be good.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I was going to suggest that some of these might help with the scoping in the coming weeks. It allows us to see where we want to go with this. If we have some folks who would be able to do that for us, I think that would be good.

We have until Wednesday for witnesses on the court challenges program, and then on this other question, it is as soon as possible.

The Chair: It is as soon as possible, because as you can see, the scoping is what is going to be taking place next week, this Wednesday and next week, and hopefully the week after. If we have witnesses, we can tie them all together.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: That is excellent.

The Chair: We'll suspend the meeting for a few minutes. Then witnesses can come forward.

• _____ (Pause) _____

•

• (1615)

The Chair: Committee members, I need to bring to your attention something urgent. After the next meeting on Wednesday, we will need to find witnesses ASAP. The reason is that, otherwise, if we go to the parameters, we won't have any witnesses. So as soon as you hear witnesses and you think you have an idea, send witness lists. That would be important.

There's a distribution going around on violence against women. There was an interesting article with recommendations in it, and some of this deals with justice recommendations. It's quite interesting, so I thought we could have a look at it for our information.

Since you are here, Ms. Neville, would you like to talk to your motion before the witnesses come?

• (1620)

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): I will just very briefly, Madam Chair.

As I look around, most members who are here today were here in the last session when we passed this motion. I think it's important that it be on the agenda, and that it should be a reminder to the government. I know there have been some initiatives undertaken by the government to look at the 2010 Olympics to address the issues of trafficking of women and children for sexual purposes, but there's much more to be done.

I don't want to belabour it, but I would ask committee members if they would support this once again and put it through to the government for their response.

The Chair: For their response?

Hon. Anita Neville: I'd like a report back in terms of what they're doing. Can we do that, through you, to the clerk?

The Clerk: You would have to ask for a government response and for that government response be tabled.

The Chair: So you'll have to put it down in your motion.

The Clerk: I thought you wanted it presented and you wanted the report adopted in the House.

Hon. Anita Neville: I would like the report adopted in the House.

The Clerk: That's something else.

Hon. Anita Neville: Then let's do it this way; we'll do it this way.

The Clerk: Okay.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you.

The Chair: So if I understand correctly, you're going to present this motion in the House?

Hon. Anita Neville: The motion once again is to be passed here, yes.

The Chair: It's to be passed here and then go to the House.

Yes, Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank Madam Neville for putting this motion on the floor again. Certainly it's something we talked about at great length when we were doing our study, and a lot of us were here when we did the human trafficking study. We know that this is a really serious, growing issue for women and children, and not just outside of Canada but within Canada as well. I think it's right that this government also is doing things to take action on this. We talked about it in budget 2007; we talked about allocating the \$6 million. We did allocate the \$6 million to combat child exploitation and trafficking.

We know that the 2010 Olympics could be the hotspot, if we want to call it that. There's certainly heightened recognition of the fact that this could be an avenue that we really need to take some action on. I believe the justice committee, or public safety, is already working on that. They are taking action on examining measures on how they can put measures together. They're certainly taking advantage of our recommendations, when we talked about heightened education and awareness, and ability to recognize, in the law enforcement area. A lot of that is being done through the RCMP, so there are training projects that are already under way. A lot of things are already being done.

I'm certainly not opposed to the motion. I know it's an extremely sensitive and serious issue, but there are a lot of things already being done, and a lot of it's being done through other departments.

The Chair: Ms. Neville, would you like to respond?

Hon. Anita Neville: Just very briefly, Madam Chair.

I acknowledged in my opening comment that there is work being done, but there's much that needs to be done. When we dealt with the trafficking report, we focused on the trafficking of women from outside Canada. I think it's equally important that there be strategies developed internally in Canada.

I would again ask for the support of this committee in passing this motion. It reinforces it; it comes from the perspective of women; and it comes from the perspective of knowing that in British Columbia a disproportionate number of aboriginal women have gone missing. I would like to see the government moving forward even more zealously on it.

I do acknowledge that there are initiatives, and I didn't know about other committee initiatives. They too could only be making recommendations on it. But I'd like to see this committee—I'm repeating myself now—from the perspective of women put forward this motion to government.

•(1625)

[*Translation*]

La présidente: Ms. Demers, we are listening.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would just like to replace "trafficking of women" with "trafficking of women and children", in the French version.

Second ...

The Chair: Excuse me, could you repeat that?

Ms. Nicole Demers: In the motion, Madam Chair, it says "... a plan ... to curtail the trafficking of women". I would prefer that it say "... a plan ... to curtail the trafficking of women and children".

I am aware, Madam Chair, that the Department of Justice and the Department of Public Safety are currently examining this problem. I am also concerned because, when we examine only the problem, we are not thinking about the cases of the people who are affected by it. The people who are affected by this problem are children and women who may have to return to their country of origin and be caught up in the same vicious circle.

It is therefore important that this kind of motion be brought to the government. We must also ensure that structures are put in place by

the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, and that changes are made to the legislation that governs that department, to help women and children who are victims of violence or the sex trade.

The legislation governing the Department of Health also has to be amended. At present, a person can be provided with care under the department's aegis for a certain number of days. I do not believe that it is sufficient. If we really want to cover this entire problem, we have to ensure that women and children who are victims of violence or the sex trade are not victimized a second time.

This plan must therefore be complete and comprehensive. It has to study this problem as a whole, and not just from the standpoint of justice or public safety. It also has to show compassion for the victims.

La présidente: Thank you, Ms. Demers.

Ms. Davidson.

[*English*]

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

This is not to belabour the issue—I'm certainly not against the motion—but I want to point out that actions are being taken, and certainly the mover of the motion has recognized that. I think the RCMP is leading the federal partners in developing these law enforcement investigative tools and enhancing the knowledge of the law enforcers. But they're also making sure that people who deal with the victims understand and know the services that are required for the victims. So that's all part of it.

I think Status of Women is working with these groups, is actively involved with that. It's a good measure that they are....

Yes, hopefully there will be some information.

That's my information, anyway, that Status of Women is actively involved.

