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Chair

The Honourable Hedy Fry

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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I'm going to call the meeting to order. Pursuant to Standing Order 108 (2), this committee is doing a study on violence against aboriginal women.

We are looking at the root causes of that violence, the extent of the violence, and the nature of the violence. By that, we mean not just domestic violence but societal violence—if there's any present generic violence of any other kind. The nature of the violence means whether it is psychological, physical, sexual...there are different types of violence. Or is it in fact discrimination, which is in itself a major form of violence against people, especially if it's racism?

Having said that, I'm hoping that we will be able to get our witnesses to speak to some of those issues.

Many of you here know how this works. There's going to be a seven-minute presentation. I will give you a two-minute and a one-minute signal, because if we don't do that, we have so many presenters that we won't have any time for questions. After those presentations there will be a question and answer period in which you can expand on some of the things you may not have been able to say in your seven-minute presentation.

We will begin with the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development and Barbara Lawless.

[Translation]

Mrs. Barbara Lawless (Director General, Homelessness Partnering Secretariat, Department of Human Resources and Skills Development): Good morning.

[English]

Thank you for the invitation to speak to this issue. My focus today will be to describe the federal government's homelessness partnering strategy and how it contributes to addressing the needs of aboriginal women off reserve who are homeless or at risk of being homeless due to domestic violence.

Homelessness is a complex and multi-faceted issue with numerous contributing factors, such as low income, mental health and substance abuse challenges, a lack of affordable housing, and family violence and conflict.

Combinations of these factors often lead an individual or family into homelessness, rather than a single trigger. While it is difficult to determine an accurate count of the homeless population across Canada, we do know from homeless counts undertaken in various

cities that aboriginal people are overrepresented among the homeless population and that aboriginal women are often overrepresented in the female homeless population.

As well, research indicates that aboriginal women may be at higher risk of homelessness because many of the common risk factors are more prevalent among aboriginal women—factors such as low wages and family violence. We also know that this issue is not exclusive to large urban centres but is also evident in small communities across Canada and in the north.

Because of its complex nature, a collaborative approach involving many different partners is often needed to address the challenge of homelessness. In response to this, the Government of Canada adopted the homelessness partnering strategy in 2007: a community-based approach that brings together a range of partners at the local level to identify issues and find local solutions.

The strategy provides funding directly to communities to support their efforts in working collaboratively with their partners, efforts that will help homeless individuals move toward greater autonomy and self-sufficiency, and to prevent those at risk of homelessness from becoming homeless. This approach recognizes that communities have unique issues and priorities that are best addressed at the local level, with local partners.

The result is a community-based approach that has been successful in strengthening the capacity of communities to address homelessness and leveraging funds and community resources from other key players, such as other levels of government and the private sector.

How does the strategy work? The strategy has seven funding streams, three of which are delivered regionally through Service Canada. I will speak to some of these.

The designated communities funding stream, which is \$83.7 million annually, is the main component of the homelessness partnering strategy. This stream funds projects in 61 designated communities, primarily major urban centres identified as having a significant problem with homelessness. The funds are targeted to local priorities identified by the community through a comprehensive community planning process that requires broad consultation and consensus at the local level, involving a range of stakeholders.

This approach is meant to ensure that communities are positioned to leverage resources to the greatest extent possible. It is through this process that local issues related to homelessness resulting from violence against aboriginal women can be raised as funding priorities.

The aboriginal homelessness funding stream, which is \$14.3 million annually, recognizes the overrepresentation of aboriginal people among the homeless and at-risk populations. While not required, many aboriginal community partners develop community plans to guide their decision-making and project selection. Similarly, through these processes, issues related to homelessness and violence against women can be raised.

The rural and remote homelessness funding stream, which is \$5.6 million annually, is designed to respond to the underserved homelessness needs in non-designated rural and remote communities, including the north. Communities with populations of 25,000 and under are the main priority for funding.

It should be noted that projects funded under the designated communities and the rural and remote communities funding streams often target the needs of aboriginal people living off reserve and experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Let me now speak to some of the results. Since 2007, 57 projects valued at just over \$27 million, and funded through the three regionally delivered streams previously mentioned, have targeted aboriginal women exclusively, and a number of these address the needs of aboriginal women who are homeless due to violence.

As well, through national program spending, we have seen the needs of aboriginal women who are homeless or at risk of being homeless being addressed through the transfer of federal properties for projects that support victims of domestic violence, through the funding of research projects related to aboriginal women and/or violence, and through working with other federal departments and agencies to explore new ways to address homelessness.

• (1105)

The homelessness partnering strategy will ensure that the government continues to assist Canadians who are homeless, including aboriginal women, by building on the strengths of a community-based approach that engages a broad spectrum of partners to identify local priorities and leverage resources for local solutions.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Lawless.

Now I'll go to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

I have Gail Mitchell and Michael Rice.

Will you be sharing your time or will one of you be making the presentation?

Ms. Gail Mitchell (Director General, Community Infrastructure Branch, Regional Operations Sector, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): I'll be making the presentation.

The Chair: Ms. Mitchell, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Gail Mitchell: Thank you.

Bonjour. I'd like to thank you for inviting me to attend today and speak on the issue of aboriginal housing and first nations women.

Aboriginal women represent a very significant portion of the Canadian population. According to the 2006 census, there are over 100,000 first nations women aged 15 and over living on reserve.

I'll keep my remarks short.

In terms of housing, all Canadians obviously need safe, adequate, and affordable housing, and we recognize that for aboriginal Canadians this is often a challenge. There are aboriginal women and children in need of transition housing, to allow them the opportunity to remove themselves from violence in their homes, as well as permanent housing, which will provide the healthy environment needed to allow them to fulfill their potential.

The federal government's responsibility and involvement in aboriginal housing differ on reserve, off reserve, and in the territories. We've heard a bit already about initiatives related to homelessness, and we'll be hearing from CMHC on their role vis-à-vis aboriginal housing issues.

In short, in terms of overall on-reserve expenditures annually, there are expenditures of \$290 million, with \$155 million of that coming from Indian and Northern Affairs programming and approximately \$135 million from CMHC. This annual contribution supports renovations to approximately 3,600 units out of a total stock of approximately 105,000 on-reserve units. We also support the construction of new units—around 2,300 per year—and other housing-related activities.

To support first nations in need of transitional housing, INAC does support a program to fund shelters on reserve through a family violence prevention program. Currently, the program provides funding to a network of 41 shelters and supports community-based violence prevention projects that contribute to enhanced safety and security of on-reserve residents, particularly women and children.

As part of Canada's economic action plan, the government provided an additional \$400 million over two years for social housing, for construction, remediation, and lot servicing and to assist in the transition to market-based housing. Of this \$400 million, Indian and Northern Affairs has allocated \$150 million for first nations over the two years. In 2009-10, close to 2,000 units were built or renovated, nearly 600 lots were serviced—which means they're prepared for future construction—and close to 825 jobs were created. The remaining \$250 million was allocated to CMHC for its programming.

Although the federal government supports housing on reserve, this funding doesn't generally cover the entire cost. First nations do share in the responsibility of providing housing in their communities and are required to identify and obtain necessary additional funding from other sources. Off reserve and in the territories, provincial and territorial governments hold responsibility for housing; however, Canada's economic action plan did dedicate \$200 million to the territories for social housing renovation and new construction. This built on a commitment from budget 2006 that had seen \$300 million for housing in the north and also established a \$300-million fund for aboriginal housing off reserve.

While housing conditions of some aboriginal people have improved in the past decades, others are living in poor conditions such as overcrowded homes and homes needing major repair. This is clearly an issue that affects women and this is particularly true on reserve.

In 2006, 26% of first nations people living on reserve lived in crowded conditions. Overcrowded housing is a serious concern throughout the north and on reserve, especially for Inuit living in the northern regions spanning the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Quebec, and Labrador. In that region, more than 15,000 Inuit—38% of the total population—lived in crowded conditions.

But for all the challenges, there have been some housing successes, and aboriginal women have been at the forefront of much of the success. I'd like to take a minute or two, if I have the time, to discuss some of these with you.

One promising development is the emergence in the last decade of several housing associations: aboriginal housing associations that support the delivery and management of housing on reserve. These networks actively support their members and each other. INAC and CMHC have been pleased to assist in funding some of these organizations and their activities.

The First Nations National Housing Managers Association was established in 2007. Its mission is to promote and enhance the professional development of housing managers, to create a central professional network for sharing best practices, and to be a centralized source of information.

●(1110)

Many on-reserve housing managers are aboriginal women, and INAC is providing capacity development workshops and one-on-one coaching to help them manage and develop their housing portfolios. INAC staff have had the opportunity to meet with many of the housing managers, and it's clear that these people are often the housing champions who create community successes.

In 2010-11 INAC provided project funding to Piikani first nation in Alberta to develop a long-term comprehensive housing plan. Working in partnership with federal partners, the primarily female staff of the Piikani Nation Housing Authority has dramatically improved conditions and availability of housing within their community.

