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Chair

Mr. Dean Allison

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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● (0845)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC)): We'll get started. We are dealing with Canada's Arctic foreign policy.

I want to thank Anja Jeffrey, director of the Centre for the North, from the Conference Board of Canada, for being here today. Thank you very much.

We had also hoped to have Greg Poelzer, who is a professor at the University of Saskatchewan, but he is a little under the weather this morning. We'll see if we can get him again at some point.

Nevertheless, we want to thank you, Ms. Jeffrey, for being here today to contribute to our study on the Arctic. We will start with your opening statement, which will be for approximately 10 minutes or so. If you go over a little bit, that's all right because you're the only witness. Then we will go back and forth with questions from the opposition and the government.

Ms. Jeffrey, we'll turn the floor over to you.

● (0850)

Ms. Anja Jeffrey (Director, Centre for the North, Conference Board of Canada): Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here.

Just a few words about me. My name is Anja Jeffrey. I'm a Danish national, but I live in Canada now. My background is in foreign policy. I was a career diplomat with the Danish foreign service for 17 years. I've had two overseas postings, one in the United States in the 1990s, and from 2003 to 2007, as the deputy ambassador to Canada. I lived in Ottawa for four years as a career diplomat, getting to know the country, its policies and politics, and its various regions very well, to the extent that we fell in love with the country and decided to come and live here permanently. In 2009, we immigrated, and I've been living in Canada with my husband and my children since then.

My background is varied. I have a bachelor's in business administration and a master's in international relations. Since I came to work in Canada, I have been primarily preoccupied with circumpolar issues and with the north, both from an economic and a social perspective. When I returned to Denmark in 2007, I became the director for our Arctic resources management committee, or management unit, and one of my files was seals, negotiating the EU seal ban—not that we were promoting the ban; we were negotiating on behalf of Greenland, and were trying to the best of our ability to work against the ban.

In 2009, when I came, I started to work for the Canadian government, and in 2011 I landed the job I have now as the director of the Centre for the North at the Conference Board of Canada. I will tell you a little about the centre.

I have a 10-minute statement, which is written down, so it can be circulated afterwards and picked up, if need be. I'll read that and make those linkages between domestic and foreign policy that I think are extremely important. I would be very open to answering your questions afterwards.

First, a little about my centre. The Centre for the North brings aboriginal leaders, businesses, governments, academia, and communities together, providing a balanced matrix of dialogue in Canada on northern issues. We at the centre deliver cutting-edge research, based on three foundational themes of thriving communities, economic development, and sovereignty and security in Canada's north. Our research is north-centric. It focuses on northern needs and wants. We have published reports on innovative pathways to education in the north, on labour force capacity issues, and on understanding the impacts of major resource projects.

Biannually, we issue an economic forecast for the territories. On Monday we are releasing a report on sustainable options for housing in the north, a highly sensitive issue and one where smart projects are now leading the way to better housing solutions both on and off reserve. Our work fills important information and data gaps in Canada. We provide accurate, in-depth, and consistent information to people across Canada about the northern potential and where it's going.

My testimony to the committee today will focus on the human dimension of Arctic foreign policy. Why is that? All our research consistently points to the fact that resilient and thriving northern communities are the key to unlocking the tremendous economic potential of the north and to moving the northern agenda forward. The centre's research report, “Getting it Right: Assessing and Building Resilience in Canada's North”, confirms that rather than being too concerned about Arctic sovereignty and national security issues, northerners want to live in secure, prosperous, and self-reliant communities. There is an obvious causal link: resilient communities equal an economically sustainable Arctic region, equal a robust Arctic foreign policy based on the inherent strength of northerners.

● (0855)

Resilience refers to the capacity of a community to anticipate risk, limit impact, and recover rapidly in the face of change. By today's standards, many northern communities, particularly aboriginal ones, are not resilient. Rapid socio-economic changes brought on by mine openings or closures—the boom and bust cycle—remoteness and infrastructure gaps, and a lack of economic diversity make building community resilience a daunting task for northerners.

Without question, one of the most acute risks facing northerners is climate change and its related consequences. For example, climate change is severely affecting the northern housing stock. Houses are deteriorating at a much faster rate than those in the south and are far more expensive to operate. Add overcrowding and you have a ticking time bomb on your hands. In Nunavut, 25% of homes have six or more people living in them; in northern Manitoba, that number is 20%.

Our comprehensive report on housing in the north recommends integration of technology and innovation in northern housing designs to offset climatic factors and reduce operating and maintenance costs.

We believe that strong policy measures are needed to drive and foster northern resilience. Rather than trying to bolster resilience from the top down, policy makers must instead formulate strategies that enable locally driven resilience-building measures. One way of doing that is to work with communities to first identify their specific risks and strengths, and their capacity to respond, and then to craft recovery and implementation plans that work on the ground. This is a way of empowering people to take action and break the cycle.

Building off our report on resilience, we are developing a pilot project in collaboration with an aboriginal community in the Northwest Territories to address social emergencies and natural disasters that may impact their community in the future.

To sum up, in terms of foreign policy impacts, it's important to stress that a healthy and resilient north is a north that can effectively drive Canadian sovereignty and security. Asserting Canadian sovereignty, outside military operations or the Rangers, requires that we continue to maintain populations in even the most remote areas. If people move away because of lack of economic opportunities or dismal social conditions, we cannot ensure consistent monitoring of our sovereign territory. So we need to invest in people and their communities. In essence, promoting Canada's northern strategy abroad starts at home, with a good understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by northerners and adequate measures to address them.

I have brought copies of the report that I'm referencing in my presentation, “Getting it Right: Assessing and Building Resilience in Canada's North”. It's also available from our website, centreforthenorth.ca.

Thank you.

● (0900)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll start with the opposition, Mr. Dewar, for seven minutes, please.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Thank you to our witness. We're also thankful that you decided to choose Canada in which to settle. I'm obviously very fortunate, because you actually live in Ottawa Centre.

The challenges we face as a country when it comes to the Arctic writ large.... Many have talked at this committee about the importance of understanding what the issues really are. In fact, we've heard many times that it's not really about the notion of sovereignty/security, as is often understood in diplomatic terms—that is, we're under threat or we have to invest in military infrastructure because somehow we're under threat from a perceived enemy. It's about the notion of security and sovereignty investing in people, particularly in this area of the world. As you know better than I do, if you don't do that, then you don't have a claim, in the large sense.

I'm really interested in your own experience, your background. Can you tell us a little bit about the Danish model in terms of governance, how you set things up?

I have two very specific questions.

First, in terms of the Danish model, when it looks at foreign affairs and this balance between people and the north, what department really leads? And give us a guesstimate of how many people are actually involved. That's the first question.

Second, you're engaged at the Conference Board and in your centre with people of the north. Who actually are you working with specifically? What organizations? And who's at the table?

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: May I address the last question first?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Please do.

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: The Centre for the North was established in 2009. It's a five-year initiative. That's the mandate of the centre. The Conference Board of Canada is a not-for-profit, independent institution. Everything the Conference Board of Canada does needs to be funded. It has no endowments, and it has no government funding.

When we do big initiatives such as this one—we also have a centre for food and we have other centres—we basically put together a group of investors, because the research needs to be funded. When it comes to Canada's north, who are the main stakeholders? That's the first question you need to ask yourself. We have what I would consider around our table, around our centre, the only balanced matrix of dialogue in Canada on northern issues.

So what does that mean? We have the federal government represented, so of course we have CanNor and AANDC; we have the Privy Council Office, HRSDC, Health Canada, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and PHAC. We have all the provincial and territorial governments that have northern jurisdictions. So of course it wouldn't be P.E.I. It wouldn't be Nova Scotia. But it would be Labrador or Quebec. It would be Ontario. You can carry on from there.

We have industry at the table, so we have mining companies. We have GE Canada. We have Cisco. We have people from private industry and a lot of the banks investing in this initiative through corporate social responsibility measures. We have academia at the table—Greg Poelzer, who is unfortunately not able to be here today, is a very close friend of mine. He and I are writing a report at the moment with Ken Coates and researchers that he has at his disposal on the role of the public sector in northern governance. We are able to do that only because we formed those partnerships with academia. We have people who are experts in the field, and we have those types of networks do the research. I might fund it, but they go out and they do it.

We have aboriginal organizations, for obvious reasons, at the table. I just had the Assembly of First Nations join, so I have all three national aboriginal organizations at the table. We have the Métis National Council, ITK, and the Assembly of First Nations. On top of that, we have a number of the regional first nations organizations at the table. In Saskatchewan, we have the Prince Albert Grand Council, etc.

We have not-for-profits, including the International Institute for Sustainable Development. Having this body of 50 members come together really creates an interesting dialogue on northern issues in Canada. I would like to have more members at the table, but I'm always looking for a good fit. Not everybody pays. First Air is a member of the centre, and they will give me free tickets, so I can go wherever they fly—to Nunavut very often. There are other in-kind contributors as well as cash contributors. So I have about $1 million a year to pay my staff and do the research I do.

