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# **Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, February 19, 2019**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable MaryAnn Mihychuk**



## Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs

Tuesday, February 19, 2019

• (0845)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.)):** Good morning everyone.

[English]

Welcome, everyone. We're here at the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, studying community capacity-building on reserves.

Before we begin, I want to recognize that we're on the unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

This process of reconciliation that Canada is engaging in across the nation from coast to coast to coast is timely. Yesterday in Manitoba we celebrated Louis Riel Day, another important step in reconciliation, and I know the country had Family Day in other jurisdictions. Let's all remember our past and move forward in a positive way.

Today we have departments in front of us, and I don't want to hold them back. We have many experts here with us. I appreciate your attendance, and we're going to get started.

According to my list, we have four presenters, beginning with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Then we have the Department of Natural Resources, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Office of the Auditor General.

Welcome to you all. Typically, we have 10 minutes for every presenter. If you take less time, we'd appreciate it, but we want you to present as wholesomely as you can. We have many MPs who want to ask you questions.

Without further ado, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, please begin whenever you're ready.

[Translation]

**Ms. Claudia Ferland (Director General, Regional Infrastructure Branch, Regional Operations Sector, Department of Indigenous Services Canada):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before committee.

[Translation]

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for its work, as it supports ongoing policy and program development

efforts at Indigenous Services Canada. Your feedback on community capacity building and skills renewal in first nations communities is welcome. In fact, these aspects are essential to achieving the self-determination and self-government objectives of first nations.

[English]

This is why we are pleased to appear before you today. With me are colleagues from Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

From Indigenous Services Canada, I'm pleased to introduce to you Keith Conn from the first nations and Inuit health branch; Lynne Newman from the chief finances, results and delivery officer sector; and Adrian Walraven from the education and social development programs and partnerships sector.

From Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, I would like to introduce Christopher Duschenes from the lands and economic development sector and Allan MacDonald from the implementation sector.

[Translation]

As you know, in August 2017, the Prime Minister announced the dissolution of the former Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, and the creation of two separate but complementary departments: Indigenous Services Canada, which works with its partners to provide first nations, Inuit and Metis people with better access to high-quality services; and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, which supports the nation-to-nation relationship and efforts to achieve the goals of reconciliation.

The creation of two new departments offers an unprecedented opportunity to bring about lasting and far-reaching changes that will enable us to more effectively move forward toward reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

[English]

**Mr. Keith Conn (Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Department of Indigenous Services Canada):** I will continue; it's a tag team.

Indigenous Services Canada works collaboratively with partners to improve access to high-quality services for first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Our vision is to support and empower indigenous peoples to independently deliver services and address the socio-economic conditions in their communities. In order to do so, we continue to build upon the progress that has been made on improving service delivery, and we have adopted a rigorous results and delivery approach. Moreover, we are supporting our colleagues from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada in their efforts to modernize institutional structures and governance so that first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples can build capacity that supports the implementation of their vision of self-determination.

Our department has learned from past experiences, obviously, that community-led planning should not be a reporting requirement led by external consultants, but rather be viewed as a process to build local capacity. We know that approaches where consultants lead and develop plans without community input do not work. For communities to deliver and implement programs, plans must be driven and led at the community level.

In our efforts to promote community reconciliation and in acknowledging that past approaches and methods have not worked, the department has adopted models where community-led planning is built upon local empowerment and focuses on strategies to retain capacity within communities.

• (0850)

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** The department is committed to a renewed relationship with first nations and is working in partnership and co-operation with first nations in a manner that is based on respect, recognition of rights and indigenous self-determination.

[Translation]

To prepare indigenous communities to take the reins, we have implemented initiatives such as comprehensive community planning. These initiatives promote new approaches to community planning, highlight best practices, and facilitate the engagement of first nations around topics such as infrastructure, health, culture and economic development.

In fact, Indigenous Services Canada's vision is to support indigenous peoples to empower them to provide services to their communities and improve their socio-economic conditions. We want services to be designed, delivered and administered by indigenous peoples for indigenous peoples; in fact, our ultimate goal is to see the department disappear over time.

[English]

Comprehensive community planning is a holistic community-led process that enables a community to build a road map to sustainability, self-sufficiency and improved governance. With sustainability as the central principle, the community engages all its members, from children to elders, in planning and implementing the long-term vision for their community by addressing areas such as infrastructure, health, culture and economic development. There are currently 147 completed comprehensive community plans across Canada.