Another positive trend is that first nation communities are linking housing renovations and new construction to skills training and job creation. Aboriginal women have participated both as developers of these opportunities and as recipients of the training and jobs. For

example, INAC has supported a women-in-trades project in a community called Onion Lake. In 2010, 27 community members received training in carpentry and heavy equipment operation. The program continues to grow.

There are off-reserve success stories as well. Provincial chapters of the Canadian Real Estate Association in Alberta and Manitoba have worked to augment and improve access to home ownership and housing.

In conclusion, aboriginal women should have the same access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing as all Canadian women. We realize there is much left to be done, but we are seeing some promising trends in housing, with aboriginal women playing a key role in meeting this objective.

Thank you very much.

●(1115)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now I'd like to hear from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Ms. Matthews.

Ms. Sharon Matthews (Vice-President, Assisted Housing Sector, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation): Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

I'm very pleased to be here on behalf of CMHC to discuss housing as it relates to violence against women.

A key part of CMHC's mandate is to work with our provincial, territorial, and non-governmental partners, as well as the private sector, to help Canadians from all walks of life access quality affordable homes. CMHC's assisted housing initiatives are designed to help some of the most vulnerable in society, including women who are victims of domestic violence.

As we all know, safe, affordable housing is a foundation for healthy living and a building block for success in many other areas, including personal relationships, community engagement, education, and the labour market. The federal government, through CMHC, invested \$7 billion annually at one point so that 620,000 low-income households living in existing social housing could continue to live in safe, affordable homes.

I might add that about 60% of those living in the existing social housing stock are estimated to be women and girls.

CMHC also supports the creation of new social housing through the affordable housing initiative. The provinces and territories design and deliver these housing programs and also match the federal investment. We also provide a suite of renovation programs to help lower-income households repair their properties. These programs are directed and delivered by the provinces and territories or occasionally directly delivered by CMHC.

CMHC also has a team of experts dedicated to advancing affordable housing solutions across the country. Through that team, we provide non-profit and church groups, private developers, and others seeking to develop local housing solutions with access to a comprehensive range of affordable housing information, tools, and resources that could help them make their vision a reality. Like all Canadians, aboriginal women and families living off reserve have access to these initiatives.

CMHC, however, also has a specific mandate to work with Indian and Northern Affairs to help address housing needs of first nations people living on reserves. As my colleague has just said, CMHC spends about \$135 million annually to support housing on reserve. This includes funding to renovate existing housing units as well as ongoing subsidies under the on-reserve non-profit housing program, which we usually reference as the section 95 program.

Canada's economic action plan also provides for significant investments in social housing, including \$400 million over two years for housing on reserve. CMHC is responsible for delivering \$250 million of this. As a result of this federal investment, first nations across Canada have been able to significantly improve the housing conditions of their community members.

A further \$200 million in economic action plan funding has been earmarked to support renovation and construction of housing in the north, where there are large aboriginal populations. Improving the quality and availability of social housing both on and off reserve can have a direct impact on preventing violence against women.

However, it's also very important to provide safe havens for those in need when family violence does occur. Here, too, CMHC does have a role through our shelter enhancement program, part of our overall suite of renovation programs. This program offers financial assistance for the renovation of existing shelters or for the creation/acquisition of new shelters and second-stage housing for victims of family violence, both on and off reserve. Federal funding under the affordable housing initiative that I previously mentioned can also be used for the development of transitional and second-stage housing.

Federal funding for shelter units has made a difference. One example would be Fort Albany First Nation, located on the west coast of James Bay in northern Ontario and accessible only by air and the winter ice road. In 2008, CMHC provided the band council with funding of just over \$800,000 to build five new shelter units. Vulnerable aboriginal women in this isolated community now have a place to go when they have a specific need.

The shelter enhancement program also provides assistance to non-profits or charities that house victims of family violence off reserve. These shelters are also available, as I said, to aboriginal women.

Another example would be the YWCA's residence in Regina that offers safe and affordable housing to women, including aboriginal

women. The Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan jointly provided about \$1.8 million in funding through the affordable housing initiative and through the shelter enhancement program to renovate and expand this 53-bed residence.

• (1120)

The federal government is one of many partners working to address this very complex and serious issue. Housing funding from CMHC makes it possible for communities to respond more effectively to the needs of women in crisis. Whether these women are accessing the 620,000 units of existing social housing or living in transitional housing or shelters built or renovated with federal funding, it all makes a difference on the ground and contributes to the broader solution.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I welcome any questions that the committee might have.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we'll go to the National Aboriginal Housing Association, with Charles Hill, who is the executive director, and Jim Lanigan.

Mr. Hill.

Mr. Charles Hill (Executive Director, National Aboriginal Housing Association): Thank you for the invitation to speak. As you can see, we're not women, but half of our people are women.

I'm the executive director for the National Aboriginal Housing Association. With me is Jim Lanigan, who is the treasurer of the association.

NAHA was set up in 1994 in response to the cap that was put on new social housing units by the federal government in 1993-94. We are an advocacy organization. We do not receive any funding from anyone. We've been hobbling along on a small budget derived from our membership and from contracts we've been doing, but we are committed to the ideas of representation and of housing people.

In this—

The Chair: Excuse me. It's very difficult to hear the witness. Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Hill.

Mr. Charles Hill: With regard to representation, it's essential that we have aboriginal control over our affairs, and that brings to mind the Native Women's Association of Canada, which is an active participant on behalf of aboriginal women. We do work hand in glove with a number of various organizations such as that, but I think there should be dedicated funding so that the representation can be increased and help us drive forward in a holistic manner.

On the figures that were cited earlier, I just wanted to speak briefly to those. NAHA did a study based on the 2006 census, which we released in 2009. The findings there confirm that three-quarters of the aboriginal people are not on reserve. With regard to the overall figures, the numbers that have been cited, our calculation is that there are some 450,000 aboriginal women in Canada. The figures I have are derived from older censuses, but there were some 800,000 people, and 51% were women. In the 2006 census, there were 1,172,000 people who identified as aboriginal. If 51% of the people are women, that's where I come up with the figure of 450,000.

There are any number of studies that have been conducted with regard to violence towards women, and there are a few that have been directed towards violence towards aboriginal women. Sisters in Spirit is one of the organizations that has been vocal in advocating that greater attention be paid to aboriginal women who are recipients of violence. I want to say that they are doing a very good job, but there is still a lot of resistance.

Part of the paper that I presented to the committee speaks to the reasons for the violence initially, but I think the basic reason is poverty. We have been excluded over the years from participation in the economic industry or whatever of Canada, and until I was 14 years old, legally I was not able to leave the reserve without a pass. So we were confined, we were excluded legally, and now the opposite tack has been taken, where I think there's an effort to assimilate us.

My sister beside me mentions that there are shelters that are available to aboriginal women, but there's the cultural affinity that is absent. This does prevent a lot of our women from participating in the mainstream shelters. I think racism and cultural differentiation continue to exist, so this is why I spoke earlier of aboriginal control over aboriginal housing—and in this case, aboriginal shelters.

I want Mr. Lanigan to speak briefly to the local...but before I do that, I want to go through the recommendations that I attached to the tail end of my report.

There needs to be additional funding: financial resources to help local urban aboriginal housing providers acquire additional housing units—plain and simple. There is a paucity of housing right across Canada, and this affects families, which include, of course, men and women. It also helps to address poverty.

• (1125)

In this regard, in 2006, a couple of years ago, the federal government provided \$300 million to the non-reserve population. This was one of the good steps that was put in place. It was very beneficial. In many of the provinces, the funding was turned over to aboriginal organizations for administration, so this is the model I'm suggesting that we pursue going into the future, because it does

provide a lot of benefit and also a chance for us, through home ownership, to acquire some wealth.

We need to provide resources to enable aboriginal organizations to establish and operate increased numbers of shelters in a culturally sensitive atmosphere and to enable the establishment and operation of more second-stage housing for those in transition from imprisonment. If I had more time, I'd speak at greater length to second-stage housing. Except on one occasion, I've never heard that mentioned: that we need to pay attention to the people who are being released from prison.

We need to recognize that the most benefit for aboriginal women can be achieved through service provided by aboriginal women. We need to continue to use a holistic approach and sensitivity to enable aboriginal women to retain and maintain custody of their children. This is one of the key elements that has to be addressed.

We need to provide resources for training and life skills, both pre-employment and employment, and general counselling to help aboriginal women become established and regain control over their lives, training and counselling to be given at the local level.

In this context, I'd ask Mr. Lanigan to speak for a minute.

The Chair: Mr. Lanigan, we're now over time, but because some people were under time, I think we've been able to grab an extra minute, so I'll give you an extra minute.

• (1130)

Mr. Jim Lanigan (Treasurer, National Aboriginal Housing Association): Thank you very much.

First I want to mention that the National Aboriginal Housing Association member corporations administer some 10,000 units of rent-geared-to-income housing across Canada. This housing exists in most major cities.