The Chair: You know, Ms. Davidson, I didn't know about some of what you've given us today. I'm sure that what Ms. Neville is suggesting is not a bad idea, because all of us will get more educated about it.

Seeing no further discussion, Ms. Neville's motion is on record.

May we have a vote?

All those in favour of the motion, please raise your hand.

Oh, you abstain from a motion?

Mr. Bruce Stanton: You're drawing attention to....

The Chair: Yes. You're chatting away while we have a very important motion, one that Ms. Davidson thought was extremely important.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Well, it's adopted.

The Chair: All right.

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

•(1630)

The Chair: Committee members, we have today with us three people from Status of Women Canada: Ms. Clare Beckton, the coordinator; Ms. Dawn Nicholson-O'Brien, the deputy coordinator; and Ms. Cindy Paquette, the director of the corporate services directorate.

Ms. Clare Beckton has taken the lead, and she'll be speaking for 10 minutes.

I know you've been through this routine before. Committee members from both sides will be asking questions.

Without any further ado, I will let you start your remarks, Ms. Beckton. This is the first time you've come to the status of women committee, so welcome.

Ms. Clare Beckton (Coordinator, Office of the Coordinator, Status of Women Canada): Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you, committee members. It is indeed a pleasure to be here today to discuss the supplementary estimates for the organization.

I've had the opportunity over the past several months to review the work of the committee. It has been varied, comprehensive, and impressive, so I'm delighted to be here today.

Over the last year, Status of Women Canada has certainly been in the news. Today I will outline the future direction of Status of Women Canada.

This year has been a time of change, transition, and renewal for the agency, including a governance review and efficiency restraint exercise. As well, in budget 2007, \$10 million a year in funding to Status of Women Canada was announced. However, Status of Women Canada's legal mandate to coordinate policy with respect to the status of women and administer related programs remains the same as when the organization was created in 1976.

In addition, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action reinforced the legal foundation for the work of Status of Women Canada.

[*Translation*]

Although there are many instruments available to achieve equality, there are systemic barriers that prevent women from participating fully in Canadian society: stereotypes and barriers to career development, to representation on decision-making bodies, to participation in business partnerships, to participation in politics and to access to funding. The list goes on. For women who belong to a visible minority, immigrants, seniors or aboriginal women, those barriers are often higher.

Measures must be taken to remove these existing systemic barriers, not only by government, but also in partnership with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society.

Status of Women Canada is in a good position to knock down these barriers, because it has two essential instruments for taking action: its functions in relation to strategic policy and partnerships and its funding mechanisms under the Women's Program. Those two

instruments cannot operate in a vacuum. They are in fact interdependent and each informs the other.

In addition, our work is supported by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Forum of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women and international forums such as the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and the Organization of American States, and by bilateral relations with other governments at the international level.

As well, Canada is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW. Canada must report periodically on the measures it has taken to comply with the convention. Canada recently submitted its seventh report to CEDAW and will appear before the CEDAW committee in 2008.

•(1635)

[*English*]

Status of Women Canada addresses the broader systemic barriers facing women by working in several policy areas that are aligned to two key priorities—women's economic security and violence against women.

I would like to just take a few minutes to share with you some of our current work. I won't read everything that's in here because it will go beyond 10 minutes and I'm very mindful of the committee's time.

As you know through your own study and from the discussion I heard as we were coming in, trafficking in persons remains a serious and growing concern for women and girls, both in Canada and beyond our borders. The committee knows that well.

Budget 2007 allocated \$6 million to combat child exploitation and trafficking. With the Vancouver 2010 Olympics on the horizon, there is a heightened recognition that international sporting events may create opportunities for trafficking, particularly in the sex trade. As a result, the government is examining measures to avert traffickers from the Vancouver event.

Currently the RCMP is leading partners in developing and piloting training to law enforcement and other front-line officials to teach investigative tools and enhance knowledge of laws surrounding trafficking and the services that victims require. With other departments as well, Status of Women Canada is actively participating in this work around the issue of trafficking.

The Government of Canada continues its partnership with the Native Women's Association of Canada to improve the lives of aboriginal women. Over the five-year period 2005 to 2010, the federal government is providing \$5 million to the Native Women's Association for the Sisters in Spirit campaign to address racialized and sexualized violence against aboriginal women. This project is a living example of creating direct benefits for women while simultaneously using the results to inform policy changes.

In June, the first National Aboriginal Women's Summit was held in Newfoundland and Labrador. There was remarkable consensus on the need for action on issues facing aboriginal women, including poverty, human rights, and violence. We are following up and will be working towards the next summit in Yellowknife in 2008.

This kind of work requires an understanding of the differential impacts of policies and programs on various groups of women, as well as cross-country coordination and partnership. This is our role at Status of Women.

Status of Women remains committed to the ongoing effort of working with federal, provincial, and territorial status of women ministers and officials. In fact, we have a meeting with officials going on as we speak today. In July, the ministers concluded with an agreement to promote women's economic self-sufficiency, safety, and security, and to work towards improving the situation of aboriginal women in Canada.

As you know, gender-based analysis is an important tool for us in fulfilling our work, because it's used to apply a gender lens to public policy, programs, and legislation. GBA allows us to understand and assess the impact of these programs and policies on women. It is one of the means we use to achieve our goal, because in the final analysis it is the outcomes that matter, and by using GBA we're able to put women into the equation and achieve effective outcomes.

We have been working on the questions of accountability with Finance, Treasury Board, and PCO, the three central agencies. I know this committee was very interested in this aspect.

[Translation]

If we are to achieve concrete results in our sphere of activities we must have the capacity to monitor, oversee and measure the progress made, based on the goals and objectives of government policies and programs designed to increase both accountability and measurable results.

Status of Women Canada therefore works closely with the central agencies and key departments.

[English]

With regard to integrating gender reporting into government accountability mechanisms and creating a set of indicators on trends in the situation of women over time, the Status of Women's work, as you know, is highly regarded in this internationally. We are called upon to assist, most recently to work with other national governments such as South Africa, Haiti, Korea, and Russia.

