



House of Commons  
CANADA

## Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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PACP • NUMBER 004 • 2nd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

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EVIDENCE

**Thursday, February 12, 2009**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Shawn Murphy**

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• (1550)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.)):** I will at this point in time call the meeting to order.

I want to welcome everyone here. *Bienvenue à tous.*

This meeting, colleagues, is called pursuant to the Standing Orders to deal with chapter 4, "First Nations Child and Family Services Program, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada", of the May 2008 report of the Auditor General of Canada.

We have with us today the Auditor General, Sheila Fraser. She is accompanied by Assistant Auditor General Ronnie Campbell and Jerome Berthelette, principal. We have the accounting officer from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Michael Wernick. He is accompanied by Christine Cram, assistant deputy minister of education and social development programs and partnerships sector, and we have Mary Quinn, director general of the social policy and programs branch, and Odette Johnston, director of the social programs reform directorate.

On behalf of everyone on the committee, a very warm welcome.

We are starting a few minutes late. We apologize. We had a vote in the House.

We will move right to our opening comments, and I turn the floor over to you, Ms. Fraser.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser (Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We thank you for this opportunity to discuss chapter 4 of our May 2008 report on the first nations child and family services program.

The audit work for this chapter was substantially completed in November 2007, and we have not conducted any further work.

With me today, as you mentioned, are Ronnie Campbell, assistant auditor general, and Jerome Berthelette, principal, who are responsible for this audit.

The audit examined how Indian and Northern Affairs Canada manages its first nations child and family services program. My colleague, John Doyle, the Auditor General of British Columbia, conducted a concurrent audit covering child welfare services for aboriginal people in British Columbia.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, some of the most vulnerable children in Canada are first nations children. At the end of March 2007, there were about

8,300 on-reserve children in care. This represents more than 5% of all children living on reserves, and this percentage is almost eight times higher than the percentage of children living off reserves who are in care.

A 2003 study found that the higher incidence of child neglect occurring on reserves is largely attributable to poverty, inadequate housing and substance misuse by child caregivers. This indicates that the problems that result in children being taken into care cannot be resolved solely by child welfare services.

In 1990, the federal government adopted a policy requiring that child welfare services provided to first nations children on reserves meet provincial standards, be reasonably comparable with services for children off reserves, and be culturally appropriate.

In 2007, INAC provided 108 first nations agencies \$180 million for their operating and administration costs. These agencies provide a varying range of child welfare services to about 442 first nations. This funding also included the costs of services provided by provinces on reserves.

The same year, INAC spent an additional \$270 million to cover the direct costs related to children placed in care by first nations agencies and provinces.

• (1555)

[English]

Mr. Chair, our audit found that the department does not know whether the services being provided are reasonably comparable and culturally appropriate services because it has not defined these key terms of the policy.

Furthermore, the department does not sufficiently take into account provincial standards and other policy requirements when it establishes levels of funding for first nations agencies on reserves. Its funding formula dates back to 1988 and has not been significantly changed since then to reflect variations in provincial legislation and the evolution of child welfare services.

In addition, the funding formula leads to funding inequities because it assumes that all first nations agencies have the same percentage of children in care, which is 6%, and that the children all have similar needs. In reality, the percentage of children in care, as well as their needs, vary widely. As a result, some children and families are not getting the services they need.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, in 2007, through federal, provincial and first nations cooperation, the funding formula was revised in Alberta. This revision links the funding provided to first nations agencies in Alberta to provincial legislation. When fully implemented in 2010, the formula will provide 74% more funds for the agencies' operations and prevention services.

While this is encouraging, we found that the new formula does not address the inequities of the existing formula. It still assumes that a fixed percentage of first nations children and families need child welfare services. Agencies with more than 6% of their children in care will continue to be hard-pressed to provide protection services while developing family enhancement services.

[English]

In our view, the funding formula should be more than a means of distributing the program's budget; it should take into account the varying needs of first nations children and communities.

Funding is, of course, not the only issue. Ensuring the protection and well-being of children requires that INAC, the provinces, and first nations agencies have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Up-to-date agreements are essential. We found that INAC had no agreements on child welfare services with three of the five provinces we covered in our audit. Even when agreements are in place, INAC has limited assurance that services delivered by first nations agencies comply with provincial legislation and standards.

Finally, we found that INAC has little information on the outcome of its funding on the safety, protection, or well-being of on-reserve children. It does not know whether its program makes a positive or significant difference in the lives of the children it funds.

The large percentage of first nations children in care calls for all the parties involved in the child welfare system, including first nations and provinces, to find better ways of meeting their needs. It also calls for better coordination between INAC programs, and between them and those of other federal departments.

We are encouraged by the fact that INAC agrees with our recommendations. In a number of its responses, it set out what it intended to do. I am pleased that departmental representatives are here today, and I assume they will be able to provide you with more information on progress to date and future plans.

Mr. Chair, that concludes our opening statement. We would be pleased to answer any questions that committee members may have.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Fraser.

We're now going to hear from the deputy minister and accounting officer for the department, Mr. Michael Wernick.

**Mr. Michael Wernick (Deputy Minister, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the invitation to appear before the committee.

You've already introduced my colleagues who work in this area. We have the complete array of ADM, director general, and director, who can help me with questions from the committee.

[Translation]

I welcome the opportunity to bring your members up to date on our efforts to improve first nations child and family services on-reserve.

Since the Auditor General's report of May 2008, we have been working with provinces and first nations to improve child and family services for first nations children. I can assure committee members that we recognize the seriousness of the matters raised in her report. We are committed to building healthier, stronger first nations families and are particularly concerned with the safety and well-being of first nations children.

● (1600)

[English]

Drawing from the report, I'd like to briefly remind the committee how the first nations child and family services program works. My department doesn't work alone, of course. Provinces have complete legislative jurisdiction over child welfare, both on and off reserve. In some cases, provinces choose to delegate the authority of their child protection ministers to first nations child welfare agencies and first nations staff.

My department provides funding to first nations, their child welfare agencies, and sometimes to the provinces to cover the costs of child welfare services on reserve, including the costs related to children brought into care. The budget for this program, as the report notes, has grown. In fact, it has more than doubled from \$193 million in 1996-97 to approximately \$465 million in 2007-08.

In recent times, Budget 2006 provided additional resources of \$98 million over five years for the implementation of a new prevention-focused approach starting in Alberta. Budget 2008 provided an additional \$115 million over five years to implement the same prevention approach in Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan. The investments in Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan are important, and they reach about 36% of first nations on-reserve children in care. Building on this momentum, Budget 2009 just recently added \$20 million over two years to work on implementation of the prevention approach in additional provinces. We look forward to further initiatives later this year.

Through these more recent investments, a number of tripartite frameworks have been concluded. Tripartite means ourselves, the government of the province, and first nations entities. In June 2007, the first tripartite framework was reached with the Government of Alberta and treaty first nations in Alberta. Subsequently, tripartite frameworks were reached with the provinces of Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan in July 2008. For the first nations child and family services program, these agreements will lead to more clearly defined policy and accountability requirements, as the agencies develop business plans and describe how these will be implemented.

While work is under way on program renovation and a shift to the prevention approach, we are simultaneously working on another track to strengthen program management and accountability. The only way forward on both tracks is through partnership with willing partners, the provinces, and first nations—who share our goal to strengthen child welfare services.

By way of a very brief progress report, we've been able to completely update the program authorities in 2007. We've updated the reporting guide to require business plans for agencies entering into the prevention model. We've revised program reporting requirements and drafted performance indicators that we're now discussing with our partners. We have worked closely with provinces to ensure that the agencies do meet provincial legislation. We considerably increased compliance activities last year and this year.

I would like to note that the department's internal audit process requires, at my direction, mid-year and year-end follow-up reports. As Mr. Campbell will know, as he attends our audit committee as an observer, we put all internal audit findings and all Auditor General chapter findings on a reporting-back cycle.

The next follow-up report on this chapter will be presented at my audit committee, which has external members, in April, just before the one-year anniversary of the report to Parliament. I will be pleased to share the results of that follow-up report with this committee at this time, if you're interested. We will be discussing its contents with the Office of the Auditor General and my external audit committee members before finalizing it.

We want to make sure that changes we're making are meeting real needs of children in care and their families. Child welfare requires the very active involvement of all partners: families; first nations governments; child welfare agencies on and off reserve; as well as federal, provincial, and territorial governments.

● (1605)

[Translation]

In that same vein, members who were here during the last parliamentary session will know that M-296, Jean Crowder's motion on Jordan's principle was adopted by the House of Commons, in December 2007, with the support of all parties. The federal government is implementing Jordan's principle, with the provinces, so that the needs of children are addressed first.