One always wonders how the work of national associations translates into housing for people at the local level. This is particularly important, so I wanted to briefly mention the work of the Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation here in the city of Ottawa as an example of how we operate and of what we do to try to make assisted and affordable housing more accessible to aboriginal women.

Gignul has been in operation since 1985 and administers 162 units of rent-geared-to-income housing in 73 buildings across the former five municipalities that now make up Ottawa. It also administers a seniors' lodge that is home to a number of seniors here in the city.

In looking at our application process, we try to give priority where priority is necessary. Because we have an active waiting list of about 200 people and a period of time of at least a year to wait for housing, we prioritize our housing. Over the last few years, we've prioritized our housing to try to address the needs of single-parent mothers and also the needs of students who are enrolled in advanced education. We do have a point system that prioritizes on the basis of need.

The result of this process is that, of the tenants we now house, 52% are women: single women and/or single women with children. So there is a direct relationship to the effort, and we're trying to make that work for us.

We're very collaborative. We're linked to the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition and we work closely with the urban aboriginal strategy to try to ensure that the resources dedicated to and available for the area are used effectively. This has been very useful for us in terms of establishing a type of community governance.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Lanigan.

If you look at your video conference screens, you will see that we now have with us Mr. Barriault, from the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Mr. Alain Barriault (President, Nunavut Housing Corporation): Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before your committee today.

Are you getting this reception?

The Chair: Loud and clear.

Mr. Alain Barriault: Technology is working. That's wonderful.

The Chair: Absolutely, even in the far north.

Mr. Alain Barriault: That's great.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation was established pre-division as the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation in approximately 1972 by the territorial government, through recognition that housing was a priority concern and, as such, deserved some undivided attention. The business of the Nunavut Housing Corporation is mainly administered through local housing organizations established in each of the 25 communities that comprise Nunavut. In most cases, these organizations were in place prior to the formation of organized municipal governments, so they are well established as client service providers to address the residential housing needs of Nunavummiut.

Nunavut, to put it in context, comprises roughly 34,000 people in population, spread among 25 isolated communities that have no road or rail access, over a land mass that is 1.9 million square kilometres. That's double the size of Ontario, for 20% of Canada's land mass, and it covers three time zones. So we have some logistical challenges in providing our services.

Populations in these isolated communities range from 140 to 2,310, with the largest community being Iqaluit, the capital city, with a population of 6,740, based on the last census. The Government of Nunavut is the principal supplier of the 9,400 residential dwelling units in the territory. The number of dwellings per community ranges from 60 to 800 in most communities, with the largest number again being in Iqaluit, with 2,560 dwellings.

The Government of Nunavut, through the Nunavut Housing Corporation, currently maintains approximately 4,400 public housing rent-geared-to-income units, of which 4,170 are owned by the Nunavut Housing Corporation and 264 are leased. We also manage 1,350 government staff housing units. Roughly 250 of those are owned by the Nunavut Housing Corporation and 1,100 are leased. As well, we hold mortgages for 500 homeowners through a variety of home ownership support programs.

This represents over 65% of Nunavut's total residential housing stock. That's quite a different picture than you would see in most Canadian jurisdictions. Owner-occupied dwellings represent only approximately 20% of all housing. As well, government staff housing comprises a sizable portion of the housing stock, especially in the regional centres. There is, especially outside the capital city of Iqaluit, practically a non-existent private rental market.

So the numbers I'm presenting to you are in effect demonstrating the lack of housing options in most communities. They're very limited in the capital city, but in the smaller isolated communities there are even fewer housing options besides what is provided by government.

We have benefited greatly from a federal influx of housing dollars to build with and to add to our portfolio and our stock. Through the Northern Housing Trust, \$200 million was provided to Nunavut, and we now are at the completion of building 725 new public housing rent-geared-to-income units. Under Canada's economic action plan, another \$100 million was made available to Nunavut, and 285 new public housing units are being built as a result of this. So our owned public housing stock will grow to approximately 4,650 as a result of this influx, which comprises basically a 30% increase in our public housing stock.

● (1135)

In partnership with the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Canada, we've just recently completed a Nunavut housing needs survey. This was done on a census basis in 24 of the 25 communities and on a sample basis in Iqaluit. This comprised a total of 75 local interviewers being hired. That way, every building used as a residence was able to be identified and included in the survey.

Of all occupied dwellings, 35% are considered crowded, as per these results. This is compared to 6% when looking at all of Canada, based on the 2006 census. The lowest overcrowding is in Grise Fiord, a community of 140 people, but overcrowding still remains at 15% in these units. The second-lowest overcrowding number is in Iqaluit, at 20%.

The largest problem is among the public housing units: 50% of public housing units are deemed to be overcrowded, based on national housing standards. These public housing units comprise more than 50% of all residential housing in Nunavut. Of the people in public housing who are considered overcrowded, 2,990 family groups indicated that they would move out into another home if alternative housing were available. Again, Nunavut's main problem is one of lack of supply. Based on the 2006 census, compared to 7% for all of Canada, 23% of households indicated a need for major repair.

For homeowners in small communities, one of the mitigating factors is a lack of local contractors.... If the majority of the housing in these communities is comprised of public housing, which is administered and maintained through local housing organizations, then there is a very small pool of homeowners from which a contractor could draw to try to make his business viable. So many community contractors do not see this as being a viable business and they do not establish and continue.

So in looking at the two factors of adequacy and suitability, 49% of housing in Nunavut is either crowded or in need of major repairs. Based on the waiting list, on the public housing waiting list currently there are 3,780 people.

• (1140)

The Chair: Mr. Barriault, can you wrap it up, please? We've gone over time on your presentation. You will get a chance to expand when you are asked questions.

Mr. Alain Barriault: I'm just about at the end. Okay.

So effectively we have a high waiting list. We have a high construction cost. We have 4% of the population indicating that they are temporary residents without a usual home elsewhere. So people are effectively considered homeless due to lack of alternatives. They may have the means to pay rent, but there are no houses available to rent.

So in Nunavut, affordability of units is not so much the problem as it is a lack of units. Public housing and government staff housing are considered affordable; however, there is just an insufficient quantity. And the lack of a private rental market means there are very few options available, so women in situations of violence cannot move into another unit because they are simply not available. That's where the pressure is coming from.

Thank you very much. I'd be pleased to take your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Barriault. That was very interesting.

Now we're going to move to the question and answer period. The first round is going to be a seven-minute round, which means the seven minutes are for both questions and answers, so if everyone can be succinct in their questions and succinct in their answers, we'll get to move on. I am going to have to stop you if you go over time.

The first questioner is Ms. Neville for the Liberals.

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

Thanks to all of you for being here this morning.

This is a really important topic. As I'm listening to each of you, from your very different perspectives and communities, what has just struck me, particularly in listening to the presentation from Nunavut, is that there is a real housing crisis, which we've heard about anecdotally as we've travelled the country, but you are confirming it to us here.

I have a lot of questions.

Let me just begin by asking Ms. Mitchell, in terms of INAC, do you have both targets and inventories of housing requirements in different communities across the country?

Ms. Gail Mitchell: I should point out the role that INAC plays in supporting first nations. We provide funding to enable the communities to deliver housing to their members. So we do maintain an inventory, to the extent that communities report on the data about available housing in communities, and we do try to align the financial support that we provide, to some extent, with the need. But we know that the need is far greater than the financial—

Hon. Anita Neville: I guess I used the wrong word when I asked about "inventory". Do you have an inventory of needs as well as your own established targets and timelines? Is there a plan?

Ms. Gail Mitchell: There is an inventory; we do have, through census data and through reporting from first nations, a sense of the gap. There's much debate about how big the gap of units is currently.

Hon. Anita Neville: Tell us a little more about that.

Ms. Gail Mitchell: Well, from the perspective of looking at the data we derive from the census around adequacy...and we work closely with CMHC in identifying on-reserve specifics, versus, for instance, what the Assembly of First Nations reports as the need for housing. We're currently in the midst of a process with the Assembly of First Nations to try to get some better understanding of the differences between the gap that INAC believes, versus AFN, but some people—

• (1145)

Hon. Anita Neville: So we should be hearing from AFN as well on this.

Ms. Gail Mitchell: Yes. If you have not done so already, I would suggest that the AFN has quite a bit to say on this issue.

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Hill, very importantly, you talked about a holistic approach to housing. I guess I would ask the other presenters, then, when you are looking at housing needs, are you looking at it with a holistic approach? What kind of ongoing consultations are going on with the communities as you look at housing?

Are you talking to social services? Are you talking to Justice? Are you talking to other agencies?

Mr. Charles Hill: To my knowledge, the organizations across the country, of which there are about 110, or 120 at the local level, do in fact carry out liaison and discussions with the other agencies. I'm most familiar with the situation here in Ottawa, because in addition to working at the NAHA, I'm also on the local board of Gignul. We are part of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition, and the coalition does work closely with the social agencies and the justice people, including the police. The mayor of the city has sanctioned an aboriginal committee to work with him.