Indigenous Services Canada has also launched community-led planning pilot projects that involve 140 communities in 19 pilot

projects across all 10 regions to demonstrate that by investing in community-led planning and the associated supports, governance capacity is strengthened. To measure the governance capacity of pilot communities in a culturally-relevant, meaningful way and to illustrate how these communities are moving along the governance continuum in a quantitative manner, three to four indicators will be co-developed with each individual pilot, based on the 10 core functions of governance and reflecting the individual community needs and priorities.

**Mr. Keith Conn:** Another example of how we are supporting community capacity-building to support devolution and self-government is community-led health and wellness planning. The department helps communities develop local health and wellness plans, which allows communities to exercise greater control and flexibility over their health programs and services while supporting local capacity development.

The department also provides support to communities for developing health and wellness plans that are unique and specific to local needs. This approach promotes culturally appropriate holistic and integrated planning to improve health outcomes.

Longer term and more flexible funding arrangements provide communities with greater control and self-determination than federal health programming does. The successes to date have been possible due to relationships with partners and partnerships with associations such as the First Nations Health Managers Association. The association led the development of a guide for first nations health and wellness planning and was launched in November 2018. I have a copy here. It's quite colourful and really a very thoughtful and visionary document led by and developed with first nations communities, technicians and practitioners. The guide promotes culturally appropriate, holistic integrated planning approaches to improve health outcomes—a true vision around community ownership.

The department is also making investments across Canada for first nations-led health transformation over the next three years. This funding supports first nations' initiatives in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec. We're identifying and designing service delivery solutions tailored to their community needs. The immediate goal is to support first nations in the transformation of health systems to improve regional first nations' capacity for health governance. The longer term goal is to ensure that first nations health is supported by indigenous governance with models that are designed, implemented and maintained by first nations based on community needs.

For example, the department is partnering with the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak to design a process that will allow for greater control of community primary health care services. The goal is to create a system whereby primary care is developed and delivered by communities themselves. These initiatives bring services closer to home and support locally driven solutions, which improve health outcomes for indigenous peoples.

Madam Chair, we could go on and on to name a number of initiatives across an array of program areas where a similar approach to first nations empowerment is being employed. These range from co-development of new fiscal relations, to relationships between Canada and first nations, to first nations land management, to economic growth strategies for indigenous communities surrounding the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario so they can be in better positions to respond to economic development opportunities.

More specifically, since 2010, we have pursued a coordinated whole-of-government approach to support the development of the Ring of Fire, a mineral-rich region in northern Ontario, as you know and read. Early investments focus on helping first nations in the region prepare for mining development. With the economic downturn in the metal sector and persistent socio-economic challenges facing first nations communities, the strategic focus has shifted to address the underlying precondition to economic development: mainly individual and community well-being. To this end, federal departments and the Province of Ontario are working collaboratively with Matawa First Nations and non-governmental partners on comprehensive community planning, strengthening financial management and governance, and client-centred case management.

The department also supports community empowerment through the First Nations Fiscal Management Act. This opt-in legislation provides a legislative and institutional framework that builds core capacity and governance systems needed to transition to greater levels of self-determination and towards self-governance.

Furthermore, the act can also support self-governing and treaty nations who wish to benefit from the provisions of the act, including financial management and systems certification, and pooled borrowing through adaptation and regulations.

● (0855)

[Translation]

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** The Governance and Institutions of Government Program is another example. This program provides support to first nations governments and indigenous governance institutions and organizations. It facilitates the development of professionals, elected officials, and indigenous groups who administer or procure services for first nations governments and communities.

Increasingly, indigenous partners are becoming experts in resolving problems in their communities. Capacity building is essential, but we recognize that it is also essential to retain the skills and talents of first nations-trained leaders in their own communities. In fact, the department invests directly in capacity building through partnerships with first nations.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, but your time has run out.

**Mr. Keith Conn:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We'll have an opportunity to ask questions. Then maybe we'll be able to.... We also have your document with us to refer back to.

Our next presenters are from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

[Translation]

**Dr. Ted Hewitt (President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Good morning, everybody. I'm very pleased to be here with my colleagues from SSHRC—

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** We didn't get that document.

**A voice:** There is no document.

**The Chair:** There is no document? Okay.

We will distribute it electronically.

Sorry, Ted; go on.

**Dr. Ted Hewitt:** Does that count for my time, Madam Chair?

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** No, we'll start right over.

**Dr. Ted Hewitt:** I'm going to be very efficient.

**The Chair:** You're going to be so precise.

**Dr. Ted Hewitt:** I am.

**The Chair:** You're scientists.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Dr. Ted Hewitt:** Thank you for the invitation to be here. I'm here with my colleagues, Ursula Gobel and Manon Tremblay, from SSHRC.