[English]

By taking a partnership approach, INAC can support services that are provincially comparable and culturally appropriate, in keeping with the needs of communities, and putting children first.

Any further questions about what we've done and what we intend to do as we move forward would be welcome.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Just before we go to the first round, I want to point out that this audit was from the May 2008 report, and probably a lot of the work was done close to two years ago. You might want to question the officials from the department as to what has been done since then.

What I'd like to do, colleagues, is adjourn this portion at 5:15 and then deal with just the minutes of the steering committee and the motion from Mr. Christopherson so we can conclude at 5:30.

The first round is seven minutes.

Mrs. Crombie.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Thank you both for your comments.

I just wanted to reflect how tragic I think this audit is, because it deals with some of the most vulnerable of our society, not only children, but aboriginal children, and how their needs are not being met.

Despite, as you point out, the \$465 million spent, there still seems to be a lack of funding. But fundamentally, what there seems to be a lack of more than anything else are controls and accountability—accountability on how the funds are spent—and we know that.

I'd like to start my questions by asking about the funding formula, which was designated, as we know, in 1988 and really hasn't been modified since. We have no idea if the program funding has been allocated equitably. The formula is based on the potentially out-of-date assumption that 6% of on-reserve children are placed in care, but there could be wide discrepancies today; children in care could range vastly.

My first question is on why the formula hasn't been changed since 1988.

Secondly, why isn't the funding based on estimated needs or actual operating costs?

Why isn't it in line with provincial legislative standards, so we know better what the needs are?

Fourth, is the statistical formula an appropriate method for determining funding levels?

Finally, how does the funding compare with the funding for family service agencies for non-native children?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** I'm not sure I caught all the questions, so we'll come back to them.

I'll turn the formula question over to Ms. Cram.

I think the point I'd like to register, very briefly, is that the program prior to 2006 had a fundamental policy flaw, which is that it was biased toward taking kids into care.

The formula isn't really the most important issue, in my view. What we had was a system that basically provided funds for kids in care. So what you got was a lot of kids being taken into care. And the service agencies didn't have the full suite of tools, in terms of kinship care, foster care, placement, diversion, prevention services, and so on.

The new approach that we're trying to do through the new partnership agreements provides the agencies with a mix of funding for operating and maintenance—which is basically paying for the kids' needs—and for prevention services, and they have greater flexibility to move between those. We don't want the agencies biased toward taking kids into care. We want them to make the judgments in the communities about the best interests of the child. That's why we put such an emphasis on the prevention thing. We're trying to do a very fundamental policy renovation and remove the systemic bias.

One of the reasons the costs grew so much in the 1990s is that the system had a tilt toward taking kids into care, which is precisely the most expensive part of the whole system; it can run over \$90,000 to \$100,000 per child per year. If you get the kids earlier, it's actually cost-effective, as well as in the best interests of the child.

I'm not denying or negating the importance of the question about the funding formula, which I'll have to ask Ms. Cram to help me out with, but I did want to get across that we're trying to give the agencies the tools on the ground to deal with case management more effectively.

**Ms. Christine Cram (Assistant Deputy Minister, Education and Social Development Programs and Partnerships Sector, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** We currently have two formulas in operation. We have a formula for those provinces where we haven't moved to the new model. Under that formula, we reimburse all charges for kids who are actually in care, and that's why the costs have gone up so dramatically over time.

There were comments made about the fact that under the old formula there wasn't funding provided to be able to permit agencies to provide prevention services. That's a fair criticism of the old formula.

Under the new formula, as the deputy was mentioning, we have three categories in the funding formula. We have operations, prevention, and maintenance. So those are each determined on a different basis.

The 6% is a portion of the operations funding. I know the Auditor General has expressed concerns as to whether that 6% is sufficient.

There is also funding for prevention. In fact, I think it's been mentioned that when the new approach is completely implemented in Alberta, there will be an increase of approximately 74% in the funding they will get.

On maintenance, we look at what the previous year's amount was for maintenance. So in Alberta, where we've implemented the new formula, we looked at what the kids-in-care percentage was for maintenance and then provided that amount.

We want to see how it works in Alberta. It was a tripartite negotiation, trying to match up with what the province does, and working with the first nations as well. We are planning to do an evaluation of that in 2010-11, when it's had a chance to operate. Should we find that the formula isn't working appropriately, we would, of course, consider changing it.

• (1610)

**The Chair:** I'm just going to interrupt here.

I want to remind witnesses just to direct your answers to the questions. Keep the answers relevant to the question, please.

And perhaps to the questioners, too, keep the questions succinct and precise.

There's a minute and a half left.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Thank you.

Just on the last part of my long question, how does the funding compare with funding for family service agencies for non-natives?

**Ms. Christine Cram:** I'm sorry, but we don't know the answer here now.

When we worked on the tripartite framework, we dealt with the province to try to offer the same kinds of services by providing funding necessary for those.

But I don't personally have those data right here.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Okay, I'll try to squeeze in one more question quickly. Why doesn't the federal government, through INAC, place requirements or criteria on the funding and better monitor the results?

**Ms. Christine Cram:** I'm sorry, are you asking us what we are doing to better monitor results, etc.?

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Why don't you place requirements and criteria on the funding and then monitor the results?

**Ms. Christine Cram:** Well, we do. We have funding agreements and there are criteria in the funding agreements.

It's true that we need to improve how we are monitoring results. We request reports from the recipients of the funding agreements, but we need to make improvements.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** What are the outcome indicators?

**Ms. Christine Cram:** Children in care is a big outcome. We use children in care as one of the outcome indicators, but with the introduction of more prevention, we need to find better indicators reflecting the efforts made in prevention. So we're working on performance indicators now with the other parties.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Crombie and Ms. Cram.

*Madame Faillie, sept minutes.*

[Translation]

**Ms. Meili Faillie (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The communities are currently facing many challenges. I took specific note of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and of the report that it tabled. Moreover, I worked for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1989.

Since the report was tabled, how much money and how many human resources were committed to this program? The report from Canada's Auditor General stated that no one managed the program on a full-time basis. How do you rate the progress that has been made? How do you go about measuring the improvements in the communities, if there are any? Tell us when was the last time that the department met with representatives of the aboriginal community, of provincial authorities or of the most seriously-affected communities, and tell us if these issues were raised at that time.

•(1615)

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Let me answer the easier questions.

In the department, we have about 30 persons, along with 10 persons in Ottawa and about 20 in the regions. The report states that there is a shortage of full-time management personnel. We have solved that problem. Ms. Johnston, who is sitting next to you, is the one in charge of the program; she is a specialist in that field. We have about 475 resource persons, over and above the investments made in the three last budgets. We could calculate the total amount in terms of financial resources.

**Ms. Meili Faillie:** How much does it cost to manage this program?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** The department's management costs cover almost exclusively the wages of the 30 public servants.

**Ms. Meili Faillie:** What about the other meetings?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** I did not catch all your questions.

**Ms. Meili Faillie:** When were the last meetings between the department and provincial authorities held? Were these issues raised at that time? When did you have meetings with the first nations or with the most severely affected communities?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** We are constantly in touch with the communities and with the provinces. Ms. Cram is in charge of partnerships. As I mentioned in my comments, we have already concluded tripartite agreements with three provinces, and we are negotiating with four or five other provinces. We hope to form partnerships with other provinces during this year, and certainly before 2012. Through our offices, we are constantly in touch with all the communities, almost every week.

**Ms. Meili Faillie:** I think that the sums of money invested were increased. Considering the sums that have been committed up till

now, have the initiatives been successful? Has any progress been made? Do your partners think so?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** It is probably too early to tell. We launched a partnership with Alberta in the spring of 2007. We are hoping to begin an evaluation exercise with our partners next year. We must let the initiative go forward before we can measure it.

We are very, very optimistic because of the experience of the Alberta government. This province is the real leader in the field of child protection. Albertans went through the same experience in the 1980s, when both the costs and the number of children taken into care went up. They created what we call the Alberta response model, which stresses prevention. They succeeded in bringing the costs down and in getting better results. Therefore, we believe that we can get the same results in our aboriginal communities.

**Ms. Meili Faillie:** Do I have any time left?

**The Chair:** You have two minutes left.

**Ms. Meili Faillie:** Do the provinces have enough funds to intervene with problem youth?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Our role consists in funding services on-reserve.

**Ms. Meili Faillie:** All right, thank you.

**The Chair:** Have you finished? All right.

Thank you very much.

[English]

Mr. Christopherson, for seven minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, all, for your presentation.

I don't have a lot to do with matters relating to this in my riding, nor did I have much experience when I was provincial or municipal. Most of my experience has come from being on this committee. I've been on this committee for almost five years now, and some of the most scathing reports coming in have been the ones dealing with this department. This is consistent, and it's getting to the point where, speaking personally, if we don't start to see some kind of a turnaround, then maybe broader action needs to be taken. I don't know what that is. We've tried to do everything—royal commissions and everything under the sun—but these things always come out horrible, just horrible. And the answers aren't very helpful.