Hon. Anita Neville: You referenced second-stage housing for women coming out of jails. One of the things that we certainly heard in our travels was that many of the women who are incarcerated are in fact incarcerated because of a response to a perpetrator of a crime against them—violence perpetrated against them.

How would you measure the need for second-stage housing? And how would you measure it in terms of culturally appropriate second-stage housing?

Mr. Charles Hill: The way I would do it is to talk with the people who are about to be released. There are also, I think, aboriginal women's organizations within some of the prisons, if not all. I think it would be appropriate to speak with the people who are going through the experience to see what would be of help to them.

Also, there has to be liaison with the authorities, so that there can be a comprehensive and holistic approach to counselling, to the life skills that I was talking about, and so every effort is made to help them get back on their feet. There also has to be a provision for them to either recover their children or have the opportunity to meet with them on a regular basis.

The Chair: You have one minute.

Hon. Anita Neville: Oh, I have so many sort of isolated questions.

Mr. Barriault, you talked about just the lack of units, not a lack of income to pay for them. What are you doing? What's the solution? We've heard from some of the women's organizations up north about the tremendous incidence of violence there. What's happening? How are you trying to address the issues?

Mr. Alain Barriault: As part of the government's action plan to address this and other issues, we are approaching this in a holistic fashion. We're developing a Government of Nunavut comprehensive housing strategy at this point. Not only are we looking at the Nunavut Housing Corporation being the solution to the problem, but we're looking as well at developing these private rental markets and at opportunities to partner with private business.

We do realize that we have a very strong dependence on federal government funding for the continued operation of existing housing and for continuing to grow our stock. Our population continues to increase, and until such time as we as a territory have more revenues and more ability to run our own affairs, we will continue to be at the mercy of federal transfer payments to deal with this problem.

• (1150)

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Demers, for the Bloc Québécois.

[*Translation*]

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

Hello. I would like to thank the witnesses for being with us today.

My question is for either Ms. Mitchell, Ms. Lawless or Ms. Matthews. I would like to know whether, in the course of your work, you have visited any shelters for native women or shelters located in the Northwest Territories.

Ms. Gail Mitchell: I visited a shelter in northern Quebec.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Where exactly was it?

Ms. Gail Mitchell: In Kuujuaq and Inukjuak.

Ms. Nicole Demers: And you, Ms. Lawless?

[*English*]

Ms. Barbara Lawless: I have not, at this stage, visited any shelters for aboriginal women. I have visited shelters for a number of homeless men.

I am relatively new to the position. Right now, I'm going across the country to get a better appreciation for what the situation is.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Ms. Matthews?

[*English*]

Ms. Sharon Matthews: Yes, I've had opportunities over my career to see various communities and whatnot. The one that comes to mind, actually, was when I was a branch manager in the London area. It was not—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Did you go to an aboriginal community?

[*English*]

Ms. Sharon Matthews: I would not have been in a shelter in an aboriginal community. I've visited some shelters and transitional housing in off-reserve situations, but I haven't been to one recently.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: That's not the same thing. I would like to talk about a situation which shocked me and deeply affected me.

In Iqaluit, there is a shelter for women which covers all of Nunavut. Unfortunately, there is no transition house. As a result, the women have to stay in the shelter as long as possible because they cannot go home again. I remember one situation in particular involving a young girl of 15. Every day, she went to see someone at the school to ask that her mother not be allowed to leave the shelter because her stepfather would kill her if she went home again. Her mother had already exceeded the length of time she was allowed to stay at the shelter, and there was no transition house in Iqaluit. There still is none.

Ms. Matthews, you said that money could be spent on second-stage housing. How can we access those funds? It's not right for people to experience those kinds of situations.

[*English*]

Ms. Sharon Matthews: As I said, we have a number of programs that various community members can access.

Off reserve, the majority of the funding that the federal government puts to housing is delivered through the provinces and territories. Through the affordable housing initiative, in any community, a group could approach the province. The benefit of the way the federal government does this by partnering with the provinces is that the provincial government matches every dollar the federal government puts in. That means the trade-off is that the provinces and territories are making those decisions on the affordable housing money, on whether it's going to transitional housing or to new social housing stock. They're making those local and regional trade-offs.

On reserve, another example would be the shelter enhancement program. That is funded out of an overall budget envelope that we use for our renovation programs on reserve, and we work through liaison committees. We have a national liaison committee, with the AFN at the table, to do a national allocation across the country.

We then work with regional committees as well, which involve various members of the aboriginal community, and then the funding eventually gets allocated down to the level of how much money is going to a particular first nation. That first nation will then take a look at that renovation funding, for example, and decide how much it wants to put to a shelter through the shelter enhancement program, or perhaps they're going to spend the money to renovate a different type of housing, so—

• (1155)

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: So, if I understood correctly, the groups looking after these women cannot access the funding.

Ms. Lawless, you talked about a program in Onion Lake, which enables 27 members of the community to get training in carpentry and in the operation of heavy machinery.

Ms. Mitchell, do these people have access—

[English]

The Chair: Excuse me, Madame Demers. Can we just stop for a second?

I think Ms. Lawless is having a problem with the translation.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: In any case, I was mistaken. My question was for Ms. Mitchell.

Were these people able to get work? Did they eventually get jobs?

Ms. Gail Mitchell: Yes. It is a very small program, but until now, it has enabled women to find work.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Could this program be implemented elsewhere?

Ms. Gail Mitchell: We hope so. But the issue is always finding partners who are willing to adopt this kind of program. Of course, we also need to find the funding. Regardless, we found that this program was really a success.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Ms. Lawless, you said that since 2007, 57 projects totalling a little more than 27 million dollars are funded

[English]

The Chair: Madame Demers, while we're waiting for the technical problem to be solved, would you like to have Monsieur Barriault answer your question about second-stage housing in Iqaluit, since that's where he is based and he knows about the housing there?

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I know what the answer is as far as Iqaluit is concerned. It's because they cannot tax their own residents. I was hoping to get an answer to this question, but none was forthcoming.

Of the 57 programs which were funded by your organization, through three funding streams totaling over 27 million dollars, how many targeted aboriginal women only? How many targeted the needs of aboriginal women who were homeless because they had been victims of violence? Where were these programs operating and how effective were they?

[English]

Ms. Barbara Lawless: *Merci de la question.*

First and foremost, what I do want to say is that under the homelessness partnering strategy we do take a very community-based approach. The funding does go to communities and they identify the priorities they want to address on homelessness and the projects they want to support to address those priorities.

In terms of the numbers I've mentioned, there are generally two types of projects we will fund. One is related to capital investment projects, which could be renovations of shelters or the creation of a new shelter or transitional housing with support, or it could be projects that simply deliver support services to aboriginal women.

So on the numbers I quoted to you, the \$27 million, that did represent 57 projects that were serving aboriginal women exclusively. That included capital facilities as well as support and prevention services across the country. Specifically, of that, 21 of those capital projects of approximately \$7.9 million were invested exclusively for aboriginal women experiencing domestic violence. Projects through that amount of investment are expected to create an additional 142 beds.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Can you send us a list of these projects?

Mrs. Barbara Lawless: Yes, I can give you the list.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Madame Demers, I think your time has run out. Thank you very much.

As Mr. Boughen is not here, we'll hear from Ms. Cadman for the Conservatives.

Go ahead.

Ms. Dona Cadman (Surrey North, CPC): Ms. Lawless, how long have you been on the job?

Ms. Barbara Lawless: About a year.

Ms. Dona Cadman: Ms. Mitchell?

Ms. Gail Mitchell: I've been in this job for two and a half years.

Ms. Dona Cadman: Thank you.

I would like to ask you a question, Mr. Hill. I'm not picking on you, but you're in the group I'm interested in. It seems that we have a problem in that there aren't enough safe houses and wellness centres for the women who need them.

Your people say that it takes seven generations to see change. We've had the residential schools. You're going on with that.... Is there an influx in abuse to aboriginal women? Have you seen that? Is there a rise in it? Have you noticed it? Or is there a rise? Is it just the same?

• (1200)

Mr. Charles Hill: That's a very hard question to answer.

Ms. Dona Cadman: I don't mean to pick on you or—

Mr. Charles Hill: I know. I didn't say you were picking on me—

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Charles Hill: I'm just saying that it's difficult to answer.

I grew up on a reserve. Growing up, I didn't see any particularly great amount of violence toward women. There was a lot of violence toward other guys and toward white people, but...

The statistics show that there are increases. Also, the number of aboriginal women who either have been found murdered or who have gone missing and are assumed to have been murdered has been atrocious.

The other thing that hasn't been mentioned is the question of suicides. I know that there has been a drastic increase in the number of suicides. That's among all of the people, not necessarily aboriginal women, and again, this is something that has to be addressed.

With regard to the seven generations, it's not my understanding that it requires seven generations to have change, but that when you do an action now, you have to think ahead—

Ms. Dona Cadman: Seven generations ahead....

Mr. Charles Hill: Yes, seven generations ahead, and that's not quite the same as something happening right now, a drastic change.