To me, it's extremely important that the Conference Board of Canada, as a convener in this space—as neither government nor industry nor anything else—can actually come forward, in a balanced way, and, based of course on data that we collect, put the types of things out there that nobody else is able to put out there.

Is that carrying over into my next question?

● (0905)

Mr. Paul Dewar: No.

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: All right. The next question is about the governance model of Denmark and Greenland, which is very different from that of Canada, of course. Denmark is effectively the Kingdom of Denmark, so it consists of Denmark, the Faeroe Islands, and Greenland. Greenland has self-government, as you know. It was voted for in 2009. It's all embedded in an act, ratified and passed by both parliaments. It lays out very clear rules, engagements, and conditions for Greenlandic sovereignty, so to speak. There's a formula in there as to how much of the money from resource development Greenland can keep and how much the block grant will be sort of clawed back as they get richer and richer.

In the wake of the act, all the discussion about them not being an equal partner, never getting to sit at the table, and never getting to do this has all died. They are actually now the masters of their own destiny. They can decide what they want. Foreign policy is not a jurisdiction of Greenland. It's negotiated through Copenhagen. But in the Arctic Council, you will see that the senior Arctic official from Copenhagen sits side by side with the senior Arctic official from Greenland. There will be two government representatives at the table. So it's not handled through the permanent participants, the PPs; it's actually handled in a government-to-government conversation.

I know that's not feasible in Canada because there is a different structure, but that's the way it works for us. So there is autonomy for Greenland, but in very close cooperation with Denmark.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Jeffrey, thank you very much for that great overview. It was very helpful.

I'm going to turn over to Ms. Brown, for seven minutes, please.

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thanks very much for being here and sharing your expertise with the committee. I found your opening remarks very informative.

I'm very interested in the peoples of the north, and I really think that what Canada does in our leadership on the Arctic Council is going to set a tone for what other countries do. I know that other circumpolar countries are having their own deliberations, debates, arguments, as it were, with their northern peoples. I think we're very fortunate, moving into the council, to have a representative from the north who is going to be the chair. She brings with her a northern perspective, a northern experience, and a northern understanding of the peoples of the north.

You used the phrase “resilient communities” and you talked specifically.... I'm very interested in seeing your report on smart projects, housing construction, and getting it right, because we face significant challenges in the north with establishing what are resilient communities. I'm interested to know what your report suggests we can do.

When I was putting myself through my degree, I worked for an engineering company, and they had three branches of engineering. They were civil engineers, but they also had an interest in a housing business, so I did design work for houses. But I gathered an understanding of what it takes for us in Canada to do the construction necessary to build, even in southern Ontario, resilient communities, where we have to dig to a depth of six feet to put down a roadbed so that we can ensure that it's not going to be disturbed by the frost.

We have much deeper frost in the north, so the chances of building proper water and sanitation for resilient communities that are going to provide proper health opportunities, potable water, and removal of sewage are even more of a challenge there. Did you address those things in the report? Is that something you touched on, and could you share with the committee some of the discoveries you made and what your recommendations are for building resilient communities for our north?

● (0910)

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: The report on housing contains four innovative case studies. One of them is in Iqaluit, where they're now building houses above code, and one of them is on reserve, where the Holmes Group has worked very closely with the band and council to build housing that goes above code.

A lot of the issues that we see in the north today are due to the fact that the construction that was put up never met minimum code requirements. For some reason, it was decided that wasn't necessary in the north, so what you see today is abysmal housing and you see housing crises, especially on reserve.

The report contains these four case studies because we want to point to the fact that there actually are initiatives out there right now that are trying to address these challenges, and we can move forward as a nation in a very positive manner if we just pay attention to the glass half full instead of the glass half empty all the time.

Yes, Attawapiskat is a reality, and there are quite a few Attawapiskats around the country. But there are private sector initiatives, some of them in cooperation with the public sector, that are really trying to address the challenges and go in and build for the future.

Now, I come back to codes and standards because it is extremely important. My first job in Canada was actually with the Standards Council of Canada, and I negotiated with AANDC and with Environment Canada some money under the adaptation program for the standards development system to address the codes and standards issues in the north. Then I left the Standards Council and somebody else took over. There's actually a working group right now, with representatives from the territories, as well as from Nunavik, that is looking very hard at permafrost issues, looking very hard at some of the other issues related to the built infrastructure. They are going to come up with new standards that can be embedded or incorporated by reference into regulation and into code.

That is the first step. If there are not specific requirements out there as to how things should be built, how they should be inspected, it will not happen. Unfortunately, it has to be mandatory and not voluntary, and there needs to be a lot bigger emphasis from the side of the Canadian government—yes, I'm going to say it—on getting this right. If you've ever gone into some of these communities, if you've been on reserve—and I've been on reserve a gazillion times—it is not good. It does not look right. Off reserve, it's the same thing. You just have to say to yourself that it cannot only be because of climatic conditions; something must have happened in the process that persuaded people to slap up boxes that would not last more than three to five years and then would start to deteriorate really rapidly. That's the reality today.

But in the report there are examples of how this is being addressed. This is what I really want to get out there, and that is that innovation is going to pave the way for a much better housing future in the north and for these resilient communities. If people are not happy, if people are not self-reliant, they're not going to be able to take advantage of economic opportunities, they're not going to be able to be contributors to the national economy, and they're going to move away from the communities.

● (0915)

The Chair: You have thirty seconds.

Ms. Lois Brown: Are you discussing with the northern territories their building codes? The National Building Code is really a basis to start with, and then the provinces put in their own building codes. We expect to have central heating in our homes, but unless you put a vapour barrier in, the proper construction, your house isn't going to last more than five years. You need that kind of instruction in the provincial or territorial building code to ensure that construction that is being put up is going to be lasting and will provide those sustainable communities that they need to live in.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to move over to Mr. Eyking.

Sir, you have seven minutes.

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

And thank you for coming.

A recent article in *The Economist* was all about global warming. They mentioned, of course, some of the reasons why. It's the exposure from water to sunlight and all these pollutants that go north from the southern countries. Of course, they mentioned Greenland. The temperature in Greenland has almost doubled. When you look at the whole world, It's gone up just over half a degree, but Greenland's temperature has gone up almost a degree and a half. Being from Denmark, of course, you're well aware that Greenland is the largest island in the world and has the largest volume of fresh water, so we would assume that it is an area that will be mostly affected.

Because of all that, the Danish government must have been very proactive in trying to deal with the changes that were happening, or trying to mitigate the changes that were going to happen from Greenland's perspective. What's your history? How do you reflect on the Danish government's model and how they dealt with it? What were they pushing as policies?

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Prior to the 2009 Copenhagen climate change summit—that was when Copenhagen hosted the COP/MOP—the then minister of the environment, who's now an EU commissioner, Connie Hedegaard, took a number of delegations from around the world up to Ilulissat, Greenland.

Ilulissat is where the Jakobshavn Glacier comes out and calves into the ocean. Satellite photos and other things consistently show that this glacier is moving a lot faster than it used to in the past. Showing people Greenland, and showing them what is actually happening, and coupling that with scientific information—obviously Ilulissat and the glacier are now a UNESCO heritage site as well—was really powerful in giving people an understanding of what climate change-provoking measures in the south do to the north.

That was the Danish government's strategy in terms of educating and making sure the northern perspective was at least pulled into the conversation. That's what we could do at the time, and I understand from the minister that she had a lot of productive conversations with delegations. There's nothing like seeing things first-hand to give you perspective on what's actually happening. That's the way the Danish government approached it.

Hon. Mark Eyking: That region was kind of a canary in the coal mine. It really showed the drastic changes, that climate change was happening.

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Well, there are scientific data out there that will show that the glacier moves a lot faster, and that the glacier is melting underneath, so it's pushing it out into the ocean, and that too has an effect on the ocean itself and fish stocks and these sorts of things. That's the way it happened.

Hon. Mark Eyking: Good.

You've alluded to the fact that the Conference Board is non-political and it's not funded by the federal government. In a way, that's good because you're not shy with your views and you don't feel intimidated when you express your views. You can put the cards on the table without getting any repercussions, and I think that's good.

So looking at that and at some of the future policies—you alluded to the housing problems that are out there and how this government has to adapt to them, because of the changes, and you mentioned innovation. Could you expand on that innovation you're talking about? You talked about housing, but what are the other innovative ways we can use to deal with the changes, whether for transporting goods up there or for mining? What are the things we have to be ahead of the curve on in dealing with the changes that are going to happen—the challenges in the Arctic, but also the opportunities?

● (0920)

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: The window for building anything in the Arctic is short, as we know. One of the case studies we have in the report—and that's the one that pertains to Nunavut—demonstrates that you can actually, in the factories in the south, create the types of panels and other units that you can then ship to the north and put together. It's called a KOTT design. It has the right type of vapour barrier. It has the highest insulating effect. It will not deteriorate.