I'd like to spend a couple of minutes on gender budgeting. I know that's an issue the committee is interested in. We will, or course, be making a more detailed presentation later for the committee.

A nation's budget is one of the ultimate policy documents reflecting the highest level of political commitment and the policies of the government. A gender-responsive budgeting process provides a key step in building equality for women. The outcome of gender-responsive budget initiatives tends to focus on resetting priorities to produce better results rather than relying on necessarily increased expenditures. Approximately 60 countries around the world engage in gender-responsive budget exercises, many of them, of course, in

different ways. There doesn't seem to be any one particular way of doing it.

The Department of Finance, we understand, conducted a gender-based analysis on policy measures, particularly on tax policy where data permitted, and on tax proposals presented to the Minister of Finance in budget 2006-07. In partnership with Status of Women Canada, the Department of Finance is now exploring various models of gender budgets. In fact, applying a gender-based analysis is one of the first steps towards a gender-responsive budget.

Status of Women Canada has compiled an analytical package of gender budget-related information, which we would be pleased to share when we come again with committee members.

I'd like to finish by just spending a couple of minutes on the women's program. I know that's of great interest to the committee. Over the past year the women's program has seen a lot of change. The terms and conditions of the women's program were changed in 2006 to encourage community-based initiatives having a direct impact on women and girls. The terms and conditions are flexible and they can be tailored to meet desired outcomes on specific issues for all women, or for targeted populations. Modifications can be made on an annual basis through various calls for proposals.

As you know, there has been much debate and some misunderstanding over the elimination of funding of lobbying activities. I heard this as I travelled across the country. We tried to make it clear that organizations that lobby are still eligible for funding if they submit proposals that meet the current women's program criteria. In fact, we do fund some groups.

As of April 1, the women's program now has two components—the Women's Community Fund and the Women's Partnership Fund. Presently \$12.3 million is in the Women's Community Fund, which supports projects at the local, regional, and national levels that aim to enable the full participation of women in all aspects of Canadian life. Then we have the partnership fund, which is broader. I have a few examples, which I'm sure you will be able to read with pleasure.

● (1640)

The Chair: Could we get that as part of the questions? I think you have run out of time.

Ms. Clare Beckett: Yes, absolutely. We will certainly give you a copy of the presentation, if you do not already have it.

The Chair: We do all have the copy of the presentation, but we also want the opportunity to ask questions. You may be able to enhance that topic then.

For the first round of questions, Ms. Minna, for seven minutes.

Hon. Maria Minna: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for coming to this meeting today.

I want to go straight to the last comments that you were making, Madam Beckton. It's right to the heart of some of the things, but not all of the things, that we've been dealing with for some time now, and that is the terms for funding. You're saying that lobby organizations can in fact do that.

Despite the fact that the criteria—or the criteria that I saw and that we all saw after it was changed—clearly states that no advocacy is allowed for municipal-provincial-federal, and a number of organizations, like NAWL and others, have actually lost their funding, are you saying to me today that if I were to ask, as an NGO, for research funds, and the result of that research I would use to advocate on behalf of women to government at all levels, I would get funding?

Ms. Clare Beckton: No, what I was saying is the fact that it's an organization that lobbies is not a bar to it receiving funding, but the project itself must meet the terms and conditions that—

Hon. Maria Minna: In other words, the project itself cannot be... Just to be clear, because this is very important to me and to all of us, I think, none of the money that is given by the Government of Canada can go to research that leads to advocacy, to lobbying. That's what you're telling me.

Let's say I'm an NGO and I come for a research project. I know there's a problem in the field of, let's say, aboriginal women or immigrant women, and I want to do a research project that will prove certain disadvantages that the community has. Then I will use that information to advocate on their behalf.

• (1645)

Ms. Clare Beckton: It's hard to say in the abstract, because I think a lot would be determined on how the project is structured and how the organization intends to...

On the web we have the specific criteria for each of the projects.

Hon. Maria Minna: I beg to differ, though, Madam Beckton. It's not that difficult. You're saying here in your statement that you do fund lobbying activities. Well, you've just kind of said to me, no. So do we or do we not fund research that leads to advocacy, and that advocacy can be done by that organization?

I'm not delivering anything to an individual woman. What I'm doing is research to change the condition and the environment, and with that research, I will do advocacy, and some of the money will be used for that. Some of the money I receive will be used for that, to advocate on behalf of women.

Is that allowed or not under the current criteria?

Ms. Clare Beckton: I'll just make it clear that I did not say that we funded lobbying. I just want to make it crystal clear that lobbying organizations can still seek funding if their projects meet the criteria.

I believe, hypothetically, the project you're describing would not meet the criteria.

Hon. Maria Minna: All right. So the criteria, then, have not changed, and in fact advocacy is not part of the criteria.

Ms. Clare Beckton: But the project that had been funded by the National Association of Women and the Law last year likely would have been eligible for about 75% of the funding if they had applied for a similar project this year.

Hon. Maria Minna: If they had not used any of the money to advocate on behalf of women.

Ms. Clare Beckton: Yes.

Hon. Maria Minna: Okay. So actually nothing has changed.

Do I still have time, Madam Chair?

The Chair: You do.

Hon. Maria Minna: Okay. I'll ask two questions, and then we'll see.

With respect to the Women's Community Fund and the Women's Partnership Fund, could you give me a clearer explanation of what exactly the criteria are for those funds, who qualifies, and maybe some examples of who's qualified thus far? Have any for-profit organizations, for instance, been qualified? If so, which are they?

As well, I know that as a result of human resources changing and cutbacks on staff, the staff person who was responsible for international issues was our representative at the UN, at UNIFEM, and at a lot of the ones that you have actually mentioned here in our international situation.

When I was in Uganda with Minister Guergis at an international meeting, the person who was travelling with us from the department did not have the expertise or the background because the person responsible for that had been let go, that position had been shut down. Do we have a position now that represents your department and Canada on women's issues at the international level?

There are two questions there.

Ms. Clare Beckton: There seem to be several broad questions.