I reference, for the advisement of committees, that at least seven reports have been done—most of those I was here for—and they were terrible, just terrible. And this is no better.

I have mentioned performance reports to members before as an area in which we want to make sure we're paying more attention. This is an example, and it's tied to the work that's done. You can see what drives me crazy in these things—and we're still getting it—on page 21:

INAC achieved its expected results for social development programs, as set out in the 2007–2008 Report on Plans and Priorities, such as meeting the basic and special needs of individuals and families, and providing access to quality care supports for children and families in distress...

Then, on page 8, when they show a chart of what's being achieved in terms of strategic outcome for people, it says, "commitments partially met". So "commitments partially met" translates into "achieved its expected results". This is the kind of thing we deal with.

We're not dealing with this report, so I won't have questions on it. But since I've raised it, you're welcome to comment on it.

I just needed to start out by expressing how thoroughly disappointing it is to continuously have reports coming in to tell us, as Canadian citizens, how inadequate and borderline incompetent a job is being done. I'm not focusing on individuals, but the work of this department is not meeting the needs of Canadians. No matter how many times we go round and round, it just doesn't seem to change.

I have a couple of direct questions. First, the audit found that INAC had not analyzed and compared child welfare services on reserves with those in neighbouring communities off reserve. I'd like to know if that's been done and what you found, or, if you're planning to do it, when you'll be doing it.

Also, you hadn't yet defined the meaning of "culturally appropriate" services, and I would like to know whether or not you have done that.

Let me just say to the deputy that for all the problems that were found, I have to tell you, I was underwhelmed by your list on page 5 of what you've completed. I'm here to be educated, but I don't see....

Well, take any of these. In the last bullet point, you say, "Increased compliance activities this year." That's a pretty modest statement. You're still not in compliance, but you've increased it.

And that's the best, five points? Out of that whole document, five points is what you're bragging about? I find it less than something to be bragging about.

So there are some specifics, some generalities.

I leave it with you, sir. I'm listening.

•(1620)

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** I think there's a question in there—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Pardon me? There were specific questions, sir, if you were listening.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Yes, I was listening intently.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** That's good.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** The problem with the child welfare is a policy problem in that we do not have the tools to really achieve the results that Parliament would expect.

We are trying to put in place prevention-based child welfare, which is exactly what all provinces tried to do in the 1990s. I did explain to you, sir, that we have accomplished that in Alberta, in Saskatchewan, in Nova Scotia, and we would like to extend that prevention-based approach to other provinces.

The increase in compliance in reporting is specifically in response to the criticisms that were raised in our internal audit and by the Auditor General that we were not checking. So we have gone from

no compliance activity to a great deal of compliance activity, and I would hope that you'd be satisfied that this is something we should be doing.

Culturally appropriate services are not really something that I, as a white bureaucrat in Ottawa, can define for a first nations agency operating in a particular community. The Auditor General's chapter does recommend, and we accept, that we should have a point of view on that—and we do—and that we be engaged with our partners on trying to define that.

It may mean something different in a Haida community, in Six Nations, in an Inuit community, and so on. Child protection, at the end of the day, is child protection in the best interests of the child, and one of the controversies about child protection for first nations and Inuit children is trying to be sensitive to the needs of the community: language, culture, separation from parents, and so on. You're familiar with the residential schools experience, the sixties scoop of adoptions, and so on.

That's why the agencies were created in the 1990s and that's why we think it's very important to catch up to practices in most of the provinces, which are the prevention-based models. We are trying to get into the mainstream of what provinces do with comparable services. It's similar to other areas like education, like income assistance, and so on, where—it's no secret and we've said this often—we do not have the kinds of tools that provincial governments have to run these kinds of areas.

I would recommend to you, because I know you're an experienced member of the committee, Madam Fraser's report from the summer of 2006, which is a compendium of what it would take to actually make a difference in aboriginal policy. I agree entirely with her conclusions on that.

•(1625)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Are you advocating those somewhere, then—the changes?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Every day.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Okay. You didn't answer the question, though, that I asked at the beginning about comparing child welfare services on reserves with those off reserve.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Our accountability is for the services delivered by those agencies to the extent that we fund them.



I'm not trying to avoid the question, but if you actually run the agency, you have two accountabilities. You have to report to INAC for the money that we provide them, and you have to report to the provincial director of child welfare, because you're using the provincial minister's authorities. Those authorities are given to the agencies, and sometimes they're taken away by the province because it doesn't feel they're using them properly. So if you run an agency, you're accountable to the province and you're accountable to us for the results.

You're aware of the issue of reporting burden, so we're trying to make sure that what we get is real information to help you, as parliamentarians, figure out whether those federal dollars are being used well. We agreed that we haven't done enough. The new agreements require much more detailed business plans and much more thorough reporting of what actually happens to the kids, and we will get there as we do these tripartite arrangements.

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

Thank you, Mr. Wernick.

Mr. Saxton, seven minutes.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As always, Ms. Fraser, you have put together a very clear and precise report. Thank you very much.

We do see some serious concerns, and I know the minister takes them seriously; however, we've also seen some progress in many different areas. One that I am particularly proud of is the apology in Parliament last year with regard to the Indian residential schools. I know that in my riding, in particular, I have heard nothing but appreciation for this apology, and it's starting to heal the hurt that was done.

Can the deputy minister comment on how this apology has affected our first nations, in particular the people who were involved in this program?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** I think the apology that was delivered in the House of Commons was a very moving event. I'm sure you would attest to that. I watched it on television and presided over an event at the department. People were in tears and were quite moved by it.

What I think it's done is reinforce a couple of things. One is that there is an opportunity for the rest of Canada, if we're wise enough to step through the door, for a new reconciliation or relationship with aboriginal peoples in the country. I think that's a challenge to all of us.

The other, I think, to try to link it to Mr. Christopherson's question, is that it sort of redoubled everybody's commitment to children and young people, in that the experiences of the kids who went through residential schools should never be repeated in terms of separation from family, isolation, being cut off from their historical roots, and so on.

There are an awful lot of aboriginal kids in this country. We have a baby boom in aboriginal Canada. It's really important that we improve child protection services, child welfare, and basic education

services to them. Coming out of the apology, I think that commitment is there from all kinds of parties.

Not to go on too long, Mr. Chair, that's why these partnerships are becoming possible: old quarrels about jurisdiction and whose responsibility it was are melting away because people want to put the children first.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

I'm also encouraged by the new prevention-based model of child care that you are working towards. I just want to ask how many children are currently in care, and then I have a question about the funds being allocated to that.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** It's in the neighbourhood of 8,000. I can get the exact number from Ms. Johnston.

**Ms. Odette Johnston (Director, Social Programs Reform Directorate, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** There are about 8,530 children in care right now.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** It was mentioned earlier that \$90,000 to \$100,000 per child is being spent. Could you give us an idea of where that money is going?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** What I meant by that, and Ms. Johnston will clarify this for me, is that of the kinds of care that an agency can provide, such as foster care, support in the family, and taking them out and putting them in care, by far the most expensive is putting them in care. According to our evaluations, it runs around \$90,000 to \$100,000 per child, whereas the prevention services run closer to \$20,000 to \$25,000 per kid. So it's kind of a truism that an ounce of prevention is a lot cheaper than the remedy.

Child protection is always a choice by the agency: do you intervene early or do you intervene later? You want to leave the kid with the family, because of all the reasons I was talking about earlier, but if you leave it too late to intervene, then tragedy can occur. It's a very tough job for the agencies.

• (1630)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** In my previous life before politics, I was in banking, so I'm interested in numbers and figures. It's my understanding with regard to the funding model that it was put in place in 1988. Is that correct? Can you explain that model to us?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Yes. As Ms. Cram indicated, we now basically live in two worlds, the world of the tripartites and the world of the provinces, on the to-do list. Perhaps Ms. Johnston can clarify.

**Ms. Odette Johnston:** In terms of the previous funding formula, directive 20-1, that was based on a percentage of children in care. It provided a base operation for the agencies. There were some specific amounts provided for prevention. We supported salaries, a board of directors, and audit insurance.

The other portion of that was maintenance. The maintenance costs, however, have been a reimbursement of actual costs. There hasn't been much flexibility in that old formula to move the funds around so they can react to needs.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Chair, how much more time do I have?

**The Chair:** Two minutes.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Can you let us know how much the cost of the program has gone up since 1988 and whether the services have also increased in that time as well?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** I had some of the financials in my opening statement. We can push it back earlier if you want. It has basically grown 250% in about a decade. We can go back to earlier years, if you like. We're now in the \$500 million range, roughly speaking.