So instead of doing it on the ground, you actually make sure that things are done properly from the beginning, and in cooperation with northerners, the company that's involved in this—and the Government of Nunavut has been involved as well—has come up with this particular design. Things are manufactured relatively cheaply in the south and then shipped up in that window of opportunity that you have with the sealift and put together, and not only in Iqaluit but also in other communities in Nunavut. My researcher was up there and talked to the general contractor, and these houses are very easy to put together, really durable, very energy-efficient, and the people who have moved into the first homes seem to actually be warm instead of cold.

We'll see, but these houses are supposed to last a lot longer than the current building stock.

Hon. Mark Eyking: What about some of the other innovative ways we have to deal with the changes? I'm kind of leaning towards our research council here in Ottawa. It has been noted by many witnesses before you that most of the departments we have here in Ottawa have to deal with this Arctic opportunity and challenge. Everybody has to work together on it.

More sea routes and more activity up there—is your Conference Board dealing with that and how we should be monitoring vessels more, monitoring the types of vessels, being ready for that challenge, that activity?

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: In a certain sense, we're working on a project right now on the economic impact of developments in northern marine waters. We're going to do that project a little differently. We're working with an advisory.... We're going to come up with a report. Then we're going to have a hearing in Ottawa. Afterwards, we're going to publish a report that can then be taken into the regions.

What we do at the Centre for the North...we are not prescriptive and we're not advocacy. What I tend to do is lay the foundation for informed decision-making. What I see is a huge information and data gap in Canada around some of these issues. There is a lack of understanding as to how you pull the information together.

Laying that foundation for informed decision-making, whether it's for governments or for industry, is really my role in this, which is very different from being in government, where I used to be. My responsibility in this space is to do applied research that is really solid and to look into the issues very, very carefully.

I've spoken to my investors as to what they want with this initiative, because I can keep building this library with the money I have and churn out reports left, right, and centre, or I can take everything I have and create a more strategic approach.

Can I have one minute...?

The Chair: Yes, just wrap up quickly. We are just over the time. Go ahead.

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Within the centre mandate, I'm going to take all of the research that we've done—and we have a lot more in the pipe—and I'm going to write an interim report: What does the research tell us? What are the predominant themes and what are the linkages? What's going on in the north? Then I'm going to ground-truth it; I'm going to take it back to the region.

Then I'm going to couple it with international best practices. I'm going to look at a cost-benefit analysis. At the end of it, we're probably going to be able to come up with something that's called "Future options for Canada's north". It's not a northern strategy, because I don't believe in one strategy for Canada's north. I think that's off the mark, actually. I don't believe in a balanced approach; I believe in cutting-edge policy-making that addresses critical issues. For that, you actually need to go a little further. You need to have people state the priorities.

● (0925)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to start the second round.

We're going to move over to Ms. Grewal for five minutes, please.

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

Thank you, Ms. Jeffrey, for your time and for your presentation. All of us certainly do appreciate it.

While I think it is quite safe to say that generally there is a lack of understanding about the threats and the vulnerabilities within the various regions of the north, as economic activities increase we need to know more about the possible consequences of industrial accidents and other man-made disasters on land, as well as in the sea, such as organized crime, terrorism, infectious disease outbreaks, and natural disasters up in the north. As someone with considerable expertise in your area, could you please elaborate a bit on the dangers and threats that could arise in the Arctic?

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Yes. I think it really comes down to the people aspect: if we do not invest in the people, then I don't think we have a viable Arctic. Who's going to live in Alert if they're not looked after to a certain extent?

A voice: Not me.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: I find it really interesting that the federal government is investing in an Arctic research station, which I think is going to be a good thing, but not in a deep sea water port. Right now, the Yukon is looking to Skagway. They're looking to Alaska.

Infrastructure gaps are one of the biggest threats to the development of the north. Today, industry is putting in most of the infrastructure needed to bring natural resources out. As an example, Agnico-Eagle, which runs the only operating gold mine in Nunavut, the Meadowbank gold mine, has built a 110-kilometre road from Baker up to the mine. I have been on it in a school bus, because I went up to see the mine. Also, they built an airstrip. They put in communications infrastructure. They put in all of the amenities you need when you do mining operations away from communities. They also have a huge corporate social responsibility program because they are as close as they are to Baker.

Now they are going down to Rankin to explore the Meliadine. What I hear from industry is that they'll keep doing it because resource development is the future of the north. Of course, the provincial governments are very grateful for that, but there could be a threat in the sense that if we don't work more closely together—responsible resource development—it's not going to go ahead as quickly and with the ease that I think the federal government really wants.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: The Arctic economy is largely dependent on global commodity prices, with mining the key sector in Canadian territories. Diamond mining, for example, is the largest industry in the Northwest Territories. Could you comment on the forecast for future growth in that region?

I understand that finding qualified labour is the number one challenge facing the northern economy. Could you also elaborate on how this is standing in the way of the Arctic region's realizing its economic potential?

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Diamond mining in the Northwest Territories is actually on the way down. I was up in the Northwest Territories last week, where I met with the premier and gave a presentation at the Northern Economic Development Practitioners conference. While I was there, the GDP for the Northwest Territories dropped 5.1%.

Gahcho Kué, which De Beers is responsible for, is going to come into operation. But what's going to pull the Northwest Territories along will be metal mining.

The Northwest Territories, out of the three territories, is the one that's experiencing negative growth, in both the economy and in population. Nunavut is experiencing positive growth on both fronts, but it's having a hard time keeping the population. They will not have the labour force capacity. They will not have the readiness to take advantage of economic opportunities.

The Yukon is in a much better state, simply because of the self-government agreements that have been negotiated with the Government of Yukon under the umbrella agreement, as well as what follows from devolution. The Yukon has several hydro and mining projects on the go that are going to carry the territory forward.

● (0930)

The Chair: Ms. Jeffrey, that's all the time we have for this round, but we still have time for three more rounds.

We're going to go to Mr. Bevington for five minutes.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Ms. Jeffrey.

If you understand the mining industry in the Northwest Territories, you understand that a capital investment in the underground shafts at Diavik and Ekati put up our GDP earlier on, and now they've stopped. So that's why GDP has dropped. That's not really a reflection on our economy in the Northwest Territories.

You talked about the population dropping. That was a mistake that Statistics Canada made, and it has been corrected. The population did increase a little.

But during the boom time, from 2000 to 2010, when sometimes we had 10% GDP growth, we experienced a population decline because people couldn't afford to live there, and the policies of the development of the mines were such that a great percentage of the people who worked there came from other parts of Canada.

I think you should review your analysis of the Northwest Territories. Five or six mines are in the chute now—environmental assessment. That's more than the other two territories combined. We are an active place and we have the sophisticated infrastructure to handle mining development. We're experts at it, as a matter of fact. We're experts in many of the northern development fields.

I enjoyed your presentation. I just did a northern development report at the natural resources committee. I think that would be an appropriate place for much of this discussion, because you're talking about national issues. You're talking about housing. I've lived in the north all my life, and I've been to every community in the north and I've been in houses over and over again. I think three elements are key in housing. One of them is ownership. Ownership tends to make the house better. Two is a wood stove. In almost all our northern communities, if you have some way of burning biomass, you're usually more successful in your house. Most of the houses that were built are public houses, where the liability factor has eliminated the possibility of putting this very essential appliance into people's homes. Three is a freezer on the back porch, because we are a hunting and gathering society and we need to have the tools required to do that work. Those are successful homes in the north.

It's not really about the construction. I also disagree with you.... If you talk to the NWT Housing Corporation, they are world experts. We've built houses in Russia. We've built them all over the world. They're excellent homes, but not necessarily for the people who live there because of course they're public housing. They're not designed for private ownership, which allows people the flexibility to design their home so that it matches their lifestyle, so that the sustainability that's available to them in their lifestyle has to be expressed in the home they live in. That's a key. I'll have to look at your report to see if you caught that element of it correctly, as to how housing should be built in the north.

Getting back to this issue of national versus international, what's been the focus of the Arctic Council? The Arctic Council is composed of eight nations and permanent participants. Is the main focus national issues within the countries, or is it the shared issues that are integral to understanding how to take care of our Arctic regions—environment, shipping, fishing, those types of issues? Is that not the focus of the Arctic Council, and has been for many years?

The Chair: Ms. Jeffrey, you have one minute to respond.

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Your point is taken, and congratulations on the Deh Cho bridge, a huge accomplishment for the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Built with no funds from the federal government.

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Built with no funds from the federal government, and it's a source of pride for sure for the Northwest Territories. I can only lament the fact that the write-up of the event in *The Globe and Mail* called the premier Ed McLeod instead of Bob McLeod, which might have rubbed some people the wrong way.

The Arctic Council is about international issues, but international issues start at home. They're formulated out of domestic policy-making. When the Arctic Council comes together as an intergovernmental forum, yes, they will discuss scientific matters. They will put common positions out there, and they get better and better at it.

● (0935)

The Chair: Thank you very much. That's all the time we have.

We're going to move over to Mr. Schellenberger for five minutes.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Thank you. I found your presentation quite enlightening.

My background in my previous life was in the construction industry, but I was at the tail end of that. I was in the decorating part of it, so I didn't build much, but we did try to cover up some of the mistakes that were made by the various other trades before.