Certainly, in terms of the community fund, it is aimed at providing funds to groups where they are providing a direct benefit to women. There are a series of criteria, which we have set out on our website. You have to be an incorporated body, for example, as we don't fund unincorporated bodies. You have to meet the particular criteria, which are now very broad in this second call. We talk about funding for a broad variety—women's economic security and prosperity; women's health; women's safety; and the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against women. So it has to fall within the parameters, which are very broad now.

On the website we have set out all of the requirements around budgeting. You have to have a certain percentage of funding provided by another organization. Generally we fund up to about 60% for an organization.

With the community fund, we now have two calls a year. These enable us to ensure there's equity in the way the funds are dispensed. People now have the opportunity of knowing when they can apply, when the cut-off date is, and we can look at the projects and compare them to ensure that they are in fact in compliance with the terms and conditions.

We have funded a variety of projects that range across the spectrum—helping immigrant women integrate into the workforce, helping poor women in Saint John, New Brunswick, for example, to be able to have pre-employment skills. These are community-based fund projects.

The partnership—

• (1650)

The Chair: Sorry to interrupt, Ms. Beckton, but I have to be fair to all committee members.

Ms. Clare Beckton: Can I just quickly answer her question about the international level?

The Chair: Sure.

Ms. Clare Beckton: The person who went to the Commonwealth summit was very knowledgeable about the Commonwealth—

Hon. Maria Minna: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...overstressed?

The Chair: We can get to that argument later.

Thank you.

We go now to Madame Deschamps.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would first like to welcome you. I believe this is the first time you have appeared at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. For our own information, given that you have recently been appointed coordinator of Status of Women Canada, can you tell us a bit about yourself and your background? Tell us where you come from and how you came to hold your current position.

[*English*]

Ms. Clare Beckton: With pleasure, Madame Deschamps, I can talk to the committee about my background.

I grew up in Saskatchewan, but I've lived all over this country, so I'm a real Canadian.

I received my training in law. I taught law at Dalhousie for nine years, and wrote extensively and presented at various conferences and in speaking engagements.

I was then asked to come to the Department of Justice to coordinate all of the federal legislation and bring it into line with section 15, the equality guarantees under the charter. So I spent four years working on charter and human rights issues, including the Human Rights Act, and the first interpretations of section 15 and what the equality guarantees meant.

Then I held progressively different positions through the Department of Justice, as head counsel for the RCMP, for Fisheries, for Human Resources Development Canada, and ultimately as the assistant deputy attorney general for Aboriginal Affairs. Then I took a year to go to Harvard to pursue a master's degree in public administration, and then worked on a multi-sectoral aboriginal leadership project.

I was absolutely thrilled to be asked to take on the position of

[*Translation*]

coordinator at Status of Women Canada. It is very important work and I am very pleased to hold that position now.

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: How long have you held this position?

Ms. Clare Beckton: Since April 2007.

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: I have another somewhat more technical question for you. After the changes that were made to the Women's Program, the WP, could you send us the project applications that have been submitted to you, and tell us which have been accepted and which have been rejected? Is it also possible to know why?

[*English*]

Ms. Clare Beckton: During this last round—and I'm assuming you're talking about the last call, which was the first one under the new terms and conditions this year—we accepted 60 applications for projects to the tune of about \$8 million over three years. They will have an impact, directly and indirectly, on approximately 260,000 women.

There's a wide range of projects. For example, in British Columbia they are working with the sex trade workers in lower east side Vancouver. We have projects that are helping immigrant women to integrate. We have projects with the Y, some of which deal with young girls and trying to help them understand how to be self-confident and to say no in the context of abusive relationships.

There are approximately 60. We can give the committee a list of them, if you wish.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: Sixty projects have been accepted?

Ms. Clare Beckton: Sixty projects, yes.

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: How many projects have been rejected?

[*English*]

Ms. Clare Beckton: We had 252 applications and we accepted 60. There were approximately 60 more that had real potential, but given the time limits and our resources we simply could not give them professional assistance at the time. We think the majority of them will be applying in the second call, because we had a number of information and training sessions that helped many of these groups understand how to better prepare their applications. We have put a successful application online to serve as an example.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: You said that you are going to be creating training courses. How will those courses be accessible in rural communities or in the regions? It is not really an easy matter for these women to have access to the offices, particularly when they have been cut from four to 16. How are you going to make these training sessions as accessible as possible?

[*English*]

Ms. Clare Beckton: Our regional employees have been going out to various areas of their regions to provide these seminars. In Ontario we've had them in Toronto, but we've also had them in other cities. In Newfoundland, our Atlantic regional office went out to not only St. John's but to Stephenville and Gander to take these sessions to groups likely to be applying for funds.

[*Translation*]

In Quebec, our Montreal regional office has given sessions in Quebec City and in other regions of the province.

[English]

So we're trying our very best to take them out to where many of the groups are so that they will benefit from that.

We also bring a number of groups together on a conference call and do the session. It has been very beneficial to have the groups come together to do that.

The Chair: Ms. Davidson, the round is yours for seven minutes.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Beckton, for presenting to us today. It has been very interesting to hear your presentation. I'd like to congratulate you on your professional accomplishments. There are many, and you are certainly well qualified to assume the role you are playing now. So again, welcome and congratulations for everything thus far.

I was interested in Ms. Minna's question on the lobbyists and so on. If I understood you correctly—and I hope I did—a group that does lobbying can get funding, but it has to be for a program that's going to have a direct impact on women. Is that correct? Did I understand you correctly?

Ms. Clare Beckton: Yes, you're absolutely correct.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Okay, thank you.

In the address you gave us today, you indicated that we had gone through significant change and so on, and you were going to outline the future direction of the Status of Women. The legal mandate, you have pointed out, has remained the same since 1976, but there certainly still are systemic barriers we need to overcome.

Could you tell me what your priorities might be for the upcoming operation of Status of Women?

• (1700)

Ms. Clare Beckton: One of my first priorities is to rebuild the organization. As you know, when we went through the efficiency review, a number of people left the organization, and some left even though they weren't affected. So we've been building a new and very strong team, including the members of my management team, whom you see here today, who are new to the organization.