The number of kids would have gone up simply because there are a lot more kids. The measure that we would keep an eye on is the percentage of children who end up in care or end up in placements. There are simply more aboriginal kids every year because of the baby boom effect.

In terms of the services, as the report and our own evaluation indicate, we went a very long time where the services were not complete. They didn't have a lot of prevention services and those kinds of tools. Almost every province renovated child protection in either the 1980s or 1990s. We're catching up to that.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

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

Before we go to the second round, I want to clarify something, Mr. Wernick, or perhaps Mrs. Cram.

It seems to me we're dealing with the symptom, the 5% of the aboriginal children who are in protective custody, which is eight times greater than for the non-aboriginal population. I want to say how troubling this whole thing is for me as a member of Parliament and a Canadian. It's certainly one of conscience. I don't think it's a partisan issue, but it's a very troubling issue, and you're dealing in a very Byzantine, elaborate framework. It's a provincial jurisdiction, federally funded, and then we have a situation where with most major bands it's administered by the local band. So I can see it's a very tough issue to try to deal with.

But then again I have a memo in front of me here about how in the last five weeks five teens from a small aboriginal community on the east coast, Eskasoni, and one man in a neighbourhood aboriginal community committed suicide. They were drug-related deaths. They're estimating that half the people under 30 on that reservation are drug users. It just seems to me that we're dealing with a massive policy failure, a failure of a monumental proportion.

You've been a deputy now, Mr. Wernick, for two and a half years. Congratulations. You're probably the longest-serving deputy of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in the last 25 years.

Do you see anything out there, any policy, any movement that might give us parliamentarians hope that things will be improving? I'm not seeing it.

●(1635)

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** It's very difficult to be objective or scientific about that. Bad things happen to kids in families in non-aboriginal Canada as well, and as I said, running child protection agencies is tough everywhere, from downtown Hamilton to first nations communities. They do it in many first nations communities in socio-economic conditions of poverty and so on that are very challenging. If I talk about that too much, somebody on the committee is going to accuse me of blaming the victims and blaming the communities.

As the chapter points out, there are some very tough social conditions in a lot of communities that lead to problems with families and problems for kids. So some of these issues are going to require much more systemic approaches to dealing with aboriginal poverty, and that requires a lot of public policy tools, many of which are in my department, I accept, but they are also going to have to work with other public policy tools. The thing that will probably make the biggest difference is economic development and participation in the labour market. The more people finish high school, get into the labour market, and participate in Canadian economic life, the better things will get. You can see two communities a hundred miles apart, and I could give you a couple of examples in your own area where one community is trending up and another is not, and it largely has to do with economic opportunities that are there, the engagement of local....

I keep going back to Madam Fraser's report on that, which I think is one of the best pieces of work on this subject there is. I'm not just sucking up to the Auditor General because she's sitting there. I really think it's a very good diagnostic.

It's deeply troubling to me to see the economic downturn, because we were seeing some real progress on participation and resource development, mining projects and so on. I would argue—this is not a partisan comment—that there were some very useful tools and skills and apprenticeships and training. We were starting to see some real results in getting aboriginal people into the labour force, and the downturn is going to slow that down.

I am optimistic that we can make progress. The problem has to be broken into its parts. We're talking about child protection today. I'm getting advice from the Parliamentary Budget Officer on education any day now. We were talking at the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development about water and so on.

All I can do as the deputy head is try to attack each of these problems under the direction of you as parliamentarians and ministers. I am optimistic—or I wouldn't be in this job—that we can make headway. They are the kinds of problems that can be attacked, and I'm not trying to avoid responsibility in saying it's really beyond any one institution to do it. We need the private sector, we need provinces, and we need a lot of local involvement and engagement. The last thing we can do as INAC officials in Ottawa is to come to a community and say, here, we have the solution. As in any area of economic, social, community development, the community is the source really of the leadership.

I'm sorry to go on, but you did ask.

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

We'll go to the second round. I'll have to shorten this to four minutes each instead of the normal five.

Ms. Ratansi.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Thank you.

Because time is short, I'm going to ask very speedy questions and you will have to write them down.

There was a statement that INAC took \$5 billion appropriated by Parliament, out of which you have given us a \$0.5 billion analysis of what is going toward programs. What's happening to the other \$4.5 billion?

Second, aboriginal communities have historically faced poor socio-economic conditions. Studies link poverty, inadequate housing, and caregiver substance abuse to a higher substantial incidence of child neglect, especially in the aboriginal communities. What steps has INAC taken to alleviate poverty and substance abuse and provide adequate social housing? There was a UBC study linking fungi to native health woes. That's really critical because of the Eskasoni question there.

I was told that Health Canada provides free prescription drugs without any control, and substance abuse is taking place due to free prescription drugs. Why is that possible? What have you done, in conjunction with Health Canada, to ensure that this is manageable?

I'll stop here because I have other questions as well.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** I hope I can deal with them fairly quickly.

The department will spend about \$7 billion this year on a variety of things. The report on plans and priorities and the performance report, which Mr. Christopherson was referring to, set that all out. If you want to pursue specific questions, we'll happily do that.

The biggest cost drivers are the programs that Ms. Cram is responsible for: K to 12 education, post-secondary education, income assistance, child protection, and what we call community infrastructure, which is what other people call capital in communities. The other big areas are negotiation and settlement of land claims. We provide services to first nations people such as a basic land registry, vital statistics, and stuff like that.

I'm happy to take any questions on that.

On the last question, I'm not trying to duck the issue, but it's a Health Canada program and really should go to the accounting officer of Health Canada, in terms of controls on—

• (1640)

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** You can't have silos, and I think that's our biggest problem. As members of the public accounts committee, we sit here, scratch our heads, and pull our hair out, as Mr. Christopherson was doing, saying we are all responsible. What can we do?

As far as value for money, if I'm investing \$7 billion of taxpayers' money and you give me these answers, I get a little concerned. Who is responsible? Who is ducking? How are we working toward the benefit of the people who are most vulnerable?

I look at the problems the Auditor General has listed and there are about six. The actions you have taken do not even address them. There are no outcome indicators. There's limited assurance that services by first nations comply with provincial legislation. They do not know whether INAC's program makes any difference in the lives of children. There are no roles and responsibilities. And as I was looking to your response, it didn't.... I'm a consultant by trade, so this is what I do. I'm getting a little concerned, because we can't sit here and not know what to do as the next step. We're not blaming the bureaucrats, but we have to work together.

So what would you say is the return on investment of the \$7 billion? With all these moneys you're talking about, why do we still have this problem?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Well, let me try the first part of the question, and I'm going to try to get Ms. Fraser to comment on it as well.

Parliament has set this up so that money is appropriated through departments with accountable and answerable ministers and accounting officers. That, inevitably, leads to a problem when more than one department is in the same area, whether it's rural development, aboriginal affairs, science, or international affairs. Accountability is a challenge, and Ms. Fraser has far more experience with it than I do.

I'm accountable for what INAC does and am answerable to my minister. We try very hard to work with partners. It's really up to the central agencies of government, the cabinet office, the Treasury Board, and so on, to keep an eye on all the pieces and to try to find government-wide reporting of results.

The biggest players in aboriginal policy are INAC; Health Canada, which does health; CMHC, which does housing; and HRSD, which does skills and employment. But there are 30 other federal departments involved in aboriginal policy or programs. So it is a challenge, I agree entirely.

I'm trying to remember if there's something else I can help you with.

On social housing, most of it is done by CMHC. We do about half of it, largely involving getting the service lots with water and sewer hookups, and so on, and we do some housing programs, but increasingly it's done through CMHC. We work on the ground with CMHC in every region to try to make sure that the two programs land in communities in a coherent way, and we'll do the same with the budget stimulus measures.

Substance abuse is something that Health Canada is alive to and dealing with. I'd be stepping outside my knowledge, as well as my accountability, if I tried to comment on that.

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

Mr. Kramp, four minutes.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just building on your point about the other departments, how often does your department liaise with the other departments to try to come up with an effective solution, working together, rather than simply everybody going off on their own direction here?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** I would say daily. It would depend on the issue and what the structures are.

You probably would call it bureaucracy, but we have a lot of committees, depending on the issue. We work very closely with Health Canada on child issues and health and family services issues. There are committees where people get together, depending on what the issue is. If it's economic development, we're heavily involved with agencies like Western Economic Diversification, ACOA, and so on.

I have a group, which I call my "foreign ministry", of people who do nothing but chase other departments and try to work with them. Some of the arrangements are formal memoranda of understanding and some of them are just personal contacts. In every region of the country, for about 20 years, there's been something called the federal council, where the most senior person in each department gets together with all of their colleagues. They do that on at least a monthly basis, and we're part of that.