I do know that years ago automobiles were built to disintegrate in four or five years, so the auto industry could then build more automobiles. I think they found over time that building a quality vehicle that lasted for years ended up being more profitable.

You can have all the regulations you want in building these homes, but you have to have contractors who will follow the regulations. At the same time, you have to have inspectors who aren't corrupt, who will make sure these regulations are followed.

I did know one particular contractor—and he wasn't really a contractor around here—who did some building around here, but he would get contracts to go into the north or to some first nations places to build homes. He built the worst things you could ever build around here, but he got these contracts continually. I think sometimes the lowest bidder isn't necessarily the way to go either.

I'm just wondering how you look at it. Are there qualified people in these areas to build, to put together the homes and to follow those regulations, and are there qualified inspectors to follow that up?

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Yes, certainly there are people who are qualified to build these good homes, no doubt about it. I think the country is moving in that direction. There have been enough examples of how the current housing stock is not meeting needs, both on and off reserve, and there are lots of positive examples and experiments out there now, primarily driven by the provinces and the territories. The member mentioned the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation really trying to up the standard on what is being built.

I think there's a legacy, though, that needs to be taken care of. Last I checked, but I'm not quite certain any more, Nunavut did not have qualified inspectors. And you need inspections in order to make sure that things are built the way they're supposed to be built. So there's a capacity issue here that is huge, and breaking that cycle is going to be really vital to bringing all these social determinants up.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: In the communities in the north, are there qualified construction people to do this? It has to all come from the south?

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Yes, or it has to be a made-in-the-north solution in a certain sense. The north is extremely human resources and financially constrained, so partnerships are the way to go here—solid partnerships where you are not cutting corners, honest, long-lasting partnerships. Then you need to bring that into the communities, because the communities themselves do not have the capacity to do any of this.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Why I say there should be competent people within those communities who help build and construct these places is that it is sustainable after, if there is a boom and bust in the area. If that job in the mine isn't available any more, maybe they can fix the house or fix the plumbing or fix the electrical, or do some of those types of things that help sustain those jobs in that community.

● (0940)

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: And it comes back to the point of healthy communities. People want to live in communities where there are schools, where there are amenities, where things look relatively nice, where you're being looked after, and where there is diversification of economic opportunity, for sure.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I think we have time for Mr. Van Kesteren to start the next round.

We'll give you two or three minutes to ask some questions.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Thank you very much.

I was listening to your presentation, and what you've managed to do—at least I can say personally—is you've allowed us to look through the lens of the northerner. We tend to look through the lens that we live here in the south. It occurred to me that we want to drag the peoples of the north along to a point where we want to be, and they don't necessarily want to go there. Am I wrong? When we talk about development, when we talk about the opportunities, is there an appetite for the people of the north to go in that direction, too? Are we thinking—

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Oh yes, absolutely. Northerners want economic opportunity. They want well-paying jobs. Whether they live in one of the capitals or in one of the communities, they want to be contributing members of Canadian society.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: So they're excited about this development as well.

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: Yes. There is often a schism, though, and it's in the report as well. The aboriginal population of the north, of course, has a certain connection to the land that does not always correspond with the way industry goes in. This is why we have mechanisms in place through which we negotiate impact benefit agreements, do environmental assessments, and all those things.

There is a clash of cultures, of course. It is getting a lot better as industry is moving in, is talking to the communities, and is learning that way.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: I was really interested in what Mr. Bevington said, and I agree with him completely. I think ownership is a real key. But when we fabricate homes, they all look the same. That pride of ownership.... Is there a movement to allow for some diversity in housing, maybe some bigger houses and smaller houses? It sounds almost as if we're trying to force our views and our values.... Is that something that is shared there?

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: The type of housing I'm talking about is public housing. The way public housing in the north is put together, your rent is determined by your income. As soon as people start making money, whether they're employed in the resource industry or somewhere else, the rent goes up because they start making more money.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: But can they own them, as Mr. Bevington said?

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: They can, but a lot of people are not—

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: In a position, maybe?

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: They might be if they're making good money, but then you run into the boom and bust cycle in many communities, and you never quite know.... Each mine has a life cycle to it. What we find is that in communities that are economically “mono”, in the sense that they are dependent on one major industry and one major employer, there can be a reluctance to enter into ownership, simply because you can sit with a mortgage for the rest of your life and you might be unemployed because of factors outside your control.

The thing about ownership is something that we really look very carefully at in the report, because that's where the care, the TLC, comes in.

The north is different from the south. Made-in-the-south solutions do not work in the north, so we need a completely different mindset in terms of how we work with this. This is why—and I'm not afraid to say this—we had many conversations with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on this specific report, because they have certain programs and policies. They are very sensitive to the realities of the north, but they also have to work within certain guidelines.

It's very important to understand what makes the north tick. Travelling in the north and speaking to people is the best way of doing it.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Jeffrey, thank you very much for coming out today. We really appreciate your testimony.

Ms. Anja Jeffrey: You're welcome.

The Chair: With that, I'll suspend the meeting so we can get our new witnesses in, and then we'll get started again momentarily.

● (0945)

(Pause)

● (0945)

The Chair: We'll get started.

I want to take the opportunity now to welcome our two witnesses from the Canadian Polar Commission: Bernard Funston, who is the chairman, and David Scott, who is executive director.

Gentlemen, I want to thank you very much for taking the time to be out here today as we look at our study of Canada's Arctic foreign policy. You have an opening statement, so I'll turn it over to you and we can get started. We'll give you 10 minutes, and then we'll move back and forth with the witnesses.

Welcome, gentlemen. I'll turn the floor over to you. We look forward to hearing your opening remarks.

Mr. Bernard Funston (Chairperson, Canadian Polar Commission): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm Bernie Funston. I'm the chair of the Canadian Polar Commission. I'm very honoured to be here today with our executive director, David Scott.

I'm going to say a few words to kick it off and then turn it over to David, who will run you through a presentation on the Canadian Polar Commission and what we've been trying to do with it since this new board was appointed in November 2010. We'd be very pleased to entertain questions about the commission and its work, and we'd be pleased to address some of the foreign policy issues that you're interested in.

In that regard, I'll say at the outset that I have a long history with the Arctic Council—from 1995 till December 2010, when I stepped down from my Arctic Council duties to take on the chairmanship of the Polar Commission. I was involved with the creation of the council back in 1995, and I participated in the negotiations. I chaired the committee that wrote the rules of procedure for the council, and I served as the executive secretary for the sustainable development working group from 2002 to 2010. I know you're interested in foreign policy, and I'd be very happy to accept questions from that quarter.

Without further ado, I'll turn it over to David.

● (0950)

Mr. David J. Scott (Executive Director, Canadian Polar Commission): Mr. Chairman, honourable members, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for the opportunity to provide some background information on the Canadian Polar Commission.

There are just a small number of slides—I believe you all have a paper copy. We'll quickly walk through it, to give you an overview of the purpose of our organization as well as an update on the revitalization process that has been under way for the past couple of years.

The purpose of the Canadian Polar Commission is to be Canada's national institution for furthering polar knowledge and awareness. What we are trying to do is to ensure that Canada can fully embrace its place as a polar nation.

The strategic outcome we are shooting for is to increase the Canadian polar knowledge available, to be used to inform decisions and generally improve conditions in the north.

We were created as a result of a task force that started in the late 1980s, and that resulted in the legislation that created the commission in 1991. We are active in Canadian polar affairs, and we have been significantly influential in the International Polar Year process that wound down in the spring with a significant international meeting in Montreal. We are now nearing the completion of a two-year revitalization process that began with the appointment of the current board, of whom Mr. Funston is the chair. I joined the commission seven months ago, following a long history of employment with Natural Resources Canada. I am a geologist by training and a professional manager. I have been undertaking a number of strategic initiatives to get the commission's program on the rails as well as to update its business practices.

As you see on the third slide, we monitor polar knowledge in Canada. We like to keep our fingers on the pulse of what is happening. We work internationally as well as domestically to determine priorities for scientific knowledge creation and to identify who can help create that new knowledge required in the north. We encourage Canadian youth to get involved and interested in the north. We communicate polar research to Canadians and the public abroad, and we are doing our best to improve international cooperation in the advancement of the creation of knowledge.

I will note as well that although today we are focused on the north, our mandate also includes the Antarctic as well. We provide advice to the minister who oversees the commission, Minister Duncan of Aboriginal Affairs.

The revitalization under way now was triggered by the appointment of a new board of directors. We have a three-year strategic plan that is well under way, and on the administrative side, I am nearing the completion of a top-to-bottom review of our operations, regularizing our business practices, and ensuring appropriate oversights so that we can meet Treasury Board and other central agency standards on administrative, financial, and human resources requirements. So we are very much bringing the organization into the realm of the modern public service, as efficient and effective as it can be and fully compliant with all expected reporting requirements.