Ms. Dona Cadman: Okay. So are we thinking seven generations ahead or only one generation?

Mr. Charles Hill: I think you're thinking seven generations behind—

Ms. Dona Cadman: Oh, okay. Thank you.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Charles Hill: —because we were independent, self-sustaining, and whatnot until we were in fact confined to reserves and we lost the economic bases that we had. This has led, one step after another, over seven generations. We're in the seventh generation now. We have to hark back to the time when we had control over our lives. This is why we always talk in terms of aboriginal control over aboriginal affairs, whether it be housing or governance and things like that.

At the start of the recession, I heard that people in Toronto were getting laid off. They were losing their jobs and they were saying that it was so degrading not to have any work. I'd say, "Welcome o the Indian world". Everybody was crying.

With regard to suicide, the young lady here, the hockey player's girl, committed suicide in a tragic way, and there was really a great uproar. I was thinking, well, if you compare that to the 200 or 300 Indian people who commit suicide every month of the year, so what....

The other thing, since we're talking about these things, is the question of exclusion. We were excluded seven generations ago when we fell into the minority position, and right now, we're being excluded on the one hand and forced to assimilate on the other.

When I say "excluded", a good example of it is the question of advertising in the public media: how many native people do you see in advertising? On television, you always see a white person, a black person, and an Asian. There are no native people. The only native person I've seen recently in advertising is Floyd Westerman, who passed away a year ago. He was marketing that Lakota medicine. He was the only one who I recall seeing.

There's a long way to go. The one thing we have to do is work in cooperation with one another and keep in mind that these statistics are in fact painting a tragic picture. And the statistics are not lying.

• (1205)

Ms. Dona Cadman: No.

Just quickly, can you give me one way we can improve? What do you think? In what area? What thing would you change to make things better?

Mr. Lanigan.

Mr. Jim Lanigan: One thing that's really evident is that there isn't a great supply of housing and we obviously need more. The one thing that we believe is that housing is the cornerstone to all of this. In that context, all the other symptoms that exist in the aboriginal community can start to be solved if you have a roof over your head. You can work on getting a better education, on getting a job, on getting training, but it all starts from having a place to live.

We believe that's the cornerstone of starting. NAHA has developed a national action plan for aboriginal housing. This action plan is built on the aboriginal housing trust model that was recently developed by the government. What it suggests.... We've just started the process. This trust has provided an opportunity to increase the supply, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. We're so far behind now that it's going take us 10 or 15 years of a similar type of funding to be able to meet all those needs. The plan also tries to incorporate the very issue of aboriginal women.

So in that sense, we want to call on the government to endorse this and to continue the process. Every time we find a little bit of success, everything stops. Somebody says, "Oh, this is a one-time shot, so you just get it once". Well, "once" just touches the edge of it; we need to continue that plan and address the problem in a much, much greater way.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Lanigan.

Thank you, Ms. Cadman.

We're now going to—

Ms. Dona Cadman: Excuse me, Madam Chair. Could I just ask if we could have that tabled? Do we have it?

The Chair: It is, I think, in English only, but—

Ms. Dona Cadman: Okay. But it will be coming...?

The Chair: Well, how does the committee feel?

Would you like it tabled? All right?

Ms. Dona Cadman: Thanks.

The Chair: So everyone would like it tabled. Translation would be in order, but until then, we can table it. Thank you.

Mr. Charles Hill: Madam, in this context, I did leave three copies, so you can have them copied.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Hill.

Now we have Ms. Mathysen for the NDP.

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

I want to thank everyone who's here and on television. I hope to be able to ask everyone a question, but I wanted to start with you, Mr. Hill.

You talked about second-stage housing. We've heard that there simply isn't enough second-stage housing for women to get their lives back in order and to look after their kids.

You also went on to talk about second-stage housing for women released from prison. Now, the reality is that we have a government calling for longer sentences, which means that women will be away from their children longer. I know that this creates an incredible strain on the functioning of that family again, and certainly we've been very concerned about the apprehension of children.

We're also hearing that government now wants people to serve full sentences; there's very limited access to parole now. It's being denied more and more, which means that there are fewer opportunities for rehabilitation and the kind of counselling that would help these women regain their lives and put their families back together.

I wonder if you could talk about your experiences. Is that a fair statement in regard to lack of opportunity and counselling for women who deserve the chance to put their lives back together?

• (1210)

Mr. Charles Hill: If I understand your question, is it that if second-stage housing for women is put in place, that is a good idea type of thing? Is that what you're asking?

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Yes, basically, and I'm thinking also of women who are coming out of penal institutions, because we very often forget them.

Mr. Charles Hill: Yes. This is why I spoke to that. I noticed that there was no mention of it in any of the material I was going through in preparation for this session. There was very little mention of transitional processes, including housing for people, for aboriginal women being released. I think there has to be special attention paid to that.

I think it would be beneficial if there were a transitional home for women. I know that there are several lodges for men, and I've worked in a couple of those lodges for men, but I'm not aware of any lodges that are dedicated specifically to women. In those lodges for men, they talk about the training that's given and that discusses traditional healing processes, traditional child raising, and family relationships.

Keep in mind that the residential school system is not too far behind us. That really destroyed a lot of our people. A prison is not too much different. We're talking now about, I guess, healing for the residential school victims. There has to be the same thought process applied to people who are being released. Why are they in prison in the first place? Somebody has mentioned that it's reaction to the violence that occurred to them, and this is quite often the case, but you have to delve underneath and see, for each individual, what went wrong and what can they do.

Also, since I'm thinking about it, I'll say that this is one of the key points of traditional beliefs and traditional education: that it's up to the individual to determine what they're going to do, but at the same time, they have to keep in mind that their actions do affect others in the community. This is part and parcel of things that people can in fact learn during the rehab session.

With regard to continued imprisonment and extending imprisonment, we're becoming another state of the Americans anyway there, so we'd better get used to it, maybe...

Ms. Irene Mathysen: I hope not. I truly hope not.

Mr. Charles Hill: I was trying to be facetious—

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Yes, I understand that.

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay.

We heard from INAC that the federal government supports housing on reserves, but not at full cost. First nations share the responsibility of providing the housing and the additional funding—or part of it, at any rate. How difficult is this in terms of raising that funding? I know that we had this three-part program: federal, provincial, and then community or others. Is that a problem?

Mr. Charles Hill: Yes, it is a very significant problem.

Jim, maybe you could say a few words.

Mr. Jim Lanigan: Yes. The National Aboriginal Housing Association primarily represents aboriginal housing providers off reserve, so in that sense we really don't get to access the resources that are available on reserve.

However, for an example of the percentage of first nations people who are housed in the off-reserve urban aboriginal housing system, here in Ottawa it's 90%. Within a 100-mile radius of Ottawa, there are 30,000 first nations people. They come to Ottawa for education, for health care, and to visit their relatives.

We don't get any support. We don't really want a whole lot of support, but we want to be able to do things like research and work on a national scale when those issues come before us. So in that sense, I think CMHC got off the boat a few years back, and we now get services from the Ottawa housing branch.

We're the only province in the country where our housing system is administered locally, and it's working as well as it can. The bright light in the process was the new mayor announcing \$14 million in homeless and housing initiatives for the city on an ongoing basis annually, so things are happening there.

But it would help us greatly if Indian Affairs started to recognize the fact that a great number of first nations people are living off reserve and that the organizations that are in the urban community are responding to those needs and are ill-equipped financially to do that.

• (1215)

Mr. Charles Hill: Just to add to that, our report shows that 54% of the registered population is living in urban areas, and that would be 45% on the reserves.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Mathysen, that's it.

Now we'll go to the second round. The second round is a five-minute round. Please do not forget that we do have a guest witness on video conferencing. Let's not forget him, as I'm sure he has a lot to say.

Five minutes, and we start with Ms. Simson for the Liberals.

Mrs. Michelle Simson (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would also like to thank all the witnesses for being here today, because I do agree that one of the fundamental root causes of the violence against aboriginal women primarily rests in the lack of affordable housing.

I'd like to start with you, Ms. Mitchell, in terms of your presentation and the economic action plan. It stated that \$150 million over two years was allocated for first nations housing. I always have trouble when it goes from dollars to units. Of the \$150 million, how much has been spent? I assume that the money runs out, that this lapses like everything else on March 31, so how much of the \$150 million over the past two years has been spent?

Ms. Gail Mitchell: I apologize. I will have to get back to you with the detailed figures on that. We sought proposals for housing initiatives—

Mrs. Michelle Simson: I understand that. The reason I ask specifically is that nine months into the economic action plan I posed a question to the government on the order paper. It was absolutely brutal, the amount of money that had been accessed because of this

three-way split: the provincial governments don't have the money to pony up, nor do the municipalities, or, in this case, first nations.

It's one thing to have numbers out there, and it sounds good, but what does it represent? Because it says that 2,000 units were built or renovated...so how many new units were built? You said "built or renovated". Obviously you have a breakdown, right?