• (1645)

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Okay, thank you. I get the gist of that.

I share the frustration, and quite frankly the anger, that a number of people around this table and quite frankly all Canadians have when we have a disadvantaged sector of our society and we just don't seem to have a long-term solution. We keep going back to the well, back to the well, back to the well, but we just don't see the light at the end of the tunnel giving us something that we can clearly define as the answer.

Of course, I'm not sure it's that easy. We all know it's just not that easy. We have all of these competing jurisdictions, regretfully—the provinces, the band councils, and all of the departments.

It's deeply disappointing to see that we are not making really, really strong and effective progress. Is it just budgetary? Is it policy? Where does the real problem lie? Is it the fact that we can't communicate effectively or we're not putting in enough money?

If you had to find that magic bullet, what would be your first priority to solve this problem?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Are you talking about aboriginal poverty or child protection?

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** I'm talking about the topic of the Auditor General's report here, basically, child welfare.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** On child welfare, my solution would be to take the Alberta response model and apply it in every province over the next few years.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Okay, thank you.

I recognize that you have the tripartite agreement with Alberta and that you're working with Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan.

What's the state of the negotiations with the other provinces? Are they moving towards that? Has there been any activity from your department, or is it at the ministerial level?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Well, we're waiting for budgets to pop up to know if we have the resources to proceed with these agreements, because they require some upfront investment to get the new services going.

As we were saying earlier, we're quite confident that this will change the pattern of cases and lead to savings later. Until I saw the budget of just a month ago, I didn't know for sure whether, or how fast, we'd be able to proceed this year. We got enough to do at least one more province, and probably two more, this year.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** I'm concerned then with the follow-up. First we have the Auditor General's report, and you have your own in-house evaluations and audits. You alluded earlier...of course, you have to bring forward per se to be able to deal with this.

I noticed in the Auditor General's report, on page 35, the following: "It began a comprehensive validation exercise in February 2008 to be completed by December 2008." Well, that is past. What is the status of it?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** On the validation exercise, I will turn to Ms. Johnston.

**Ms. Odette Johnston:** We've been meeting with first nations. We started meeting with them in December to go over the validation. We're expecting to be completing that in March.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Fine. So this committee could expect to see a report should we ask for it.

**Ms. Odette Johnston:** On the performance measurements, yes.

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

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

*Monsieur Desnoyers, pour quatre minutes.*

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** I, like some of my colleagues, find some elements of this report devastating. I have a few questions about this.

We are dealing with 8,300 children taken into care. We hear that regular investigations are being carried out on 297 persons, to be specific, and this affects more than 103,000 persons inside. Is there any estimation of the cost of these investigations? Is it or is it not a part of the sum of \$270 million committed to the program?

We note that the birth rate among aboriginal peoples is increasing much more rapidly than the birth rate in Canada in general. The funding formula is based on the fact that 6.6% of children live on-reserve, whereas the true figure could be as high as 28%. Therefore, the allotted budgets may well have to be substantially adjusted.

I have other concerns about this. We hear that funds committed to community infrastructure and housing were taken and transferred to the child care program. This is significant, in view of the fact that the entire current program is not monitored in any way and has practically no accountability. As we look at this program, we note that it is a kind of free-for-all. What will finally come out of all this for the children?

There is no analysis with specific figures to inform us of the impact on children. As we heard, there are no evaluation indicators either. This is worrisome. A great deal of money is involved, whereas, on the other hand, very little information is forthcoming from the department.

Finally, I would like to discuss the connection between Health Canada and yourselves. This seems to give rise to serious disputes that have a significant impact on the children. I would like to have some examples of the impact of these kinds of problems when they arise. If there are disputes or issues that last for years, what will happen to the children's health? The whole picture of governance that involves Health Canada and yourselves, with regard to health, is a major issue.

I just put several questions to you all at the same time.

• (1650)

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** They are very good questions.

Regarding the situation with Health Canada, I can tell you that we have solved the problem of the implementation of the solutions.

As for the accountability model, it is not a free-for-all. As I tried to explain, these agencies work in step with provincial legislation. Thus, activities in Quebec are governed by the legislation adopted by

the Assemblée nationale du Québec. If any problems arise, a Quebec minister has the needed authority to solve the problem.

There are all kinds of responsibilities toward provinces. There is also a certification process. The agencies must be certified according to international standards.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** We know how things work in Quebec. This report deals with Canada in general. Therefore, my questions are also general and have to do with the rest of Canada.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** You noted that there was a free-for-all, but not as far as accountability is concerned. There is a dual accountability toward the provinces and toward us. There may have been a lack of coordination in the past, but the agency is very much accountable for the delivery of services. And as this is a provincial area of jurisdiction, the first level of accountability for the agency is the provincial minister.

The 6% does not represent the program's rate of growth. As I said, expenditures have gone up enormously over the past 15 years. We always pay the bills with an eye to the best interests of the children. This is the reason why the costs went up to nearly \$150 million.

Perhaps I did not catch all your questions.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** You have taken funds out of those budgets and committed them to children in care. What happens to infrastructure and to housing? You did not answer that question.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** This is the financial framework we have been working with since 1995. We have an envelope for on-reserve services. Some services are limited to a growth rate of 2% per year. If something goes over this rate, we have to get the funds from another envelope. We have been living with this for the past 15 years.

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

[English]

Mr. Weston, you have four minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** I would like to use Mr. Shipley's microphone, please.

• (1655)

[English]

Thank you, Madam Fraser, for this report. Through its far-reaching nature, many deficiencies have been outlined, for sure, as well as some aspects of hope.

The problems are very frustrating, Mr. Wernick. They're constitutional, they're demographic, they're fiscal, and they're administrative. I authored a report on self-governance to the Canadian Bar Association. I've been in the courts acting for aboriginal people. I didn't know there were 38 departments responsible for administering the different aspects. It's unbelievable.

I see three levels of interest. First, I think for the next 50 to 100 years, issues of self-governance will be the most important constitutional issues in Canada, and therefore this is relevant to all Canadians. Second, children are involved, and they are Canada's future. It's been said that it takes a village or a community to raise a child. Well, all Canadian parents have to be concerned about your report and all these kids who are mentioned in your report as the most vulnerable. And, third, there are three first nations in the riding that I have the honour to represent: the Sliammon, the Sechelt, and the Squamish, all of whom have different issues. I've been in close consultation with them on treaty issues relating to the Sliammon; the allocation of revenues for natural resources with the Sechelt; and in terms of access to credit with the Squamish.

You talk about the many shortcomings, and those are clear for us to see. I think it's worth noting that there have been accomplishments. You referred to some of them. This government has made major investments to address priority areas such as education, women, children, families, water, and housing. These were all in Budget 2008 as well as Budget 2007 and Budget 2006. Then in Budget 2009, there's \$1.4 billion allocated over three years for aboriginal priority issues, including schools, health programs, safe drinking water, housing, community services, and training.

You note that there have been advances in various provinces, including New Brunswick, Manitoba, British Columbia, and Alberta. In terms of housing, this government has made major investments—of more than a billion dollars—in housing on and off reserves in the north. And then, as Mr. Saxton mentioned, there was the iconic apology on the residential schools issues.

Let me get to my question.

[Translation]

Here is my first question, Mr. Wernick.

You said that the old battles over jurisdictions are less and less relevant, given the fact that the provinces have jurisdiction in certain specific fields related to the provision of care.

Would you clarify the division of powers between the two levels of government, federal and provincial?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Do you mean in this sector, or in general? This is a far broader question.

**Mr. John Weston:** For both, if you can.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Thank you for the question.

[English]

There's a long answer, which the chair won't let me give.

So very briefly, on child protection, we have what I would call two streams of accountability. One is accountability to the child protection ministries and ministers in the provinces for the services, and those are delegated authorities that can be withdrawn. They operate under the child welfare legislation of each province.

They are also, quite rightly, accountable to you, as federal parliamentarians, for federal dollars that go to finance them, and you're quite right to ask what results are obtained for the federal contributions. So there's that dual accountability.

On your first point—and you're going to have to remind me of the middle one—there are many departments and agencies involved in services and programs for aboriginal people. I don't think that's a bad thing if the specialists in an area pay some attention to aboriginal communities.

My advice to parliamentarians would be to try not to create little mini specialties within an enormous INAC with 10,000 employees. It's much better to have the people who know skills and training at HRSD pay attention to aboriginal labour force issues, to have people at Public Safety who know policing to work on aboriginal policing issues, to have people at Health Canada who know about substance abuse and drug problems, which exist in wider society, work on aboriginal communities. It's not necessarily a bad thing.

But what you buy for that is the problem that was raised by most of you, which is how do you keep track of all the pieces, and does it add up? That's a real challenge. I'm still going to try to get Ms. Fraser to comment on that, because I think that's a fundamental problem with carving up responsibilities into departments on complex issues.