The fifth slide is a brief overview of our strategic plan. It has three key elements. The first is to aggregate and identify polar knowledge out there, bringing it together so that it can be used. The second is to make sense of that knowledge, to synthesize it, analyze it, identify trends, and provide analysis. And the third is to turn it inside out and communicate that knowledge—the knowledge in the network as well as the analysis of what that knowledge means. We communicate that to the general public, to the international community, and to decision-makers at the federal level as well as in the territorial areas and northern parts of the provinces.

On the sixth slide are many of the key elements we are working on. We have recently opened a new liaison office in the north, located in Yellowknife, in the Greenstone Building. David Miller, a long-time CBC researcher and journalist, is our northern coordinator. He joined us earlier this month. He brings with him a long history of knowledge, investigation, and a very strong network of northern connections to help us retain a good set of eyes and ears in the north that allow us to hear the views of northerners as well as help to communicate polar knowledge back into the north.

We are active in supporting the work of both SCAR, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, and IASC, the International Arctic Science Committee. These are two international cooperation bodies of whom the CPC is Canada's adhering body. This helps us leverage into leading-edge science knowledge that's being created—natural sciences as well as social sciences globally—to ensure that Canada both contributes to and benefits from international knowledge developments.

● (0955)

On the synthesizing of knowledge front, we recently completed some work in Anchorage, Alaska, at the third biennial Canada-U.S. Northern Oil and Gas Research Forum. We made very strong connections with the Alaska-based players, and we're now undertaking a number of initiatives to coordinate work in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas—studies of the ecosystem, impacts on communities, and various other technical aspects.

Finally, in terms of communicating, we are refreshing our Internet web presence. We are modernizing the publications, which formerly were printed documents mailed around. We are going far more digital. We've stopped printing pieces of paper, and we are very much looking forward to providing a richer Internet experience for interested parties in the public.

Finally, in summary, the CPC is completing a significant two-year revitalization process to become a much more effective organization that is aligned with Canada's northern strategy, delivering for northerners and all Canadians. We are completing a complete business process review to bring the organization administratively and legally up to the expectations of central agencies. And finally, the program is being reviewed and modernized to ensure it is aligned with Government of Canada priorities and is being deployed as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Scott.

We're now going to start with Mr. Dewar, for seven minutes, please.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I'm going to start and then share with Mr. Bevington.

Thank you for being here today. I should note there was a time when there was a problem in terms of capacity for you. I remember asking questions in the House back in 2008: where was the board? It took the government two years to actually get you up and going. I'm glad to see you here and functioning. It should be noted, though, that it was an institute without a board for two years, from 2008 to 2010. But t's good to see you here.

I'm curious about how you work with other partners in other countries. As you will know, the whole Arctic Council idea was to web circumpolar countries together to make decisions to advocate for the north. How do you do that as an institute, in other words, in working with what other countries? And how does that fit into your present day-to-day operations of sharing information and who you work with?

Mr. Bernard Funston: I'll kick off on the general side, and then David can wade in here.

We do work with a number of international organizations. We'll start with the one David indirectly mentioned with our recent trip to Alaska. We work closely with the U.S. Arctic Research Commission. We had joint meetings in April of last year. We're due to meet with them next week in Vancouver, actually. We look at a range of issues that are of common interest and we try to find ways to work together.

Some of those are generally informational. I should say, to characterize the Polar Commission, we're an information shop primarily. We're not a policy shop and we're not a research shop, really. We don't direct research money or priorities, but we have a large network, and we certainly keep track of who's doing what, where, and when.

We have two very formal connections to international organizations, to the International Arctic Science Committee, as David said, and to SCAR, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research. Those are national representatives that we participate with in those organizations. One looks at the Antarctic side, and the other, of course, looks at the Arctic side of the agenda.

Most of our work is not joint project work. We don't have a budget that can allow us to jump into joint research projects, for example. They're informal connections, primarily moving information and making people aware of what's going on, giving them linkages, if you will, into our domestic Arctic activities.

Dave, do you want to say something?

● (1000)

Mr. David J. Scott: Yes. In a little bit more detail, much of what we do is attempt to coordinate and encourage new partnerships to emerge. We work with federal agencies domestically to try to ensure that what Natural Resources is doing is perhaps more closely partnered with what Environment Canada does. We try to stretch that out internationally as well to work with the best and the brightest who are out there, who may be interested in a particular thematic area of investigation, if we can bring their expertise and finances to Canada.

Canada, in many cases, can be the natural laboratory where new knowledge can be created. We bring in the best and the brightest. This also allows Canadian scientists, whether they are based in universities or in government departments, to be connected internationally.

Again, the scientific community is really recognizing that it's an integrated global system. It's not just work in the north or the south; it's how the two come together.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I'll pass it over to Mr. Bevington.

The Chair: You have about three and a half minutes, sir.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Thank you.

I'm very pleased to have you here. Mr. Funston, you come from my hometown, and, along with Mark Carney, you are one of the more famous people from my hometown.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Dennis Bevington: I want to ask you a question that I asked at the natural resources committee. That is, what is Canada's Arctic research agenda? Is that available? I asked the deputy minister that and he promised me a copy of it, but he hasn't delivered it to the committee, so I'm asking you: have you seen the Arctic research agenda?

Mr. David J. Scott: I think an expression of that is the current science blueprint of the Canadian High Arctic Research Station. It's in its nascent phase, as I'm sure you're aware. There is a feasibility study that broadly outlines the thematic areas of research the government will pursue through the research station at Cambridge Bay, as well as the science program that will function, essentially, coast to coast to coast—everywhere except Cambridge Bay—in the north. The areas in question are things aligned with the northern strategy, such as environmental stewardship, social and economic development, governance, and sovereignty and security issues. Those are fairly clearly laid out in the blueprint that is available on the web, at science.gc.ca/CHARS. That document is available.

The details of the scientific plan, as to how that will be accomplished over the first five-year increment, are still under development. A first draft of that has now been produced for consultation. The department rolled it out earlier this week, and consultations, especially with northerners, will be ongoing in the coming weeks and months. All of this is led by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Mr. Bernard Funston: One additional note on that—Dennis would be shocked if I didn't mention it. Of course, the three territorial governments have their own science agendas as well. The Yukon is developing one. The Northwest Territories already has one. When you said Canada, I assumed you meant the Government of Canada, but it's more generic than that.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: I'm simply curious about the research on the changing Arctic climate conditions.

Is there an agenda that we can identify to see what research is being proposed for the incredible changes that are taking place in the Arctic, in terms of ice, in terms of weather conditions, those sorts of things? These are the crisis points we're coming to in the Arctic. On the movement of ice, we had two blockages of ice this summer. The weather conditions have changed and the wind directions have changed, especially in Frobisher Bay, where it was packed up with ice.

Is there an Arctic research agenda dealing specifically with Arctic weather and ice conditions?

The Chair: You have about 20 seconds left.

Mr. David J. Scott: The short answer is yes. Those elements are covered not only in the High Arctic Research Station science blueprint, but also by some of the line departments, such as Environment Canada.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll turn to Mr. Williamson, sir, for seven minutes.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today.

I want to take us back a step. The review we're doing is on Canada's Arctic foreign policy. I appreciate that there must be an awful lot that can be studied on both poles, the changes going on there, the new developments or the new opportunities. I'm curious to know if you feel the work you do influences or impacts on the question of sovereignty in the north, and if so, how?

I guess another question is, how would your research in the north differ from what is done in Antarctica?

● (1005)

Mr. Bernard Funston: I'll take the first stab at that.

In terms of whether our work can contribute to sovereignty, it's a tricky question. It's a good question. I'm one of those who is doubtful that sovereignty is what we should be thinking about in terms of technical, legal meanings. Sovereignty is a very interesting proxy in Canadian policy for a whole range of things, domestic and international. There aren't many other Arctic states that actually have sovereignty crises, as we do from time to time. The Norwegians, for example, when they were dealing with the Russians on Svalbard, did not have a sovereignty crisis. They had an issue.

For us, we bundle a lot of things into that word. I would just say that an organization like ours can have a huge impact in ways that are perhaps lateral; we have to think laterally to do them. For example, I have been engaged with some of the Pacific Rim countries—China, Korea, Japan, and Singapore, and of course the U. S. and Russia are in that box—talking about the globalization dimension of the Arctic. I think we have to understand that the Arctic is an area where we have not just climate change occurring, but also globalization. We have seven billion people on the planet at the moment, and it's not just a case that the things that will change the Arctic occur in the Arctic. Most of them, in fact, occur outside of the Arctic. Whether that's pressure for transportation routes, or minerals, or transboundary pollutants, or climate change itself, they're caused by non-Arctic drivers.

Where does that relate to Canada and its borders? I think the bottom line is that this part of the planet is increasingly attractive for the human species, all seven billion of us. So it has to be understood certainly in its physical science dimension—the climate change, the ice regime—but more importantly in its human dimensions. That's why I think we hear so much talk about the Arctic voice in terms of foreign policy. It's not because statecraft is talked about on the streets of Tuktoyaktuk on a daily basis. It's because very often when we deal with the Arctic, we forget that people live there. We tend to look at it as a frontier, which means we're going there to get something, or we're going through to get to southern destination points, or we think of it as a laboratory, or we think of it as a big wilderness, a big park that we can preserve by drawing lines around it. But most importantly, for people like Dennis and me, it's a homeland. It's where people live.