We're also working to change the way we deliver the women's program to make it as effective and efficient as we can, adding new tools, working with the website to update our website to make it more accessible to women across this country.

Also, on the systemic barrier side, we're focusing on making sure that we're influencing the policy agendas both nationally and internationally. In addition to being able to do that, we do that in partnership with not only the federal government departments but also our federal-provincial-territorial partners as well as international partners.

We're also looking at taking gender-based analysis to the next level, focusing on the accountability element of gender-based analysis, to ensure that departments are indeed reflecting gender-based analysis in their work. That is through our work with central agencies.

Where I think we've made considerable progress...we now know that the Treasury Board requires, for example, that every Treasury

Board submission have a gender-based analysis, that they have done the gender-based analysis.

So we are making very good progress with central agencies, and we're also still working to coordinate in areas where no one department has responsibility. And we are looking at issues such as women and long-term economic prosperity, for example.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you very much. That certainly sounds like an ambitious program but an extremely worthwhile one. I think that will get things back on track. Hopefully we'll spend the dollars delivering programs that will directly benefit women. I look forward to seeing how that unfolds.

Do I still have some time?

The Chair: Yes, you have three minutes.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: There's another thing I wanted to ask you about. We were talking about the motion we just passed before you began your presentation, and I made the comment that I felt Status of Women was actively participating with some of the other groups when it comes to the 2010 Olympics.

I wonder if you could elaborate a little bit more about what Status of Women might be contributing, whom they may be working with, and what we're hoping the outcome will be.

Ms. Clare Beckton: Status of Women is part of an interdepartmental committee that is working on the issues around trafficking. We have been working very closely, for example, with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to assist them and encourage them in the training they're doing for other police forces on how to identify victims of trafficking.

We have been working with the Department of Justice, and all of the other departments, to ensure that the work they're doing has a gender lens and that the policy they're working on reflects the needs of the women who may be trafficked.

It was very interesting to note as well that as a result of gender-based analysis, they now have the temporary work permits for women found to have been trafficked into Canada. That was the result of a gender-based analysis.

All of that is to say that we are working very closely with all the other departments as part of this committee.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you very much.

The Chair: You have one minute left.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: I have one minute left? Okay.

You talked about the projects that you had approved already. I think you said that 60 were approved and that 60 more were hopefully going to be able to be worked on with the presenters and then approved.

Are there any areas in particular that you can see the focus going toward? Is it general or is it a huge variety of issues?

Ms. Clare Beckton: The issues on the last round were focused around economic security and prevention of violence against women, but within that was a whole spectrum of projects, ranging from helping immigrant women integrate to helping women become empowered to step into positions of decision-making, one of the areas that I personally am very interested in. There is a project involving aboriginal women, helping them to take their culturally gender-based analysis into their communities to help them with their work.

So there is a whole spectrum of projects, ranging from young women to seniors to immigrant women to visible minority women. Many cross over. For example, we have three projects in lower east side Vancouver dealing with various aspects of the sex trade workers and helping to assist them.

We are very positive about the outcomes of the initiatives we've funded in this round.

•(1705)

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Davidson.

We now go to Ms. Mathysen for seven minutes.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for coming.

I have a series of questions, starting with the supplementary estimates. If you look at page 137 under vote 101, the line indicates that:

Funding to forgive a debt due by the Native Women's Association of Canada that resulted from an administrative error.

That funding was to the tune of \$708,000.

Can you explain why the \$708,000 was necessary? What went on in that situation?

Ms. Clare Beckton: I'll do the best I can, because I wasn't here when it happened.

As you know, there is \$5 million for Sisters in Spirit, and this was the first year's payment. It turned out that Status of Women only had authority for grants, and this was a contribution agreement. So it was a technical error that required us to change our terms and conditions to have authority to pay under both grants and contributions. That change was unable to be made that year because they had to go to warrants, and Status of Women was not able to do it under a warrant.

As a consequence, we had to go in early this year and seek debt forgiveness, because that resulted in a debt to Status of Women of \$708,000. But it was simply a technical error and no fault of the Native Women's Association.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: No, I'm sure it wasn't.

I have a letter here, and I'm going to hand you a couple of copies of it so that you can see what I have. I'll hand one to the chair, and hopefully we can have it duplicated and translated, if need be.

You'll see that it's a request from my office for ATI searches. The letter from the department indicates that due to the \$5 million in administrative savings, the ATI office—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, a point of order. We do not have copies of the documents. We do not know what she is talking about.

[*English*]

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: I'm just explaining it. This is a letter that was sent to me, and I just need to ask a question about it.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Are you going to hand the letter in?

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: I just did.

The Vice-Chair: Okay.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: The letter is addressed to the Chair.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Mathysen.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Basically, I made several requests. What I received back was that because of the \$5 million in administrative savings and the workload pressures and the backlog, I could not get what I needed.

I made these requests in June. It's now November. As you know, under access to information these requests must be obliged in 30 days.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I have a point of order.

Excusez-moi, madame Mathysen—

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Well, just perhaps, if you could listen carefully—

The Vice-Chair: Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Madam Chair, a point of order. We do not have a copy of the letter, which is also not in both official languages. We would at least like to have a copy before you ask a question. We ask that of everyone.

[*English*]

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: The letter was sent by SWC. I'm simply showing a letter that I received from the department, so I don't think it's a particular mystery.

My question is this: if you're having difficulty coping with ATI problems, what else is the department having difficulty with? As well, when do you expect the ATI situation to be resolved? When in fact can I receive the information that I asked for in June?

Ms. Clare Beckton: I would have to look at the specific information, but in the past couple of years we have had a threefold increase in requests for access to information. In fact, already this year we've had double the amount we had in the first eight months of last year.

We currently have one person working on the ATI requests. Even though she works overtime, she is not able to keep up. I am well aware of that, and we are in the process of engaging a second person to assist her. It's very difficult to find people who have a lot of knowledge and experience in the access to information field, because they're so much in demand from every department.

We are working on it. I believe we are close to being able to hire someone who will be able to help the person working there.

• (1710)

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Was an ATI person let go when the cuts were made?