I probably missed your middle question. Will you remind me?

• (1700)

**The Chair:** Well, we're into the time pretty good here, so I—

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Perhaps I'll leave it that then.

**The Chair:** Mr. Christopherson, four minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I have a number of questions. We won't have time for back and forth, so I'll just load them up to you, and if you'll be good enough, you can respond for me.

Time may be tight, Chair, but a couple of these would be appropriate for the Auditor General to chime in on, too, in terms of her thoughts on some of these, but I leave that—

**The Chair:** Don't hesitate to ask them to respond in writing, too. That's an option open to any member here.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Okay, great.

For my first question, I'm going straight from the Auditor General's statement today, in paragraph 14, which was, "We found that INAC had no agreements on child welfare services with three of the five provinces we covered in our audit." That may have been covered by part of the answer you gave to Mr. Kramp, I accept that, but that would be my question flowing from that.

By the way, just to put something positive in there, I would agree with the chair and underscore that it may seem like very little, but the fact that you've been there, Deputy, two and a half years you said, that's a huge win. There was a time when we sat here and we had at least three, I think we were on our fourth deputy, or you were our fourth. It was just unbelievable. We couldn't get any traction because they kept changing the deputies. So congratulations on surviving. Sometimes surviving is winning.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Well, let's see how the rest of the period goes.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** The day's not over, right?

My next question comes from paragraph 16: "Finally, we found that INAC has little information on the outcome of its funding on the safety, protection, or well-being"—I believe this was somewhat asked earlier, but I'd like to hear a more fulsome answer—"of on-reserve children. It does not know whether its program makes a positive or significant difference in the lives of the children it funds."

Thirdly, you made reference in your opening statement to Jordan's Principle, and you said, "The federal government is implementing Jordan's Principle, with the provinces, so that the needs of children are addressed first."

Yet in the Auditor General's report, on Jordan's Principle, exhibit 4.3, page 17, she says, in the last sentence:

However, in our view, a dispute-resolution mechanism will not work in the presence of irreconcilable differences and without a change in funding authorities. Such difficulties need to be resolved if this proposal is to result in better and timelier services to first nations children.

You're saying it's being implemented. The AG is pointing out a roadblock. I'd like to know how you're managing on that roadblock.

Also, you offered to give us a copy of the report for your meeting coming up in April. I'd like you to do that, but in addition would you send us the one from late last year? Because if I understood correctly, I think you said you meet twice a year and there are reports coming from that. You've offered to send us the next report. I wouldn't mind also seeing the last report, the one that wasn't offered.

There's more, but I'm out of time, so I'll leave it at that, Chair, and I'll leave it with you, Deputy.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Thank you, Mr. Christopherson.

I would check whether we actually got to a mid-year report, because the report was tabled in May. If there is a report, I'd be happy to provide it.

It's our practice to put all internal audits, all evaluations, all Auditor General chapters, and all follow-up reports on the Internet site. They're there.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** These too?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Yes.

With regard to Jordan's Principle, the observation was correct at the time it was made, but it's no longer accurate. We moved on. We're going to Treasury Board with Health Canada. We will reset the fence post between the two departments and the issue will go away.

In the meantime, we've been very actively involved with Health Canada and the provinces—particularly Manitoba, where this has come up—and we have active case management. Kids are being dealt with, and the principle is being applied.

I would be happy to provide more written detail on that, if you'd like.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Yes, on paragraph 16 in particular.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Yes.

I would ask Ms. Fraser and Mr. Campbell which five provinces they looked at. They obviously didn't go into all ten in order to draw observations. I suspect it's British Columbia or...?

We have tripartites with three, and they looked at five.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Manitoba, Quebec, and....

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Well, they looked at five, and three didn't have agreements.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** And we don't.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** How does that work? And what is the world of difference between having an agreement and not having one?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** The tripartite approach: we have agreements with particular agencies, with 108 of them, so each agency has its own funding agreement. What we did not have in the past was a tripartite arrangement among ourselves, the province, and the first nations about how we want to work and how to go forward. There's been one in Ontario for some time. It dates from an earlier time. We've now added Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan, and we hope to do another couple this year.

It takes a look at the whole province. We sit down with the provincial child welfare people and the agencies and agree on an approach going forward. So at the time they did their fieldwork, no, there wouldn't have been tripartite agreements in place. Those are more recent creatures.

I'm not sure if I got all your questions there, but we'll read the transcript—

• (1705)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Perhaps you could deal in writing with paragraph 16, where the AG says there's "little information on the outcome". It's a macro question, so it needs to be dealt with in writing.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Yes. The outcome—as I think Ms. Johnston had a go at in terms of validation—we can pursue in writing for you, Mr. Christopherson.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you, Deputy, and thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Shipley, four minutes.

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Wernick, for coming in, and thanks to your staff.

Obviously, thanks to the Auditor General also.

The budget has gone up from two and a half times, over the last 10 or 11 years, with another \$20 million; I think that's focused a little differently. Has that budget gone up proportionately over those 10 or 11 years? It would appear that the \$20 million...it takes about \$10 million to implement the enhanced prevention approach. If I understand correctly, that started in 2007. But I also believe money doesn't solve all the issues.

Secondly, can you give me an idea—you may have said this already, but I was a little late getting in, for which I apologize—of when you would know to what degree that implementation is working?

Thirdly, you have some willing provinces. Are the other provinces, the ones that are not on the program, keen to come on and adopt it?

Fourth, I want to go back to the residential schools issue. This comes out of the Auditor General's report. A good thing happened, and we've had some bad results from it. It would appear that sometimes when money flows, people who are not used to handling it may cause some social issues in terms of drugs and alcohol.

So I'm wondering if we can have some help. I'm looking for assistance. Should something else come along where we're asked to disperse money, we don't want to be creating more problems just by doing something that is good, that is needed. I think that was a concern.

Finally, with regard to the money that is transferred to the provinces for the administration—the implementation happens through the bands—is there any discretion on that money?

Thank you.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** I'm going to try to do these very rapidly. Then we'll read the transcript and follow up.

In most cases, the money passes directly from us to a child protection agency, not to the band government. They're a distinct entity. In Ontario it does go through the province because of an old arrangement. We give the province money and they flow it to the agencies.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Is there discretion on that?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** It's under an agreement. It has to be used for particular purposes. It's a typical federal-provincial cost-sharing or financial kind of agreement, which we'd be happy to provide to you, if that's interesting.

On residential schools, that might be an issue you'll want to pursue later. Payments went out under the common experience payment, and payments are going out under the independent adjudication process to about 79,000 individuals. It's human nature that there are going to be some unfortunate results for some people who come into that kind of money.

What I could do, with other colleagues, who, by the way, were at the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on this very subject at ten o'clock this morning.... We've worked with communities, social services agencies, the RCMP, and financial institutions to try to reduce and mitigate those results. This cannot be error-free. It cannot be without some problems. People were very attentive to that. All the parties to the settlement agreement were very attentive to that and tried to do prevention, but there will be cases. Overall, I think, the experience has been a positive one. We could come back on that if you wish.

In terms of other provinces, as soon as we had our first agreement with Alberta, we were in contact with all other provinces. The minister was in contact with his counterparts and we were with others to say, "Here's something interesting and would you like to discuss it?" That's how we knew we had eager partners in Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. We know we have others that would like to join.

The problem with a tripartite is that you need three parties at the dance. You have to get the province ready. You need to have the first nations agencies ready. You have to come to some agreement on the accountability bargain. That's actually a lot of work. We think we have at least two or three other provinces in the on-deck circle.

• (1710)

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Thank you.

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

Ms. Ratansi, for four minutes.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** I will ask two questions, one to the Auditor General and one to Mr. Wernick.

Madam Fraser, in your audit, you state that INAC "is informed of deficiencies" in meeting the requirements of provincial legislation and standards for child welfare services, and that "it should follow up to ensure that timely remedial actions are taken". In what way can INAC ensure that the requirements of the provincial legislation and standards for child welfare services are met? If you could, I will ask that you park that question.



Mr. Wernick, have you developed an action plan with timelines and roles and responsibilities to address the issues that have been raised in this audit? If you go to page 13 and what the Auditor General has laid down, it appears that INAC doesn't know what it's doing. You've not analysed and compared services. There's variation in services. It does not know nationally how many children are placed in care, etc.