Ms. Gail Mitchell: We're still waiting for reports to come back in on those. We can provide all of that.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Madam Chair, I would like the figures concerning how much has been spent, because this money will lapse.

I'm going to address this to you, Mr. Barriault. Are you getting money from the economic action plan? You have been allocated money, have you?

Mr. Alain Barriault: That's correct.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Are there provisions for extensions on any projects due to the remoteness of some of the communities where you have no access?

Mr. Alain Barriault: At this point we have no problem with making all the financial commitments that are required under the agreements, so that is not causing us a problem.

For us, the logistics of things are that we deliver material one year, and then we undertake the labour to build the following year, so our commitments will be in place and we will be able to deliver on all the funding in the time allotted.

• (1220)

Mrs. Michelle Simson: It won't dry up with a drop-dead date of March 31. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Alain Barriault: No. Our problem is that it's never enough money, but we will have all our commitments in place. We are in the process of construction, and our commitment dates will all be met.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Again, I'll address you, Mr. Barriault. You mentioned that 35% of first nations people live in crowded situations. This was based on what, the 2006 census?

Mr. Alain Barriault: No, on the 2010 Nunavut housing needs survey that was undertaken in partnership with Statistics Canada, so these are current figures.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Okay.

Is that a decrease? Is that number going down or increasing?

Mr. Alain Barriault: The number is increasing because the housing units available to people are increasing at a slower pace than the population is increasing.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Okay. I just wanted to see how successful...if we're headed in the right direction. Obviously that isn't the case.

Mr. Alain Barriault: No. We are trying to hold back the tide. We're slowing it down, but we haven't reversed the patterns yet.

The Chair: Thank you.

Next would be Mr. Boughen for the Conservatives, for five minutes.

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

For the whole panel, whoever would like to answer these questions, feel free to do so.

Here is one thing that came to mind when we talked about increasing the number of housing units. I'm wondering whether this is due to population increase or due to one family splitting up and now occupying two housing units rather than one?

Mr. Jim Lanigan: One thing that is evident is the increase of aboriginal people in the urban community. Ottawa, for example, according to the last census, had an increase of 40%. Some of that is people identifying as aboriginal, but much of it is people coming to the city or going from the city. There is a constant mobility there—

Mr. Ray Boughen: A shifting of people.

Mr. Jim Lanigan: That's it exactly.

Mr. Ray Boughen: Here is another thing that comes to mind when I hear about the violence and the dysfunctional families. We're building things at the end here. If we think of it as a spectrum, we're at the far end of the spectrum: we're building housing because we haven't been able to deal adequately with people who are in stressful situations with one another.

What are we doing with regard to looking at the starting point rather than the end point? What are we doing with regard to asking whether we are putting together family counselling operations or supplying educational programs for young people, programs that challenge them rather than see them running away from that building called "school"? What kind of front-end operations are we looking at that would alleviate the back end?

Mr. Jim Lanigan: I can answer that as well.

I always have to use the Ottawa example. Certainly I think we have a good array of aboriginal delivery services here in the city of Ottawa. We have services for children, for youth, and for women, and for housing and the aboriginal health centre. There's a significant amount of activity going on.

So yes, we are making progress. Again, the whole question is one of supply and demand. There are just more people coming in all the time, and there are more issues. A lot of the services that people come to Ottawa for aren't available on the first nations...they have to come here to get them. We have to ensure that when they do arrive, they fit into the community, that they get a sense of belonging here and they get to become good neighbours with the people who live next door. We try to do that through our housing system. We have counsellors. Each of the organizations that exists in town has them.

● (1225)

Mr. Charles Hill: I want to add a couple of words to that. Not all of the people on all of the reserves are dysfunctional, and not all of the families. A lot of the dysfunction that has occurred harks back to the deprivation I was talking about earlier with regard to the loss of economic bases and things like that. It varies from reserve to reserve.

My reserve in southern Ontario is right in the heart of the Golden Horseshoe, so there are a lot of jobs around. People can work off the reserve, but they live on the reserve. The other thing that is

happening on that reserve, though, is that people are taking on the challenges of helping people recover, and I think that's happening right across the country. Various reserves have set up their own counselling systems. Much of that is based on traditional teachings in terms of healing.

Mr. Ray Boughen: Thank you.

Here is one last question. What consideration has been made to the construction of townhouses and apartment buildings rather than single-detached houses for folks?

Mr. Charles Hill: Do you mean on reserve?

Mr. Ray Boughen: I'm talking about anywhere there's a need.

Mr. Charles Hill: We have a seniors residence here that we purchased through Gignul Non-Profit Housing, going on five or six years ago, and presently, thanks to the aboriginal housing trust fund, we're in the process of building a 28-apartment complex that will belong to us. So there is some movement in this area, on reserves and in other cities.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hill and Mr. Boughen.

We have Monsieur Desnoyers for the Bloc.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome to all of you. My question is for all of you.

Mr. Lanigan, you scared me a little when you said that it would take between 10 and 15 years to meet social housing needs, because you may be right. This would mean that, if we want to fight violence against women, we have decided to focus on poverty and the lack of housing, since these are some of the main reasons why there is violence against women.

I have a question for Ms. Mitchell. In 2005, there was a shortfall of between 20,000 to 35,000 housing units on aboriginal reserves. In 2006, 26% of natives living on reserve were living in overcrowded housing conditions. As for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, that figure stood at 40%.

Does the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development have a strategy to counter this problem? Indeed, it is a fact that overcrowded housing is one of the main factors that lead to violence against women.

Ms. Gail Mitchell: Thank you for your question.

As for this strategy, we have two programs. First, we have a housing program,

[*English*]

through which we provide financial assistance. Also, we have a program to construct shelters for aboriginal women. There are 41 shelters servicing 300 communities.

[*Translation*]

As it now stands, additional funding which—

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: Your report contains several figures, and other figures were published in 2005. Based on those numbers, at the time, there was a shortfall of 35,000 housing units.

In your opinion, how much time will it take to solve this problem, even with the programs you mentioned?

Ms. Gail Mitchell: Of course, it will take a very long time.

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: So, this means that for a very long time, women will continue to be victims of violence. In many cases, it is inevitable that these women, who live in overcrowded conditions, will have to deal with major and significant problems.

Does the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development have a strategy which includes an objective that will bring about results more quickly than “in a very long time”?

[*English*]

Ms. Gail Mitchell: We find that housing on reserve is not lasting as long as one would expect it to. The pressures of overcrowding and other impacts affect the life expectancy, if you will, of housing. We have to look at it from the angle of the people who are occupying homes and the supports they need to be able to manage that, as well as from the angle of the community in managing the housing stock.

Indian Affairs doesn't own the housing, nor does it directly manage the housing stock. Communities need assistance in developing the types of skills to manage social housing. We are putting in place programs to support better capacity building. We're working very closely with CMHC—

● (1230)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: That sounds like it is too little, too late.

A little earlier, you said that this created jobs in communities. If major programs were implemented, this would create good jobs, which would probably bring down poverty levels in the various communities, and it would, at the very least, solve part of the problem. Because, based on what every witness has said before the committee, the problems in aboriginal communities are extremely serious. We will be making an important recommendation to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

I will come back to you, Mr. Barriault. We were told that in Nunavut, the rate of overcrowded housing was 40%. A few moments ago, my colleague Nicole Demers talked about what she saw in that region. How long will it take for your program to address this issue in Nunavut?

Mr. Alain Barriault: The way we decided to address this issue, because you can never solve every problem, is that we—

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: You said “never”. This means that women will forever continue to suffer, correct?

Mr. Alain Barriault: It means that if we do not change the way we do things, we will not be able to solve these problems. We are trying to find better ways of doing so.

One of the things we need to improve is logistics. There are many small communities spread out everywhere. These villages are not connected. No matter how much we help one community, that help will only go towards that community; it cannot be shared. For us, this represents huge challenges and it is very expensive. Every small village of a 140 people needs housing and support, which is very expensive. Until now, the funding spent to solve problems has been

distributed equally, based on population, but this approach is not fair given our logistical challenges.

If we want to build a building in Taloyoak, we buy the building materials in Ottawa. These materials are then trucked 5,000 kilometres to the coast of British Columbia. Then, the materials are loaded on a ship, which travels another 12,000 kilometres before getting to the village. The solution costs a lot of money.

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: Do you have any?

Mr. Alain Barriault: We do not have a—

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much. You're over your time now. I'm sorry.

Ms. Mathysen.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope I can get all these questions in.

We've heard a diversity of opinions with regard to the location of shelters. For example, in Thunder Bay there was a discussion about the fact that the shelter intended for women who were abused was being taken over by the general population because there was a dreadful lack of housing in remote communities. So it simply wasn't possible to have a separated shelter for an abused woman or abused women.

While we were in Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout, we talked to a woman who runs the local shelter in Sioux Lookout. She talked about the problems with women having to come into the city from their communities. They had to leave their children behind. It was extremely stressful. They felt isolated. In addition to that, there were transportation costs.

Could you clarify who's responsible for paying the transportation and financial support costs for women who have to leave their communities because there's no shelter there and they have to go to the larger centre?