If you want to engage in a thought exercise, think about how a person living in Ottawa would react if northerners were having almost daily, around the planet, conferences on how people in Ottawa should structure their affairs and how they should be more environmentally responsible or more economically responsible. That's the pressure that people of the north feel.

As to sovereignty, I don't think we have, in a legal sense, any burning sovereignty issue. We have a territorial dispute with the U.S. in the Beaufort Sea. We have some issues around Hans Island, which are close to being resolved. But we don't have a sovereignty crisis. As I said, I think one has to look at that word and think of all the proxies it serves.

Mr. David J. Scott: I would simply add that on a research and knowledge creation front, international collaboration is one way to leverage in knowledge from around the world. When it undertakes investigations in northern Canada, Canada's rules and regulations are followed, the territorial science permitting processes are followed, land-use permits to set up a research camp are followed. I think it is an effective way of demonstrating that Canada has rules and regulations in place, and that jurisdictional responsibilities are adhered to and recognized by those who come from other countries.

Mr. John Williamson: Thank you.

I would say, though, Mr. Funston, that you're probably not alone in sometimes feeling that Ottawa is pushing these pressures. I think that's a sense that many communities and towns across this country sometimes feel, that Ottawa is, frankly, meddling too much in some of these approaches to local governments.

● (1010)

Mr. Bernard Funston: It's not just Ottawa. I'm certainly not just blaming Ottawa. That's not the point. It's the whole southern interest recently in the Arctic. In 2005 you might have seen the occasional article on the Arctic. From 2006 on, it's almost every cover of every magazine you could imagine in some form. It's not just driven from national capitals. The interest in it is actually truly global now.

Mr. John Williamson: I would think you would think that's a positive thing, by and large.

Mr. Bernard Funston: I spent the first 30 years of my career asking people to pay attention to the Arctic, and I have to say I'm not sure I should have wished for that quite so vehemently.

Mr. John Williamson: Be careful what you wish for.

Mr. Bernard Funston: Absolutely.

Mr. John Williamson: Is it Mr. Scott or Professor Scott?

Mr. David J. Scott: "David" is fine.

Mr. John Williamson: David, I'm curious to know, because you referenced the fact that the Arctic is Canadian and you're working with scientists. Do you find that must give you a benefit? Do scientists from other countries often work through your group? The training must be altogether different in the north than it is in the south. You must have much more freedom and mobility here, and more challenges when you're in the Antarctic, for example.

Mr. David J. Scott: Absolutely, yes. There are mobility challenges in both polar regions. Certainly, the climate in the north in the summer is much more favourable to doing Arctic field work than it is in the southern summer.

I think there are a number of challenges. Access is certainly one of them. The sheer geography, the size of these areas, and the wide range of investigations that need to be accomplished to fully understand these environments, to make sense of that new information, are major challenges.

Prior to joining the commission, as a research scientist and science manager in Natural Resources Canada, I had the opportunity to work collaboratively with many international partners, all of whom hold Canada and the Canadian research enterprise in very high regard. They're always pleased to partner with Canadians, and this often leads to opportunities to work internationally and to share best available knowledge, to learn from one another and move ahead in a global context—the understanding of the functions of our planet and the creatures that inhabit it.

Mr. John Williamson: Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That's all the time we have.

We'll move to Mr. Eyking for seven minutes.

Hon. Mark Eyking: Thank you, Chair, and welcome to our guests.

I'm glad you mentioned that we don't have a sovereignty issue here, because it keeps being brought up and witnesses keep saying it's not a sovereignty issue. The issue is how we manage and put policies in the north in the future.

I just read here that your chair and your boards are appointed by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Bernard Funston: Yes.

Hon. Mark Eyking: And you're funded by the federal government mostly?

Mr. Bernard Funston: Mostly.

Hon. Mark Eyking: Are you independent in your decision-making, or do you get directives from the Privy Council? How does it work?

Mr. Bernard Funston: No, we're very much independent in our decision-making. Obviously, we have a very close connection to the Government of Canada. I think we're called, technically, a departmental corporation. Our board is entirely from outside government. Our staff are all government employees.

No, we're not under any particular directive. The minister, obviously, has an interest in what we do, because he has a general responsibility for the north. I must say, the department has been extremely supportive for the last couple of years as we've tried to resuscitate and revitalize the commission, but it's not a command and control situation.

I think they've given us encouragement to come up with something exciting to lead us into the next era. As I said, we came on stream just as the Arctic was exploding in interest, and we have a very broad cross-section on our board, a very exciting group of people to work with. We keep the minister's office informed about what we're doing and we report through him to Parliament, but it's not, as I said, a command and control operation.

Hon. Mark Eyking: The board members' names are submitted to the Prime Minister's Office for screening. Is that how it works?

Mr. Bernard Funston: I imagine that's how it works. I'm not sure how they come up with the initial list.

Hon. Mark Eyking: Recently, I visited New Zealand, and when you go to New Zealand, you find very little difference in wealth between the first nations and the visitors, the New Zealanders. There's more involvement of their first nations people in the economy.

When I was there I asked the member of Parliament why they got it right and we didn't. He said they learned from North America's mistakes, because they started about 100 years later, and because of inclusiveness in resources, and whatever. They have a different template.

As we go forward with the Arctic, and you talk about how we don't want to get into this frontier mentality—between Canada, the United States, and first nations people right now, there seem to be land claims, resource claims, constant court battles, and whatever. Let's assume we might have a better chance of doing things differently here, and maybe have a different template in the way we deal with the communities up north.

That being said, and you already alluded to it, we can't have Ottawa as the centre, that it comes from here, as if the north is some sort of colony. The ideas about what we're doing have to come from the north. As a government, how do you see that we should deal with it differently this time around, so that we get it right for the people who live there? Should we learn from our mistakes and do things differently?

● (1015)

Mr. Bernard Funston: Absolutely. It's important to learn from one's mistakes.

I think we are actually doing it differently—certainly since I began working on these issues more than 30 years ago. The first and biggest step in that "doing it differently" approach was, of course, the settlement of land claim and self-government agreements. We still have a few outstanding ones in the Northwest Territories, but we don't have a vacuum in that area anymore. We have these legal regimes, which are protected at the highest level of our Constitution. In New Zealand, for example, the Treaty of Waitangi was a very early adoption of a notion of aboriginal law or indigenous law. That was signed in 1841, I think, so they've had a lot of time to work on this.

We are getting it right. We have the legal basis for it. The implementation of some of those undertakings is always challenging, and that will go on for some time, because you don't ever unbox a new way of doing things. It takes time. I think we're doing things as well as we can. We're always constrained by resources, and in this particular case, I think we've had the world come to our back door in kind of an unexpected way. I don't think anyone was prepared for the sudden upwelling of global interest in the Arctic after 2005. I think it overwhelmed national capitals across the Arctic states. Other than Norway, which had been doing this in a very different climatic environment for a long time—they were quite well prepared—the rest of us, I don't think, were as well prepared as we thought.

The bottom line here is that the issues have moved from what were primarily domestic issues—building nursing stations, schools, rinks, community centres, and so forth—in the north. We've done that very well since 1950, when I was born in the Northwest Territories. Where we haven't done a lot of building and infrastructure development, though, is on this offshore side of things. We weren't prepared for the Arctic to become accessible at an ocean level, and that is a big sticker shock for our nation, and for the U.S., and for Russia—less so, as I said, for Norway. For Iceland, it's not an issue at all.

But doing things differently also has to take into account that we now have a global conversation. It used to be an "Ottawa and territorial capital" conversation perhaps, but now we're talking to the Chinese about the Arctic, and now we're talking to...you know, India has applied for observership in the Arctic Council. It's a global conversation, as I said, because of the change that's being driven in the Arctic. It's not just Ottawa. I wasn't suggesting that Ottawa has colonized the Arctic. The pressure is coming from the middle latitudes generally, and it's a demand for resources, it's a possible shorter transportation route, and of course it's that whole trans-regional effect of climate change. The fact that the Arctic is melting has huge consequences for the middle latitudes, with sea level rise, with changes in climatic patterns.

So we are doing things as well as we possibly can in Canada, and I think some of the other countries—certainly New Zealand and Australia—have learned from us. But we're not perfect.

The Chair: That's all the time we have.

We're going to start with the next round of five minutes.

Go ahead, Ms. Brown.

Ms. Lois Brown: Thank you very much. I'm going to share my time with Ms. Grewal, if we need to.

Mr. Funston, you may not like my asking this question, because you've obviously thought that you should have put a halt on asking people to be involved in the north. But Mr. Scott, particularly, you are talking about educating people and having people be more aware. Has there been any initiative through your organization to create some sort of curriculum for kids in schools? Is that part of your mandate, or do you have anybody who's involved in the organization?