I don't want to repeat what has been going on. I just want to know. The only main indicator that you had as a performance indicator, or an indicator whereby you have outcomes, is that 82 first nations agencies are being funded. That's very loose, so could you tell us if you have something concrete and specific? If you do, could you send it to the committee?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Mr. Chair, on the question about the agencies meeting provincial requirements, they are, as has been mentioned, subject to provincial requirements. We obviously don't audit the provinces, but I would presume there would be some sort of inspection compliance activities carried out by the provinces. The federal government does actually obtain that information; it's then the follow-through afterwards to make sure that things are addressed. They also have the ability to do compliance audits, and the deputy mentioned that they were doing more of those or were beginning to do more of those.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Very quickly, yes, we have an action plan in the sense that we're pursuing these various initiatives. That was the undertaking I made at the beginning: that it would be going to my audit committee in the month of April and we'd provide it to the committee. It will go through each recommendation and give more specifics on what we're doing or what we already have done.

If you're in agreement with that, Mr. Chair, we would provide it to the committee as soon as my audit committee has blessed it, and we would be in discussion with the staff of the OAG.

**The Chair:** Yes. Please do.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Good.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Sorry. I'm not sure what the other question was.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** I was going through a litany of things that the Auditor General had said, and I was wondering whether you have an action plan, because what you had in your presentation was really not an action plan. It was, I'm sorry to say, bunk. I really didn't think there was anything concrete in it. If you have an action plan, please share it with the committee to give us some comfort.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** We will provide the specifics in response to the Auditor General's chapter. However, I'm disappointed if I haven't conveyed that signing tripartite agreements with three provinces to put in place a prevention-based model for child protection is an accomplishment. Everybody who works in child welfare knows that we have to move to prevention models, and that is what we're trying to accomplish. The very same people who are dealing with and trying to respond to the findings of the report are also trying to negotiate these tripartite agreements. We have signed three tripartite agreements, and we're implementing them.

In response to a previous question, as soon as we have some experience with them, there will be evaluations, and those evaluations will be available to parliamentarians.

**The Chair:** Last, we have Mr. Young for four minutes.

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Mr. Wernick talked about systemic approaches to first nations poverty. He mentioned finishing high school and participating in the labour market—I guess otherwise known as having jobs—and the issue of water. My question is what have you been doing to address the underlying problems that lead to children being taken out of their homes?

• (1715)

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** We have to agree on the underlying causes. We have programs that try to ensure that people have safe, secure housing. Our partner departments try to deal with policing services and communities.

**Mr. Terence Young:** With regard to housing, what progress have you made?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** I'd be happy to provide specifics on that. We build and renovate housing units every year with the resources that we have available. So does CMHC.

**Mr. Terence Young:** How bad—

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** The underlying issues have to do with what happens in particular families. We can't get at that. That's case management. That's what the agencies do. We can try to improve the environments in communities. Basically, if kids are safe, secure, and going to school, those are the most fundamental things we can do.

**Mr. Terence Young:** What about economic development? What progress have you made there?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** There's not a lot you can do with small government programs to change the trajectory of the Canadian economy. As I said in my earlier response, there's going to be resource development, megaprojects, mining, and forestry. What we can do most of all, I think, is put in place basic education. We do have some support programs, and the government committed in the 2008 budget to taking the economic development programs, which are dusty old things from the 1980s, and putting in place a new economic development framework. That will be done by the government this calendar year.

**Mr. Terence Young:** Thank you.

Just quickly, you said prevention, which costs \$20,000 to \$25,000 a child, is the best way to go. Briefly, what is the prevention model?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** You should talk to Ms. Johnston, who's a practitioner.

**Ms. Odette Johnston:** We've worked with each jurisdiction and analyzed what's happening in each province, looking at what they're doing in terms of prevention, jurisdiction by jurisdiction. We've put in place frameworks that outline the broad goals and objectives that are going to guide prevention. When it gets down to the agency level, they develop business plans on what specifically they're going to do over a five-year period.

Part of that is the prevention money. We're also looking at increased collaboration with other programs and services in the community. They establish very clear targets on that.

**Mr. Terence Young:** Thank you.

Mr. Wernick, what progress have you made in defining culturally appropriate services? I still want to understand this better.

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** As I said, I don't think there ever will be a specific definition. What's culturally appropriate to a community would depend on whether it was a Sechelt or a Mohawk community or something else. We're trying to build that into business plans, targets, and goals more systematically. Again, I would ask Ms. Johnston to elaborate on that, and we can follow up in writing, if that would be helpful.

**Ms. Odette Johnston:** One of the things we did when we renewed our authorities was to expand the range of placement options for communities. We added kinship care and post-adoption subsidies and supports. Those will, by their very nature, assist in providing more culturally appropriate services. As Mr. Wernick said, we do look at the cultural appropriateness in terms of the prevention frameworks we've been developing. Those are built into the frameworks, business plans, and agreements as we move along.

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

That concludes the second round, and now the committee has a couple of motions to deal with.

I'm going to ask you, Ms. Fraser and Mr. Wernick, if you have any closing remarks for the committee. Before you do that, again, on behalf of all the members of the committee, I'd like to thank you for your work and your attendance here today.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I could, in my closing remarks, I'd like to make one point of clarification.

The federal government has the responsibility to pay for services for children on reserve. Those child and family services can be delivered in two ways: either through provincial governments or through first nations agencies. We note in the report that where there are agreements with the provinces, the government basically reimburses the provinces for the cost of providing their services.

Over time, as there has been a shift to preventative services, the federal government would be reimbursing the provinces for that. Where the funding formula comes in is with the first nations agencies. The funding formula, as we've mentioned, has not been changed in 20 years. It is largely skewed towards putting children into care, and it really does not pay very much, as the deputy has indicated, for preventative services.

Mr. Wernick referred to a report we made in 2006, I think it was, about some of the underlying issues, and one of the causes or one of the issues that we noted was sustained management attention to programs. Quite frankly, one has to ask why a program goes on for 20 years, the world changes around it, and yet the formula stays the same, preventative services aren't funded, and all these children are being put into care.

I think we can be somewhat hopeful when we look at the Alberta model, which is recognizing that services have changed and funding based on that example is going to go up quite significantly. All I can say is that I would hope the rest of the provinces and the funding formulas would move quickly so that these children, who really do need services, get them as quickly as they can.

• (1720)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Fraser.

Mr. Wernick, do you have any closing comments?

**Mr. Michael Wernick:** Very briefly, I certainly agree with Madam Fraser's comments.

I don't think there can be anything more troubling to any of us as public servants, parliamentarians, or parents than what happens to children, especially children in vulnerable situations. I hope you can accept that we're trying to move forward in a very complicated area of public policy with our partners, and we do share your sense of frustration and your sense of urgency on it.

On my watch, we have renovated the authorities and we have moved on the tripartites, thanks to the leadership of two very capable ministers, I should be the first to say. I am optimistic that this problem can be attacked and that we can improve things. There are other complicated issues in aboriginal policy that also can be attacked by the sustained attention of good public policy and sound management. We look forward to an ongoing dialogue with this committee.

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

As I said, the committee is going to deal with a couple of motions.

As I indicated, there are two motions to come before the committee. The first motion I will deal with is the report of the steering committee, which was held earlier in the week. Those minutes have been circulated. Basically they set out the paragraphs, the future agenda items, of the business of the committee. I should also point out that in the second part, the steering committee is recommending that five previous reports.... These are five reports for which the work was done, hearings were held, the committee issued a report, and on behalf of the committee I tabled the report in Parliament. But before the government responded to the report within the required 120 days, the government was prorogued, or suspended, because of the elections. What we're going to do is retable them just for the sole purpose of getting the response from the government.

You have the minutes in front of you, and the chair would entertain a motion for their acceptance.

Mr. Kramp.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** I so move.

**The Chair:** Is there any further discussion?

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Yes, I do. This is on the steering committee report.

On number one, I recall that at the steering committee we weren't choosing the chapter really. And maybe, Dave, my assistant, can help me with the chapter number—I forgot what number that was—the one on plants. We had quite the discussion in public and there was quite a little bit of discussion even at the steering committee. We were going to put it as a notation, and we just didn't want it to get away from us, but I'm not seeing it here—

**The Chair:** No, Mr. Christopherson, I think that was at chapter 4, but I believe the steering committee agreed that it would go back on the agenda for the next meeting of the steering committee. It will be on the agenda.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I'm sorry, Chair, but what purpose does that serve?

**The Chair:** Well, we would discuss whether or not we do it. On the next agenda of the steering committee, that particular chapter would be there, as to whether we decide to recommend to the committee that it be included as part of this list. We won't forget about it. We're going to continue the discussion.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Okay. I hear you. If other colleagues on the steering committee are fine with it, then I'm not going to make a *cause célèbre* out of it, but it does make it a little more difficult to consider whether we want to do it when we've already laden ourselves with six out of eight chapters. That leaves only one chapter in the whole thing that we aren't doing.

**The Chair:** No, that's not correct either. What we've done is taken four of the eight, but we've reached back and taken two from the May 2008 report of the Auditor General.