Ms. Clare Beckton: Yes, that was part of the efficiency review cuts.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: So it isn't terribly efficient to have efficiency cuts, I see.

I have another question, and this is basically a three-parter. I'd like you to comment on the changes in terms of the mandate of the women's program. Why were the changes made? How were the changes helpful? And what's been the impact of these changes?

Ms. Clare Beckton: I'm afraid I won't be able to help you on the first one, on why the changes were made, because I wasn't here at the time. I think they were made so that there would be a more direct benefit for women. The decision was made that the funding should be going to directly benefit women.

How has it helped? Well, we have a number of recipients who can now focus on ensuring that the money is going to a direct benefit for women.

It has had an impact on groups this year, because as all of us and the groups are going through a transition, everyone is trying to see what the new criteria are. We have put that on the website, as I said. We've tried to put particular tools on the website to assist. We went through a learning process in the first round, and as a result of the evaluation of that first round, we have come up with additional tools to help the groups understand the criteria for the terms and conditions. That includes putting a model of a successful application online, as well as doing the training sessions.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to the second round now for five minutes.

Mr. Pearson will start.

Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Chair, and thank you for coming to the meeting today.

We've been fairly concerned, many of us, as members, about the cuts to the regional offices. I am part of a steering committee that works with Canada's food banks. There's been a lot of malnutrition in the northern regions, so we're trying to find ways of working with food companies to get food to all these various areas. We've had our 10 major food banks—the one I'm in, in London, is part of it—trying to get food up there. We've been at this for a year and a half, and we've found that we're actually going to need maybe 20 or 30 food banks to do it.

Once we realized that we couldn't do it, we tried an Internet model. People could use the web to do it, but the vast majority of

people didn't have the Internet. We tried to use the telephone, but the vast majority of people didn't have phones, so we tried to set up satellite phone links, and this was quite expensive.

I'm looking at this map, and as I think about what our food banks are trying to do, I look at what the Status of Women has here with three offices down in this part of the country and one in Alberta, in Edmonton. And there's all this.... I'm just trying to figure out how it can be efficient to do that. I'm wondering how you send people out to all these remote communities to determine the viability of the programs and what they're applying for.

It seems to me that with the cuts it's logistically impossible to carry out the mandate. As food banks, we're finding the same thing, and it's very frustrating to us.

I wonder if you could speak to that, because it doesn't seem to me that we can efficiently do it.

Ms. Clare Beckton: This, as you know, is the first year we're operating with four regional offices, and we have not yet had full staffing. We did receive some funding under the supplementary estimates, which is the subject of this meeting today, which will add more resources, or at least an additional resource, to each of our regional offices.

We know that we can't continue to operate the way we were operating with 16 regional offices. We have to use different tools to try to get the information to the groups, to go out to the groups. Our regional people will be travelling as much as they can to go out and to meet with various groups. We have been bringing groups together in different communities to do these training sessions. We do work through the telephone, through these kinds of conferences.

I think it will take us a year or more to be able to fully assess the impact of the cuts and the impact of having four regional offices—

• (1715)

Mr. Glen Pearson: Thank you. Sorry to interrupt, but I don't have much time, and I want to turn it over to Ms. Neville.

Why wasn't it going to work, having 16 offices as opposed to four? You just said it wasn't going to, that changes had to be made. Why is that?

Ms. Clare Beckton: Well, I don't think I said it wasn't going to work. Again, I wasn't here when the decisions were made, so I'm not privy to all the discussion that went on.

I think some of the regional offices out there were operating with people alone, and not necessarily getting the best efficiencies, where you have people who come together to share skill sets.

Also, I think when some of the offices were set up, we didn't have some of the Internet tools that we have today and that certainly facilitate access for many groups to get information. We're working on expanding our own website to make it much more user-friendly over the next year.

Mr. Glen Pearson: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Neville, you have about a minute and a half.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you. I have so many questions.

I'd like to pick up on Mr. Pearson's comments. I have a whole bunch of my own, but it might have to wait for another time.

You're talking about Internet access. You just saw a map of the country that is not being served. There is no Internet access here. Are you keeping track of the additional travelling costs you are incurring in order to travel to meet these needs?

We know, anecdotally, that so many of the offices valued the coordinator who was in the office to provide guidance for getting through a government form and whatever. How are you making that up? What are you doing to assist people? My concern is for the low socio-economic groups who may not have the same access to the Internet.

I haven't got a lot of time, but you referenced that you have another 60 in the queue to come out of 200-plus applications, and I want to know what kind of organizations were refused funding and why they were refused funding.

The Chair: Ms. Beckton, please give a very succinct answer. I have to move to the next round.

Ms. Clare Beckton: I'll do my best.

Yes, we do track all travel expenditures, of course. It's required as part of our mandate.

One of the ways that we are also getting out to people is we do work through our Service Canada offices, which are in many more communities than we are. We do send information through there—

Hon. Anita Neville: As a member of Parliament, I'm getting countless complaints, so...

Ms. Clare Beckton: We are mindful of the groups that have less access. We're trying to make sure the information goes out in many different formats, including community newspapers. We don't rely on just the Internet to get it out.

The Chair: Thank you.

Hon. Anita Neville: Can I just follow up on something?

The Chair: Quickly.

Hon. Anita Neville: Could we have a list of those organizations that have been refused funding?

The Chair: Fair enough. I'll make a request when we're done.

Madame Boucher

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Good afternoon, ladies. We are pleased to see you here today, because you can tell us about how your organization operates.

We hear a lot about the budget cuts made, but \$5 million was provided directly for the program. This is witnessed by the fact that 260,000 women will be directly affected by the first round of the Women's Community Fund that was announced in October. This is a significant number of women and we hope it will be maintained at that level.

I would like to understand how the Women's Partnership Fund works. What does that fund do today that could not have been done in the past?

[*English*]

Ms. Clare Beckton: With respect, what the partnership fund does is it gives us an opportunity to actually create genuine partnerships where other partners are involved from the beginning of the project through to its completion and the evaluation. What that does is say that we know that other sectors of society—not just government, but the private sector, non-governmental, other levels of government—equally have responsibility towards ensuring that women will have full participation.