My daughter is a new teacher. She's just done a unit on aboriginal peoples in Canada. There's very little availability, though, of opportunity to teach about aboriginal peoples of the north, and yet that has to be a component we look at. She is looking for resources. I suggested that perhaps looking at the north might be something she should do in her geography class. She is teaching grades 3 and 4. What kind of curriculum is being constructed, because the education needs to start at the very elementary levels now?

● (1020)

Mr. David J. Scott: Thank you for raising that. It gives me an opportunity to emphasize one of the pieces of our outward communication strategy, and that's very much focused on kids who live in the north.

Curriculum, of course, is a territorial jurisdiction, but we absolutely recognize the need to support the teaching of an appropriate curriculum. We've begun a number of initiatives to start to work with that. We're starting to work with the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, which has a long and very strong history of producing teacher-friendly materials. They have expressed a strong interest in working in partnership with us to focus on the north as well, so the curriculum that is required to be taught in each of the three territories and the northern parts of the provinces can be better supported. We're looking to partner with other organizations to help fund the creation of materials that can assist the delivery of each curriculum across the north.

The National Film Board of Canada has recently come to us to see if we could help them with one of their projects, which is to help them return historic films made in the north to the north, in the dialects of the areas where they were filmed. One project that they're seeking our assistance with is to make sure that copies of those historic films, which in many cases include the elders of people living there today, can make their way into the schools and into the homes of northerners.

These are just two examples of initiatives where the Polar Commission, through its mandate to reach out and raise polar awareness, can do some very practical things at the school/child level—and of course we all know kids are pretty good at teaching their parents.

We're very pleased to start to work on these things. These are nascent projects that we hope to finalize and get under way in the coming months.

It's a very strongly recognized need. We believe we're very capable, through our mandate, to convene and bring partners together, the right players, who can do it properly in respect of local curricula.

Ms. Lois Brown: Thank you very much.

Ms. Grewal.

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

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Thank you.

Your organization is our ears and our eyes in the Arctic region, but since the cutbacks in 2000, you have lacked a northern presence. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development has now provided the necessary funding for that, for the commission, and to open an office in the Arctic.

Could you please comment on the importance of this office and how it will allow you to do a better job to fulfill your mandate?

Mr. David J. Scott: Thank you for the opportunity.

We're very proud of the fact that we now have a northern presence. Once again, we are mandated to do so, and for a number of years we were not in compliance with that mandate.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs did put funding on the table for us this fiscal year. We acted as promptly as we could to describe and advertise the position. Our strategy was to seek the most appropriate candidate across the north, regardless of where he or she lived, and then to set up the office in that person's home community, rather than identify a community and try to import someone to it. We were very fortunate. We had widespread interest. We had over 25 expressions of interest, 17 applications. We interviewed 10 individuals in the north and wound up with Mr. David Miller of Yellowknife.

We are very excited. He is extremely well connected to northern communities, predominantly in the Northwest Territories, but through his long history, his 33 years in the north, he's quite well connected to the other territories, as well as to the northern parts of the provinces. With this local voice, he is very well connected. We are already changing the way we are thinking about the program we deliver, in terms of making it more relevant to northerners. It's an excellent opportunity to once again refresh our presence and become much more northern. Despite the fact that our headquarters is here in Ottawa and six of the staff are based in Ottawa, we now have a couple of folks in the north.

I'll also add that, as a consequence of this search process that brought us Mr. Miller, we also identified a young woman by the name of Jocelyn Joe-Strack, who's with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation. She lives in Whitehorse, and she has joined us on a part-time basis. While she finishes her master's of science at the University of Northern British Columbia, she's giving us a hand on some analysis of northern research needs and the state of knowledge.

● (1025)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Bevington, sir, you have five minutes.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: I'll share some of my time with Ms. Péclet.

I just have a couple of questions.

I want to put the education stuff in an international perspective, of course, because that's what we're here for.

On the UArctic, the international virtual university that was supported by this government up until 2010, do you think we should get back on board with this in a bigger way? They had a very successful meeting in Winnipeg about a month ago. Is this something that you see as a great tool for sharing knowledge throughout the northern hemisphere with northerners?

Mr. Bernard Funston: It is a very interesting initiative. It's one that actually originated in Canada back around the time of the Iqaluit ministerial meeting in 1998. The people who first came up with the idea sat down at that meeting and put it forward. It's a very worthwhile approach. They're trying to come up with curricula that are relevant to northerners, and to allow people, through Internet capabilities, to actually study in their resident communities without needing to go south if they don't want to.

It has a lot of challenges in terms of the cost, of course, and I think that's where we withdrew some funding in 2010. I would love to see it back on its feet.

From a Canadian perspective, we are the only Arctic state that doesn't have a university north of 60 in our northern precinct. But I must say, and Dennis would know the numbers a lot better than I do, when it was first initiated in 1998, the dissonance or the misalignment with the Canadian situation was that we weren't graduating a lot of kids into the university level of education. Those numbers have improved more recently, but we had more challenges in those days, even 10 years ago, in graduating kids from high school. Getting the balance right is always the trick. You don't want to invest in higher education if you're not having people funnel through the system to actually be able to utilize it.

However, as an initiative, it was a very exciting one, and I know it struggled.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Thank you very much.

One of the functions of the commission is to counsel the Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. As you know, the Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency will be taking on the chairmanship of the Arctic Council in the course of the next few months.

Are you going to meet with her to advise her, in particular with respect to the priorities Canada should put forward at the Arctic Council? I would also like to know what you think of the priorities the government has set out. Do you think that they are the right ones? We have heard about development of northern communities, development of the north and of natural resources. These concerns are more national than international.

Do you not think that we should instead prioritize questions like climate change, the management of fisheries and of risk, for instance the risk of oil spills? What do you think our priorities should be? Will you be meeting with the minister to advise her on that?

[*English*]

The Chair: If you can answer all that in one minute, that would be great.

Mr. Bernard Funston: Okay.

No, we haven't met with either of the ministers yet on those priorities. We have offered to assist. Our invitation hasn't been taken up as yet; I think there are a lot of things going on.

In terms of the priorities, as mentioned, they are set in the Kiruna ministerial meeting in May 2013, and that will be done in collaboration with our Arctic state partners. The key here is the consensus rule within the Arctic Council, so Canada cannot unilaterally push an agenda, say, for sustainable development in communities in Canada's Arctic.

A lot of the ongoing agenda of the Arctic Council will include things like climate change, short-term forces of climate change, those sorts of things. That agenda will be quite full. What I take the Canadian agenda to be is for Canada domestically to focus more on these issues. I can see that it's really bringing home the Arctic Council's work in order for it to be better disseminated within Canada, and that is a role where the commission could assist. Because of our strategic planks, aggregating information, synthesizing information, and distributing information by better communications at the local level, we could certainly make the Arctic Council more understood in the communities of the north.

We haven't been asked to set priorities, and we haven't done that.

● (1030)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now turn it back to Mr. Van Kesteren, for five minutes, sir.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Ms. Grewal has a question.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Grewal.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Could you please tell us how the Canadian Polar Commission compares to the U.S. Arctic Research Commission? Could you play a similar role to that of the American commission?

Mr. Bernard Funston: I'll start and then let Dave finish, because it's a very good question.

We're almost an amalgamation of two bodies in the U.S.: the U.S. Arctic Research Commission and the polar board, which does more with the Antarctic side of things for the U.S. Their focus is primarily on research and I think on coordinating departmental and agency thinking on Arctic research in the U.S. We don't have that function. We don't organize departments as to their research agendas.

Otherwise, we have a lot of common structural issues. They're appointed by the president. They've had some vacancies on their board that have only recently been filled. They have a chair who is also a northerner, Fran Ulmer, from Alaska. She is the former lieutenant governor of Alaska. I must that say when we sit down and talk to each other in our joint board meetings, we have a lot in common.

Dave.

Mr. David J. Scott: On a more operational level, through bilateral dialogue that we've had over the past seven months, we have identified a number of areas where we, as independent commissions, can better coordinate work of various scientific organizations. In Canada, obviously, there's the academic world and the networks such as ArcticNet, as well as the federal departments and territorial players. We can help to bring those folks together.

One geographic area where we're currently focusing our efforts is the area of the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas. There's an international boundary in the Beaufort Sea, of course, but the ecosystems don't recognize that boundary. The mammals move back and forth. The water flows freely.

The research agenda that can be done can be more effectively delivered with better coordination, so we're working very closely now with the U.S. Arctic Research Commission and players in Alaska to ensure that, for example, a coast guard vessel is used by the scientists of both countries for efficiency and effectiveness. It ensures that the data that are gathered are compatible so that the natural ecosystem that is out there is better understood more holistically, rather than by trying to attack it independently. We're trying to create that coordination.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: I have a question, Chair.

Thank you for being here.

Along that same line, what about the Russians? Are you engaging them? Do they have the same interests that we have as Canadians and that the Americans have? Are you finding any difficulties or challenges there that you could share with this committee?