• (1725)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Oh, right. Are you sure?

**The Chair:** I'm positive.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** So it's May 2008, chapter 5; May 2008, chapter 7; December 2008, chapter 1; and December 2008, chapter 2. Okay, I'm with you. I hear you.

**The Chair:** Now, Mr. Christopherson—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** But I still think we should make the decision now. I don't know whether we need to chew on it at the steering committee. We're going to do it or not. I'll put it on the floor to deal with the matter. I'll move an amendment that we include chapter 4.

**The Chair:** What's the title of chapter 4, Madam Clerk?

It's chapter 4 dealing with the CFIA, is it?

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Yes.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Yes, with food safety.

**The Chair:** Let's deal with the amendment. Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

Mr. Kramp.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** The steering committee is there for just that purpose. We all had our issues that we wished to bring forward, and we didn't want to get into the trade-off situations. We settled on one.

Mr. Christopherson and Madam Ratansi brought up the concern about this other chapter, chapter 4. At that particular time, we said that's fine, we have our issues now, but if we need to go back and revisit and you wish to bring that up at the next steering committee rather than go back and forth and get into the "negotiation" per se, let's just go that way. That was the full understanding I had with Mr. Murphy at that time and with my colleagues. I didn't realize we were coming back here to get into a trade-off again.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Again, Mr. Chair, I'm not looking to open up any trading.

I accept everything you said. That's exactly the way it happened. I was unclear at the end of that meeting. We were getting close to one o'clock and all I heard was... I just wanted to make sure the issue was alive, because that was the most I was going to get out of that meeting, and I got that. All I'm doing now, rather than delaying, is just trying to short-circuit, so I'm not backing out on the sort of deal, if you will, the trade-off, as we said. I'm just trying to short-circuit the process. We've got so much work and I'm saying, look, let's make a decision right now, so I'm moving the amendment.

But I stand by the four, and you have a valid point in raising that.

**The Chair:** Okay. I want to hear from Ms. Ratansi. Then I'll put the amendment to a vote.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** I just want a clarification. This is the minutes of the meeting of the steering committee?

**The Chair:** Correct.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** So if it is the minutes of the meeting of the steering committee, then Mr. Christopherson has a valid point, because in the minutes we did say chapter 4. Therefore, it can be recorded that chapter 4, which is the food safety or plant safety chapter, would be considered for the next steering committee. That would reflect accurately our discussions. That's number one.

Number two, I guess the clerk was given the responsibility of telling us which....

Okay? The clerk was going to tell us the ranking of these chapters: 1, 3, 7, and 2. I understand, then, that what the clerk has put down is the ranking according to different parties, right? True?

**The Chair:** Dealing with your first point, the point was made at the end of the meeting, as Mr. Christopherson indicated, that the matter, chapter 4, would come back on the agenda for the next steering committee. That would be in the minutes of the in camera hearing, so it is on the agenda. I don't think it needs to be in the minutes.

On the listing, yes, we basically took them in that order, but we have to appreciate that because of scheduling the clerk is given a certain amount of flexibility, such as whether accounting officers are available on this date. We can't set ourselves in stone, because the clerk may call one department—

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** That was not my question. These were the priorities chosen, so when you're submitting a report to the committee here, for accuracy purposes, we should have said that chapter 4 was discussed and we would like to put it back into the steering committee. I'm not really belabouring the point. If it causes too many problems, I will go along with whatever this report is.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Okay. What I thought was going to save us time is taking us twice as much. I withdraw my motion.

(Amendment withdrawn)

**The Chair:** It's on the agenda for the next steering committee.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Is there any further discussion on the minutes of the steering committee?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** All right. The next item is the motion by Mr. Christopherson to bring to the committee the Parliamentary Budget Officer. I'll read it:

That the Parliamentary Budget Officer be invited to appear before the Committee to discuss his role and issues pertaining to his independence.

Colleagues, I am going to invite Mr. Christopherson to speak to this for up to two minutes. I'll entertain up to six interventions of one minute each and go back to Mr. Christopherson and put it to a vote, so we won't spend a lot of time on it.

Mr. Christopherson, you have two minutes. Go ahead.

On a point of order, Mr. Saxton.

• (1730)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** As the parliamentary secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, I want to emphasize that I'm very interested in the subject of this motion, but I do not believe it is a matter properly dealt with by this committee. The public accounts committee looks into the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of government programs and ensures that government is accountable to Parliament regarding its administrative practices.

This motion asks the committee to call the Parliamentary Budget Officer before us to discuss his role, specifically his independence. It does not ask him to appear regarding his work on the budget or on the costs of the Afghanistan mission, for example, or any of his work that would fall under the mandate of public accounts. I submit that it is not in the mandate of this committee to look into the mandate of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. The PBO's mandate stems from the Accountability Act, which places the PBO within the Library of Parliament. It falls outside of the mandate of this committee to examine the internal operations of the Library of Parliament. There is a committee that was created in order to examine the kind of issue that is raised by this motion.

I would like to state again that I find this to be a very important topic, which deserves proper study. However, that study is more properly dealt with by the standing joint committee on the library.

**The Chair:** A point of order.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I appreciate what the member is saying, although it does create problems when parliamentary secretaries roll in here with marching orders from on high. Having

said that, I appreciate that there is a question of where it goes, but I don't think it is out of order for us to consider it, given that we are one of the three committees mandated to interact with the budget officer. As I understand it—and I stand to be corrected—we are one of three committees that have the right to request information and request reports, so I don't think it's out of order.

I'll speak to why the motion is there, but on the point of as to whether it's out of order, Chair, I don't see anything out of order with the motion, particularly with the way it is worded.

**The Chair:** I'm inclined to agree with Mr. Christopherson. I have given this some thought. We are one of the three committees mentioned in the legislation constating that particular officer of the Library of Parliament, and I think it is in order to have him here if the committee so decides.

The issue will be debated on the motion. Can he come? Yes. Should he come? That's probably another issue, and I agree with Mr. Saxton that probably the best and most appropriate committee is the Library of Parliament rather than this committee.

We are going to go back to Mr. Christopherson. You have two minutes.

I'll entertain up to six interventions and go back to Mr. Christopherson, and then we'll put the motion.

Mr. Christopherson.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you for your ruling.

I have to tell you, the wording that was suggested to me by others I talked to was far stronger than this in terms of taking a position on the issues at hand, which Mr. Saxton did touch on in his remarks.

My sole purpose in doing this is that nobody else is. We have a budget officer who's running around believing that he's under one mandate and under one supervisory set of rules, and others who are in positions of responsibility are saying differently. And nobody's resolving it. All I'm trying to do is offer up one venue.

Quite frankly, this is probably not the best place to resolve the issue, but as one parliamentarian, in a non-partisan way, I'm saying this can't continue. This is crazy. Somebody has to take responsibility for getting to the bottom of it, setting it straight, so we can then go about enjoying the fruits of the work that's to be done.

In the absence of somebody else's grabbing it...and to that degree, Chair, I'm quite prepared to accept a motion and would support a motion of tabling if I get an indication from, particularly, government members or opposition colleagues who know it's going somewhere else. I'll just keep that idling on the side street—well, it won't be idling, it'll be waiting on the side street—in case it's needed, in which case I will withdraw and get rid of it.

I am not about arguing what's right or wrong or what those parameters are to be. I say to my government colleagues that what I am about, as a parliamentarian, is that this can't go on. This is an untenable situation, and I don't see anybody resolving it.

Maybe I was hoping, if nothing else, this might light the fuse, give it a kick—pick your metaphor. I didn't feel right that we could continue doing nothing when the media and others come up and say, “What are you all going to do about it?” and there's no answer.

So there's my bit.

• (1735)

**The Chair:** Okay, I'm going to make a suggestion, colleagues.

I've talked to a number of other people about this motion, and as I indicated to Mr. Saxton, in my opinion this is not the proper committee. The right and proper committee is the Library of Parliament committee. The difficulty is that it took them a while to get struck, but they're now doing it. They're getting overtures from a number of other people who deal with this issue.

Mr. Christopherson is quite right, this is an issue that has to be dealt with by Parliament. Parliament has to assert its own

accountabilities, and in this particular issue especially it has to do it immediately.

What I would suggest, following up with Mr. Christopherson's statement, is that someone take a motion to table for two or three weeks to allow the Library of Parliament to get on with what they should be doing, and then if they don't, we can consider this in a different light.

Would you accept that, Mr. Christopherson?

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I would, Chair, that's fine.

**The Chair:** Okay. The chair would entertain a motion to table a motion by Mr. Kramp; that's non-debatable.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Tabling with instructions to be returned no later than three weeks from now.

**The Chair:** No later than three weeks, that's fine.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned.

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

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