● (1235)

Ms. Gail Mitchell: Indian and Northern Affairs, through its social programs, does provide support to communities and we do fund a program related to prevention of violence against women. We can provide a more detailed response to that question.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay. It was my understanding that the shelter itself had to cover the costs, which meant they were taking money out of programming to make sure these women were able to get in and out of their communities.

Also, in some cases, the reality was that a woman would leave more than once. She'd go home, desperately looking to be with her children, and find that nothing had changed, that the abuse was still there, and that she had to return to the urban centre.

One of the things that troubles me very much about the homelessness partnering strategy is its temporary nature, the ad hoc nature of it. It's funded now, am I correct, to March 31, 2012?

A voice: To 2014.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: To 2014? But once that date passes, then we're back to, "Is that money going to be there or not?" This must be very frustrating for you for planning things and to put in place something substantive that will make a difference over the long term. As we've heard, we're seven generations behind.

Ms. Barbara Lawless: Well, I think what I can say to that is that the commitment was made back in 2008 and was a five-year commitment to address homelessness issues. It was the first time that we had received that length of support. It was a five-year commitment at that time. I think that is significant. We have just had the strategy renewed until March 31, 2014.

We did consultations with a number of community stakeholders and provinces and territories across the country in 2009 to determine whether or not the approach we were taking, which is essentially the community-based approach, was the best approach. It was almost unanimous that taking a community-based approach to address the issue of homelessness is a very strong approach, and it was even recognized as a best practice by the United Nations. So in terms of the approach, definitely, and I think the significant investment of five years of funding, which was the first time they received that amount of funding in any one block, was significant.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay.

Certainly a community-based approach is very important, but wouldn't core funding, funding you could depend on, help to build the capacity within communities and also ensure that the housing was going to be there? We could rely on incremental new housing.

Ms. Barbara Lawless: Well, I think the other interesting thing that's happened in the last couple of years is that you do see provinces and territories doing a lot more around homelessness and housing. In the last couple of years, seven provinces and territories have announced a housing strategy or a housing and homelessness strategy. I think that's significant, because it's not just one level of government or one NGO out there that can solve the problem. I think it does take a very collaborative approach.

I think the approach we take under the homelessness partnering strategy is successful. For every dollar we invest, roughly about \$2.31 is invested from other resources, so that allows us to leverage additional funding, and I think that is significant.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Yes. I understand that the need for other—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: I thought I could sneak one in there.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I'm going to get a buzzer that's going to go off for everybody.

Thank you.

We have to go in camera in about five minutes, and we do not, therefore, have time for another round. Sometimes we do and sometimes we don't. We don't have time for another round, but as chair I'm allowed to ask questions occasionally, and I want to ask some questions today. I haven't had an opportunity because of lack of time during the last few times we have had witnesses.

Something that concerns me is that wherever I go, I hear the same problem, and I also find that it's not being answered to my satisfaction. I still don't get it.

INAC is responsible for aboriginal people. This is a fiduciary responsibility of the federal government. Therefore, if anybody is going to help aboriginal people on reserve, whether it is with regard to housing, health care, education, or training—you name it—it's going to have to be INAC, working, of course, with partners within the federal government. But it is the federal government's fiduciary responsibility, so I fail to understand why it is that this is not happening appropriately on reserve.

But secondly, I understand that off reserve—and I hear that three-quarters of aboriginal people leave and go off reserve—once aboriginal people get into the cities and off reserve, they are abandoned by INAC to the other levels of government.

I know that you give money to other levels of government, but are there no criteria? Do you not say, when you give money to the other levels of government, that every time you send them money, it's going to be for shelters, for transition housing, for housing for aboriginal people...? That's what your money is coming for: it's for aboriginal people and not for use by anybody else.

We find that the problem for women—and I think Mr. Lanigan said it well—is housing, housing, housing. You know: "It's housing, stupid." That's the sort of bottom line I'm hearing: it's a first thing. We see and we've heard, and it has been very difficult for all of us—I'd like to think that I speak for everyone here, regardless of party, and that this is a non-partisan issue now for us—that aboriginal women leave the reserve because they don't have safe places to go to escape domestic violence.

So they come into the city, and when they get into the city, they don't have any access either to shelters—or if they do, it's very temporary—or to a place to live. They are given money that is welfare from social assistance, which is, in many instances, \$1,000 or \$950, depending on the province, and they're expected to look after the kids they've brought out of the abusive home. They're expected to find housing and feed and clothe their kids with money that is not sufficient. So their kids are apprehended, taken away, and given to non-aboriginal families to adopt, who then get \$2,500 to look after two children.

Now, if this is not discrimination—and blatant, systemic, institutional discrimination—against aboriginal women, I don't know what is. I'm not blaming here...I'm just saying that it's a fact we heard and it astounds me. I don't understand why it's happening and why it is that the federal government does not believe it has a duty to ensure that aboriginal women escaping violent situations off reserve are given the same amount of money to look after their kids that a non-aboriginal family is given. That is certainly fair, equitable, and reasonable.

Can you explain it to me? I don't get it.

Ms. Mitchell, we'll start with you.

•(1240)

Ms. Gail Mitchell: Thank you.

I'm not sure that I can fully explain it, but I will take into account

The Chair: Do you think it's explicable?

Ms. Gail Mitchell: Well, I guess the issue of INAC's responsibility vis-à-vis aboriginal people really derives from class 24 in section 91 of the Constitution. That also links back to the question of where communities are: the land base. The issue of access to the appropriate types of support in urban centres really becomes a matter of provincial jurisdiction related to the provision of social housing and support or community-level support. Can we do a better job of coordinating efforts? Absolutely. I don't think there's any question that we can do a better job.

When it comes to housing on reserve, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs has provided financial support to enable the community level—we've talked a bit about community-level decision-making—to provide housing to members.

The Chair: I'm talking about being off reserve, Ms. Mitchell. I just want to focus on off reserve.

Every time we ask this question, we're told that it's not our problem, it's the provinces, we give them money.... Don't you have criteria? Don't you have strings attached to that money? Isn't it clear? The money is obviously insufficient.

Ms. Sharon Matthews: Maybe I can speak to this.

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Matthews. Please, somebody help me here.

Ms. Sharon Matthews: I don't have the answer either, to be clear, but in terms of setting the federal parameters, certainly with all of the funding the federal government puts on the table through CMHC—and it's not insignificant, there's a lot of money on the table—

The Chair: Sure.

Ms. Sharon Matthews: —there are agreements with all the provinces and territories. We've arranged it such that they design and deliver those programs.

You sort of ask why we don't set parameters that say “thou shalt” do this or that. We do have some of those “thou shalt”. They are not this client group versus that client group; they are how many federal dollars there are per unit, for example, or “yes, we're open to energy efficiency”. There is accountability in terms of reporting and

understanding what you're doing with the funds within that global framework.

But the real reason, frankly, that we don't set a “thou shalt serve this client group in this particular circumstance” to the degree we would have done, say, 20 years ago, is that the relationship is different. We partner with the provinces and territories. They come to the table. For every dollar we come to the table with, they come to the table with a dollar, and they're working to the degree they can to bring it to being as local as they can.

As we've heard others say in the room, the local community—

•(1245)

The Chair: But you're speaking about housing in general. I asked INAC because I think that INAC has a responsibility for aboriginal housing money and for anything that goes to aboriginal people.

I think my question is.... It is so inequitable. I mean, how can you compare \$1,000 with \$2,500 for non-aboriginal families? It is institutionalized discrimination when the institutions of government are not ensuring equitability in making sure that aboriginal women have the same opportunities to look after their children that other people have for looking after aboriginal children.

I know that all of us have questioned this. I still don't get an answer. I still don't have an answer and I really don't know why I don't have an answer or why we can't get an answer for this. It's been going on for a very long time now. This is not news. This is not something that just happened the other day. One of the things we have a problem with as a committee is understanding this institutionalized discrimination against aboriginal people.

Mr. Hill.

Mr. Charles Hill: I can't answer the question specifically, but I have my suspicions. It harks back to the efforts that have been made over hundreds of years to eradicate us as a people, first through confining us in the concentration camps they call reserves and expecting us to die off. There were only 192,000 people left in the late 1800s.

That mentality of doing away with the Indian problem still exists at the higher levels of government. That is the sad part of it. The efforts that are going on right now are intended to make us assimilate rather than help us get back on our feet. If you assimilate us, then the Indian problem is gone. This is unacceptable to us as nations, as aboriginal people. I think that is the reason that there's a continued drive to—

The Chair: Mr. Hill, I'm sorry, but I've just gone over my own time. Everybody should smack me across the wrist for it.

Mr. Charles Hill: That's all right. I'll forgive you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I want to thank everyone for coming.

All I have to say, Mr. Hill, is that your explanation saddens me so profoundly in Canada today.

Perhaps we can thank everyone now—

Ms. O'Neill-Gordon, do you have a point of order?

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): No, I just have a comment. It's not a question.