Mr. Bernard Funston: The Russians are tough to engage. In our council role, I worked very closely with the Russians for their chairmanship of the Arctic Council from 2006 to 2008. It's a different approach. They're a little less keen on the information sharing side of things. It's not a natural sort of process for them since the fall of the Soviet Union. They're more interested in coming to the Arctic Council cafeteria, if you will, and taking the various reports; they don't leave many on the table themselves.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bernard Funston: It does make it difficult. The other part that's very tough when working with Russians is to know where they stand in terms of their official responsibilities and whether they actually are official spokespersons for a ministry, an agency, or whatever.

It is still a bit of a black hole for us, I think, in our day-to-day work. I do maintain contact with, for example, the indigenous organizations in Russia; I know the leadership of the RAIPON group that was just discontinued. But it is a difficult thing. At the scientific level, I think there is better collaboration, and certainly through IASC, which is one of the bodies we sit on, the Russians are involved at a scientific level.

● (1035)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: I think one of the challenges, which we haven't spoken about too much at this committee, at least not today, is that as the Arctic starts to free up, there are going to be more fishing vessels. Is there a willingness on the part of the Russians to have some type of agreement, and possibly even to police, so that we don't have a raping of the Arctic, which we experienced on the east coast and in other areas of the world?

Mr. Bernard Funston: There already are those kinds of regional fisheries management organizations. There's a very well-known scientific body based in Arctic Russia called PINRO, which does a lot of work with the Norwegians, for example, on Barents Sea fish stocks. That is an area that has been fished for some time.

In terms of high Arctic fisheries, as we learned in our Alaskan meetings recently, we don't know a lot about the productivity of the high Arctic Ocean. Most of the fishing is in coastal areas, which are under state jurisdiction. Where there are straddling stocks, as there are in the Barents Sea between the Norwegians and the Russians, there's actually a very strong management plan already in place.

As to whether people will start fishing in the central Arctic Ocean, we learned that, for example, the Arctic cod, the major keystone species, are tiny little things. They're from one to seven inches long, and we don't know much about their productivity.

So there will be fishing, but primarily it will be state regulated. Then where there are straddling stocks, we would probably work primarily with the Americans, and of course the Danes on the east coast. I don't know that we have any straddling fish stocks of a commercial quality with the Russians at this point, but they are working closely with the Norwegians already and have been for many years.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: That's good.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you. You're already one minute into Ms. Brown's time.

There are four minutes left, Ms. Brown.

Ms. Lois Brown: Thank you very much, Chair.

You were here for part of Ms. Jeffrey's presentation to us this morning. I don't know that you caught it all, but she said to the committee that the Conference Board of Canada has put out a document called, “Getting it Right: Assessing and Building Resilience in Canada’s North”.

Have you reviewed this paper, and do you have any comments on it?

Mr. Bernard Funston: I haven't reviewed it and I have therefore no comments.

David?

Mr. David J. Scott: I haven't reviewed it in sufficient detail. But I would simply add that I think the more we have folks looking at the north, engaging with northerners, and trying to figure out solutions, collaboratively, ideas will emerge and an appropriate path will emerge. But I can't comment on the specifics of that report.

Ms. Lois Brown: She said there is another report coming out on Monday on housing strategies for the north, which is going to be available.

Do you get those kinds of papers that are coming out of Canada? Do you have people go through them, and is the board using that as a basis for some of its research?

Mr. Bernard Funston: We don't have the staff to allow us to get through the volume of papers that are being generated, and it's huge. Would we like to? Absolutely. At some point it's more important for us to know who's doing what work, as opposed to knowing what's within the walls of their reports.

It does inform the board, but we've tended to bring our ideas together from our various experiences, as opposed to looking at reports and then responding to them. We just don't have the capacity at the moment.

Mr. David J. Scott: We do our best to stay on top of new information that is being produced. But as Mr. Funston has noted, it is rather overwhelming, given the relatively small size of our staff. We have essentially two and a half folks working on the full range of things we do.

Ms. Lois Brown: On your website sidebar you have listed resources available and a directory. Who is using that? How do you compile that list? Who do you use as empirical evidence? And would you list the Conference Board of Canada as one of the resources available to the people who are using your information?

Mr. David J. Scott: I first must apologize for the current state of the website. I would say it has suffered over the past four or five years and is now nowhere near as up to date as I expect it to be. We're doing our very best to revitalize that.

The Conference Board is one of the players that compiles information and produces analysis, so again, in the spirit of sharing information that's been produced, that's precisely one of the groups that should be referenced as a player in the north that has information and has performed analysis. We're non-judgmental in this case. We will share the work of a full range of government and non-governmental organizations that are weighing in to produce information about the north.

● (1040)

Ms. Lois Brown: I would anticipate—

The Chair: Thank you very much. That's all the time we have.

Ms. Lois Brown: Can I make one comment?

The Chair: Make a quick point, sure.

Ms. Lois Brown: I would anticipate that there is a lot of university work being done, and, just to Mr. Bevington's comment about universities in the north, the availability of online education opportunities now is one way of getting education into the north. Let's hope that in the future there is an aggregate number of students who would generate the demand for a proper university facility to be built.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Dewar has a question, then I have a question for you, and then we'll wrap up.

Mr. Paul Dewar: You've touched on it, but the ecosystem management is a massive equation. We're studying the Arctic for reasons that have to do with Canada taking over the chair in May.

Can you give us some ideas—and if you don't have them presently, maybe share them with the committee later—about how that should be contemplated through the Arctic Council? How do you get the ecosystem management right, not just the fisheries but just generally from a policy perspective?

Mr. Bernard Funston: I think the real challenge on ecosystem-based management again is to understand what the phrase means. The Norwegians don't even like that phrase. They like the ecosystem approach, because it's not actually management based in the ecosystem. Secondly, it's not managing the ecosystem; it's managing human activity within the ecosystem.

One of the underpinnings of ecosystem-based management is good science. As we know from most of the Arctic Council reports we have read, we don't fully understand the dynamics among the systems that constitute the ecosystems. They've identified 17 large marine ecosystems in the Arctic region. Probably not all of them are right for any kind of human activity in the near future.

But the real challenge here is this whole notion of science that underpins ecosystem-based management and what it means in terms of management, because science is good at developing knowledge and information. It's not particularly good at making choices. It helps make choices, but politicians are the people who make the decisions about competing interests. As I said, I use that analogy of frontier, homeland laboratory, and wilderness. Those are all valid ways of looking at the north. How do you decide whether you're going to drill for oil or allow polar bear hunting? There's a political decision and a choice in that, and sometimes you don't have the information. Sometimes the science doesn't tell you what to do.

So like “sustainable development”, it's a term that will evolve. There's a big report to the Arctic Council on this concept due in May 2013. It has a weakness on the science side, but on the management side it also has a weakness, because in these Arctic states we don't have civil services that are very good at making those kinds of choices on a technical basis. They are quintessentially choices that have to be made at a political level.

Ecosystem-based management sounds like a science-based process, but ultimately it's going to be very politically based, in my view.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Can I just ask you which term you prefer, the Norwegian one or your management—

Mr. Bernard Funston: I think I prefer the Norwegian one. The Norwegians are much better, I find, when I work with them on the English language than I am.

I think the ecosystem approach is closer to what we're getting at. We're looking at the ecosystems, but they're not watertight compartments. Of course, what do you do with ecosystem-based management when the actual impacts are from outside: transboundary pollutants and climate change? Those aren't things you manage in the ecosystem. You have to—

Mr. Paul Dewar: They're multilateral. They're kind of—

Mr. Bernard Funston: They're global.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Okay. Thank you. That was great.

The Chair: Actually, my question sort of stems from what you just talked about in terms of sustainable development. In your involvement over the years with the Arctic Council, how have you seen the evolution of that? That sort of touches on what you just talked about. You've obviously seen a lot of changes in the evolution of the Arctic Council since 1996, so could you briefly touch on those?

Mr. Bernard Funston: Certainly. It's been a remarkable and quite amazing evolution, in my view. There are a lot of detractors, but the process took time.

Sustainable development was not based on any kind of theoretical or definitional approach. The States didn't want to define it at the front end, so it started off as a collection of projects, and the projects were simply approved based on who was interested and who had money to do them. But over the course of the first 10 years, a pattern started to develop. I think we have now, actually looking at the Arctic human development report that came out of the Icelandic chairmanship in 2004, sort of a pattern, almost a strategic framework for how you look at sustainable development questions.

The challenge, of course, in sustainable development in the Arctic is determining who it is for. Is it for the local people, or is it to sustain the seven billion who live on the planet? As I said, I think the globalization pressures are such that this is the next thing in terms of potential energy resources, certainly mining resources—we don't know too much about fisheries—and even tourism. So the question is, who's it for?

"Sustainable development" is a tricky term because it's a process as opposed to a result or a destination. I think it's gone well. I think there's more effort now to try to bring in business perspectives. Certainly, the working group has been a very strong supporter of the indigenous perspective. We won't get the balance completely right, but the dialogue is much more healthy than it was in 1996, when I started.

● (1045)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Gentlemen, thank you very much for taking the time to be here today. We appreciate it.

The meeting is adjourned.

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