The partnership fund is an opportunity to create this kind of partnership. It's not impossible under the community fund, but that's not what the focus of the community fund is. For example, we're working on a project now that will be around homelessness in the north. The fund enables us to bring in a whole range of people from the private sector, from other levels of government, from some very fine non-profit organizations, so that every sector is contributing its expertise and adding value to that project. We think we will get much larger benefits from some of these kinds of projects that individual groups could not do.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I am often approached by people asking me how Status of Women Canada operates. People don't really know whether it is a department, whether you are a deputy minister, etc. You are an agency, but you come within the responsibilities of the Minister.

If I had to explain to someone in my riding who needs your services how Status of Women operates, what should I tell them?

[*English*]

Ms. Clare Beckton: We are, I think, officially called a departmental agency, whatever that means. The *coordonnatrice* reports directly to the minister responsible for status of women and heritage. While we are part of the portfolio that the heritage minister has responsibility for, we are an independent agency.

We tend to work more with groups in terms of providing the funding through the women's program and also working on systemic barriers, which takes us into other governments' work around policy and their program and evaluation.

Although we don't have a tremendous amount of resources to do this, we do attempt to assist a number of individual women who call us with personal issues. For example, we have had women who call because they've been beaten by their husband and they don't know where to go. If we possibly can, we try to direct them to the appropriate resources.

Unfortunately, we don't have psychologists—and some days I feel like I would need that.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: You have only 30 seconds.

Ms. Demers.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for being here today. This is the first time I have had an opportunity to meet you. We have so many questions to ask you and so little time to do it. There are so many things we are concerned about. You have given us a document that tells us what you want to do with Status of Women Canada. The thing is that it was working well. We are wondering why something was changed when it was working well.

How many employees do you have at present?

[English]

Ms. Clare Beckton: Prior to the efficiency review, there were 130 FTEs, which is the term that is used to describe the staff. With supplementary estimates (A), we now have 77 FTEs in the department. So there are 76 people working with me when we're at full staff.

The actual mandate of Status of Women was not changed. It remains the same. The changes were primarily to the women's program and that was refocused to provide more direct management.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you. You said that you are trying to do the work with half the staff, and that's fine. Did the staff all come at the same time as you, or were they there before? How many employees were already there when you arrived?

[English]

Ms. Clare Beckton: Yes. Indeed there are people who are working with us who were there before, and we value their corporate memory tremendously. We have a very good mix of new people and people who have corporate memory. We of course have to be more strategic and focused on the issues that we're looking at, and that's what we're trying to do, be very focused and strategic.

● (1725)

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Are the people who are no longer there the ones who had strongly suggested to the Minister not to change anything in the Status of Women Canada program? We know that some employees had recommended that nothing be changed, because they considered that to be a serious mistake.

Groups that do research and lobbying no longer receive funding. How will you achieve one of the objectives you refer to at the end of your document, which reads as follows:

... by becoming actively involved to influence the development of policies and programs in important priority areas, and monitoring results;

Where are you going to get your studies and your research?

You have worked with the Attorney General. You have worked in human rights. Because you are a lawyer, you probably know that in 1983 we had the pay equity act, which is part of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That act has not yet been implemented for federal public servants. We are wondering why and how this is. You know, as a lawyer, that rights must be respected, so do you intend to pressure the Minister to have a pay equity act introduced as soon as possible?

I would have other questions to ask you, but I am out of time. In fact, I have one last question: are you a member of Real Women of Canada?

[English]

Ms. Clare Beckton: To start with the last one, I'm not a member of any organization. The reason I'm not a member of any organization is that in my position in the government, and now, I need to be impartial and to deal with all organizations that put applications before us.

In terms of people who left, many people left because they worked in places where we no longer have offices and they were unable to move. Some people decided to retire because they had been with Status of Women a long time. Some people decided to pursue new opportunities. And some people were tired and wanted a change. There is a fairly significant turnover, as you're aware, within the public service, and Status of Women is no exception.

So I don't think they were turned over for any ulterior reasons. Whenever you have a transition, you have a number of people who will change.

In terms of research, we do have some internal research capacity, but we also work extensively with existing research sources. For example, we take advantage of the Public Policy Forum's research work. We look at the research that's been done around the world. We look at the research in other departments. We talk to the research granting councils, as well, and try to ensure that they're doing research.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Beckton.

The last question is from Ms. Mathysen.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to take a look now at the performance report. On page 17, subactivity 2.2 talks about fund research and community-based action. It says subactivity 2.2 focuses on funding research and community-based action that address selected issues of significance to Status of Women Canada in a "coordinated manner".

I wonder, did this research had value? Did it have value? I know this is 2006-07, but did this research have value in terms of the full participation of women?

Ms. Clare Beckton: It's a challenging question to answer because I think research, in most instances, does add some value. There is always a question of how much value the particular research adds, as opposed to funding for direct benefits. In a generic way, I find research to be useful in many cases, but not always.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Now that it's gone, how will the useful part of that research be acquired?

● (1730)

Ms. Clare Beckton: As we said, we are looking and we have been talking to the research granting councils, such as the social science research council and the science granting councils, to ensure they are doing research that relates to the concerns and needs of women and maybe have gender-based analysis in terms of how their research money is being allocated in terms of men and women.

We do have access to whole bodies of research and we're trying to encourage other departments who have the substantive responsibility for an area, such as HRSDC and Health Canada, to be doing that kind of research. They do some significant research that we can access, of course, throughout the government.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: At the top of page 4 in your presentation, you speak about gender-based analysis on policy measures conducted by the Department of Finance. Last June Ms. Guergis indicated that the 2007 budget was indeed done with that gender lens, that there was significant documentation to illustrate that, and that this committee could have that documentation.

I wonder when might we expect it. It seems to have fallen off the radar, but I'm still very interested in having it so that we can look at it.

Ms. Clare Beckton: This would be documentation that's in the hands of the Department of Finance, so I think you may have to request that information directly from them.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: That would be fine.