I'm happy to hear Sharon Matthews' comment that there is a sufficient amount of money on the table and even happier to hear Barbara say that for the first time they are given a five-year term and that gives them time. That's very, very important to hear, because our government is trying hard to work for the good of all the—

The Chair: Thank you, Tilly, but we must go in camera now.

Hon. Anita Neville: We don't have to go in camera for my motion.

The Chair: You don't have to go in camera for your motion? All right.

Then perhaps we can just move swiftly. While everyone is leaving, I'd like us to focus on a couple of things in business that we must do today.

We have a budget that I need you to okay, if I could have the attention of the committee, please. We have a budget to study the language changes at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The budget is \$6,300. Can I have an okay for this budget, please?

All right, Dona, so moved. Thank you very much.

A seconder? Good.

Thank you.

Now we'll go to Ms. Neville's motion, which I'm going to read for you:

That the Committee recommend that the government conduct a gender audit of all federal funding of sport, including Sport Canada funding programs, funding of infrastructure projects by Infrastructure Canada, as well as contributions to international athletic competitions hosted in Canada, to ensure that funding is being distributed on an equitable basis;

That the conclusions of this audit be made publicly available and tabled in the House of Commons; and

That this motion be reported to the House.

Ms. Neville, speak to your motion, please, and then I'll entertain debate.

• (1250)

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you.

Very briefly, Madam Chair, I guess I'm continually surprised—and I shouldn't be—at the inequities that are prevalent in so many aspects of the world we operate in. I don't want to equate this with violence against aboriginal women, but you talked about institutionalized discrimination. I would say to you that, knowingly or unknowingly, there is, very much, institutionalized discrimination against female athletes. I think it's important that we as a committee speak out on behalf of women athletes.

We did it in February of 2008, when we expressed concern to the Olympic committee on the recognition or non-recognition of women's ski jumping as an event at the Winter Olympics. We know that moneys are being given out or being requested for the Pan Am Games. We know that moneys are being given out for various infrastructure projects that are focusing largely on male-participation athletic events.

I'm not saying that we take radical action; I'm saying that we gather information and know the reality of the situation for women athletes in this country. I can go through a host of discriminatory events that take place. I don't want to prolong the discussion, but there are many instances: the number of events they're allowed to compete in, the dollars allocated, and the fact they're under the jurisdiction of an international sports body that makes up the rules, and whether they violate Canadian human rights codes in this country or not, they have the wherewithal to do that.

I am just asking that the committee speak out on behalf of women athletes and that we ask the government to move forward in gathering this information.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Neville.

Anyone wishing to speak for or against this, please speak up.

Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): I don't completely disagree, but I don't completely agree either, at least not with the way it is worded.

First, Sport Canada funding is already available to the public online. The list of everyone who has received funding is there, including funding for women. Everything is available.

As far as Infrastructure Canada is concerned, I would like you to be more specific. I am convinced that when you build roads and things like that, gender is not an issue. When you build a road, it's a road. When you build an arena, it's an arena. Not everything is gender-based.

Further, doing an audit costs the taxpayers. If you want information, perhaps we should invite representatives from Sport Canada, or the minister, to appear before us and to provide an explanation. That would be preferable and would not cost taxpayers any more money.

We should put that question to Sport Canada, through the clerk or the analysts, in order to find out more about the funding, but this information is already available. I am convinced that the representatives or the minister would be pleased to discuss this matter with us, since the information is already available online. I went online yesterday and everything is there.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there anybody else?

Madame Demers.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I simply wanted a clarification, Madam Chair.

Sylvie, I thought that every department already conducted a gender-based analysis.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Perhaps gender-based analyses are already carried out, but when you are dealing with infrastructure projects, such as roads or arenas, I am convinced that the issue of female drivers is not taken into account.

• (1255)

Ms. Nicole Demers: I am thinking of how these infrastructure projects might affect men, women and children.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes, but a road is a road. It affects everyone the same way.

Ms. Nicole Demers: No, but we should find out whether the money which was invested will affect the number of workers who are women and the number of workers who are men.

Ms. Sylvie Boucher: Well, that is not the same—

Ms. Nicole Demers: Are we going to have a—

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: It's not the same thing.

[English]

The Chair: Excuse me, Madame Boucher. Madame Demers is speaking. This is not a debate back and forth.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I'm sorry, but she asked me a question and I answered.

[English]

The Chair: Let Madame Demers speak. Then I'm going to go to Mrs. Grewal.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I had the impression that gender-based analysis was already being carried out in various departments. If that's not the case, I think it should be done.

In the area of sport, after the Own the Podium program ended, many athletes ended up without any funding, without the support they had received from their sponsors in preparation for the Olympics. Indeed, Sport Canada, through the Own the Podium program, had provided funding to the athletes so they could compete in the Olympics. As a result, we won more medals than ever before: 26 medals, including 14 gold. I remember because, that week, it was on TV.

This should motivate us to provide our athletes with the support they need to continue their training without having to worry about money. This is especially the case for women, because they receive fewer sponsorships than men.

Skier Érik Guay won another competition this week. It is easy for him to obtain sponsorships. However, it is harder for women. This week, two female skiers said on TV that it was harder for them.

Perhaps this matter is worth looking into.

[English]

The Chair: Madame Demers, we're going to have to... We're running out of time here. We're going to have to go to Ms. Grewal.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Excuse me, Madam Chair.

It might be a good idea to look into this matter.

[English]

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to ask Ms. Neville if she could clarify this a little with regard to infrastructure projects.

Hon. Anita Neville: I want to know when moneys are given to stadiums and other sporting activities whether the stadium dollars are going to support men's sporting events only or whether women's sports groups participate in those. I don't know that. I think it's information we want.

Infrastructure dollars go to a whole host of things. They go to—

The Chair: Ms. Neville, can you wrap up? I need to call a vote.

Hon. Anita Neville: I'll stop.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have to call a vote. There's no more room for discussion on this issue.

Those in favour of the motion as written?

Yes, Madame Boucher? I'm listening.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I think that some people would like to speak to that issue. We have the right to know how we are going to move forward on this matter.

[English]

The Chair: Madame Boucher, would everyone on this committee agree to stay an extra 10 minutes so we can finish a debate?

I am looking at the time. We have to get out of here at one o'clock. It is now one minute to one. If you're prepared to stay here, I need unanimous consent of this committee to stay for an extra 10 minutes. May I ask the committee first?

Mr. Ray Boughen: What about next week to vote...?

The Chair: Are you prepared to wait until next week, Ms. Neville?

All right, then. We will postpone this until next week. We will discuss it more fully. Thank you.

Because obviously we have to finish at a particular time, and I can only spread that time or move the debate to another day, if the mover is in agreement, and if everyone's in agreement to spend extra time... I can't just allow people to speak.

I'm not being unfair, Madame Boucher, when I say the time is up and we have to cut off the debate. Thank you.

Can I entertain a motion to adjourn?

Sorry. Dona?

Ms. Dona Cadman: Can I ask you a question? It's not about this vote or anything. I'll be very quick.

The Chair: Okay. We have time.

Ms. Dona Cadman: I want to go to a reserve. We've been to Williams Lake. I don't know how many of you have been on a reserve. A few of you have, but I have not been on one. I would like to personally see one, if we could. Is that possible?

I would even use my own money and my own time to go to see it. I just want to see first-hand.

• (1300)

The Chair: Well, the blunt answer is that we have no more money left for travel, so there is no more money left to do that.

Dona, you can do what you wish. You can spend money and go to a reserve. I'm sure we can find a reserve for you to go to if you want to do that on your own. We can get you that information, etc., but unfortunately we had to bargain down the amount of money, which I think, as everyone mentioned here, was terrible. We watch other committees getting money to travel to Nigeria and everywhere to talk about immigration and we don't get money to deal with a really seminal problem, unfortunately.

Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I would like to know whether it is possible to change committee rooms. It is becoming harder for some

committee members to get to 131 Queen Street. Would it be possible to have our next meetings elsewhere than here?

This morning, I saw Ms. Neville again. We always arrive late, because many committees meet at 1 Wellington Street. Would it be possible to meet over there, or in the La Promenade building, or in another place, which would be easier to get to? It is hard to make it over here.

[*English*]

The Chair: When we come back, we will be at One Wellington; we've wrangled that. But the point remains that, no matter what the committee is, getting to 131 Queen has been a problem. I would encourage all of you to speak to your House leaders and your whips and to complain, because the problem is not that we don't have the buses. We have three buses coming to 131 Queen. Everyone else has two; we have three. We come out of there and three buses are lined up. We come out to get a bus on the Hill and there are three buses lined up, one behind the other.

Either we need some kind of coordinator to manage these buses so one's on the way, one is here, and one is there...obviously. Please speak to your House leaders and whips about this problem, because it's facing everybody who comes to this venue.

An hon. member: So it's 131 Queen that's the problem?

The Chair: Yes, it's 131 Queen.

Thank you.

Can I have a motion to adjourn, please? Okay, Dona.

The meeting is adjourned.

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