Also, on page 2 at the top, I'm very interested in the submission that Canada has made in regard to the seventh report to CEDAW. I understand that it is going through the process, but I'm wondering when you anticipate that the report might be available to this committee. I'd be very interested in seeing what Canada reported to the UN committee.

Ms. Clare Beckton: I think that report should be available to the committee, and we'll make sure you get a copy of it.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: That would be excellent. I'd appreciate that very much.

When you were answering the questions of Madame Demers, you indicated that due to the staff reductions, you had to be focused and strategic. Is there a sense within the department that some things may have fallen by the wayside, things that you would have liked to pursue, had there been opportunity, the staff, the resources to do that?

Ms. Clare Beckton: I think if you ask any head of any organization, they would always say there are some things they'd like to do, that they never have enough resources to do what they'd like. What we are trying to do is to work in the areas that we think will get the best benefits, like the areas of accountability around gender-based analysis, strategic focus on where there are significant gaps that are hindering full participation of women in Canada.

As I say, I think there's always more work that we would like to do, but we do have to focus on priorities and what we can do with the resources that we have.

The Chair: Thank you.

Time's up. I know that everybody is having lots of fun.

Ms. Beckton, thank you for coming. You have a very impressive resumé.

[*Translation*]

One moment, please. Are you asking a question?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Madam Chair, have you also considered my request? Ms. Neville requested the list of projects that have been rejected. I would like us to add to that ...

[*English*]

The Chair: You were in too much of a hurry. I was going to officially ask that.

As you can see, there are a lot of questions and concerns, although we appreciate that you are new to this job. As you gave us the list of projects that have been approved, it appears that it's 23%, so we would appreciate receiving the list of projects that were denied and the list of projects that were approved, for our consideration, because that's part of our job as a committee.

Mr. James Lunney: I have a point of order, Madam Chair—

The Chair: You're coming back on December 10, the clerk tells me, to talk about gender budgeting or gender analysis.

Ms. Clare Beckton: Well, if you say I'm coming back on December 10, then we will be here.

The Chair: That's what I have been told just now.

Ms. Clare Beckton: Okay.

The Chair: There have been lots of questions, and I couldn't give Mr. Stanton his turn, etc. We have more questions, so I guess we could always pose questions around it and also some items for clarification.

Mr. Lunney—

• (1735)

Ms. Clare Beckton: May I just say, with respect to the list of groups that were not approved, because of privacy we have to ask them for their permission to release that information. That could take a little longer than December 10.

The Chair: Fair enough.

Is that the point of order, Mr. Lunney?

Mr. James Lunney: I wanted to say on that same point that every government program is oversubscribed. Whether it's arts and council grants or sports groups or anything else, it's oversubscribed. I hope it wouldn't be the committee's intent to take over the work of the department in trying to evaluate individual requests.

The Chair: Mr. Lunney, I don't think I heard that. What we heard was that 23% of the projects only had been approved. Ms. Beckton herself gave us the figures. I think the committee has an interest and a right to know what 60 were approved.

Did you say that you couldn't give us the projects that were not approved? Or was it the ones that...?

Ms. Clare Beckton: We can give you the ones that were approved. What we cannot give you, without getting the consent of the groups involved, are the ones that were not approved on this round.

The Chair: And you will get their consent, if that's the will of the committee.

Ms. Clare Beckton: We will seek their consent, yes.

The Chair: Okay.

Madame Boucher had her hand up first, and then Ms. Neville.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: You spoke about having the representatives of Status of Women appear again on the 10th. Is that to discuss gender budgeting?

La présidente: Yes.

[English]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Okay, so only that.

[Translation]

It will be only to discuss the budget, because we are going to prepare the report? That is what I want to know. They will come back on the 10th to discuss gender budgeting?

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Boucher, normally when witnesses come, we generally have two hours with them, from 3:30 to 5:30, or at least 3:30 to 5 o'clock. A lot of committee members from both sides have not been able to ask the questions. We are letting Ms. Beckton know that when she comes back for gender budgeting, there will be some issues that need clarification that may be raised. We as a committee can take a decision as to whether we're going to give an hour and then go from there to gender budgeting.

Oui? Okay?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: It will have to be ...

[English]

The Chair: It'll also depend on how we get our witnesses who are coming for an international....

So we'll be doing a lot of juggling.

Yes, Ms. Boucher.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I have received some information from Ms. Verner's office. She would be prepared to come on December 12, but only for an hour, from 3:30 to 4:30, because she has to make a presentation to another committee.

[English]

The Chair: Fair enough.

We generally give ministers one hour anyway, because they are busy.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: So Ms. Verner will be available on December 12, from 3:30 to 4:30.

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Neville, and then Mr. Stanton.

Hon. Anita Neville: I just wanted to comment on Mr. Lunney's point of order, Madam Chair.

I think the questions are quite legitimate. I acknowledge that many programs are oversubscribed, but not many programs have gone through the major cutbacks, reorganization and transformation of criteria that this one has, and that has elicited an outcry across the country.

So I think it's fair to ask for that kind of information, to know what the impact has been.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Beckton has indicated that she will supply us with the ones that have been approved, and for the ones that have not been approved, she will seek permission to produce that list.

Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I just have a question, perhaps an administrative one.

We are now finishing up a debate on the supplementary estimates. Is there a vote or some confirmation on the part of this committee that we so approve them? Is there any report to the House? What is the administrative requirement here, in terms of approving the supplementary estimates?

The Clerk: We're also inviting Madame Verner on the supplementary estimates.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: So that will be the follow-up meeting?

The Clerk: By then the votes will have been deemed reported, because you will have passed the number of allotted days. She's only coming on December 12.

The Chair: Technically, the deadline is December 7, if we want to change anything, so it doesn't impact anything.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: If there's no other report, it's deemed approved by December 7.

Okay, that was just for my own information. Thank you.

• (1740)

The Chair: Ms. Beckton, Ms. Nicholson-O'Brien, and Ms. Paquette, thank you so much for being here. We hope to keep in touch and to work together.

Thank you, and take care.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.