I want to begin, as you did, by recognizing and acknowledging our presence on the unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

As president of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and chair of the Canada research coordinating committee, I am really pleased to have this opportunity to speak to members of the committee about a very special initiative that the federal government granting agencies, in collaboration with first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, are undertaking with the goal of strengthening indigenous research capacity.

In 2015, as we're all aware, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued a very clear call to establish a national research program to advance the understanding of reconciliation. Call to action 65 reads as follows:

We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

● (0900)

[Translation]

In 2017, the Canada Research Coordinating Committee, or CRCC, was created. The CRCC brings together the heads of Canada's research granting agencies, namely the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the National Research Council, the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Chief Science Advisor, the Deputy Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and the Deputy Minister of Health.

The objective of the CRCC is to achieve greater harmonization, integration and coordination of research-related programs and policies, and to address issues of common concern.

[English]

The CRCC reaffirmed the federal granting agencies' commitment to the calls to action of the TRC, and identified as one of its priorities the creation of a national dialogue with indigenous communities to develop an interdisciplinary indigenous research and research training model that contributes to reconciliation. In budget 2018 the federal government committed \$3.8 million to SSHRC to support this priority by developing a strategic research plan that identifies new ways of doing research with indigenous communities. This includes strategies to grow the capacity of those communities to conduct research and to partner with the broader research community.

In support of these objectives, SSHRC, in collaboration with the other federal granting agencies previously named, has been leading the implementation of the strengthening indigenous research capacity initiative. This engagement seeks to build an increased understanding of the effective strategies for strengthening the research capacity of indigenous communities and improving relationships with first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

In the spirit of renewing relationships with Canada's indigenous people, our engagement activities have been guided by three key objectives. First is a focus on co-development, such that everything we do will be developed in partnership with indigenous communities. Second, a key objective is to build new relationships with first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples by fostering and sustaining mutually respectful relationships and generating ongoing opportunities for dialogue. A third objective is to take a coordinated approach across the federal funding agencies and other key partners in this endeavour.

[Translation]

Building upon engagement through previous round tables and dialogues with indigenous peoples since the release of the TRC's report, four strategic themes were identified to guide our current engagement activities.

These themes were: supporting indigenous talent and research careers; engaging indigenous knowledge; mobilizing knowledge and partnerships for reconciliation, and fostering mutually respectful relationships. Each offered an area in which indigenous scholars, students and community and business leaders could engage actively with our work.

[English]

The process of engagement has taken place over the past several months along two streams.

In one stream, a series of regional events, such as round tables and workshops, were organized in collaboration with indigenous partners and communities. Between July 2018 and March 2019, 14 regional events will have taken place with indigenous communities across Canada. These events have engaged with first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, as well as reflected a diversity of voices, including elders and knowledge keepers, youth and students, business leaders, women's groups, community and research organizations and post-secondary institutions. An online engagement platform developed on GCcollab has further enabled engagement and dialogue.

In another stream, multidisciplinary research grants, entitled indigenous research capacity and reconciliation grants, were funded through SSHRC's connection program. A total of 116 indigenous research capacity and reconciliation grants, with a value of up to \$50,000 each, have recently been awarded to indigenous organizations as well as to researchers at post-secondary institutions and other not-for-profit organizations.

These grants specifically support community gatherings, workshops and events that focus on mobilizing and exchanging knowledge on indigenous research in ways that are transformative and contribute to reconciliation.

Furthermore, for the first time, not-for-profit indigenous organizations were able to apply and lead these projects directly. In fact, some 85% of projects submitted by indigenous organizations were successful, and more than half of the indigenous research and conciliation grants were awarded to such organizations.

The lessons and perspectives that emerge from these engagement activities will be formulated into a draft strategic plan to be presented to the CRCC in the spring, and which we hope will lay the foundations for a sustained engagement with first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples on advancing indigenous research and reconciliation.

These activities have raised many important points and ideas. Participants have been as impassioned as they have been insightful. They have demonstrated that the manner in which scientific research has been done traditionally, and in many instances continues to be done, with indigenous communities in Canada warrants serious reflection.

● (0905)

[Translation]

Through the engagement events, first nations, Inuit and Métis people spoke emphatically about the need to decolonize research, and especially putting an end to the type of "helicopter research" that has non-indigenous researchers fly in and fly out to collect data with little, if any, relationship-building with the community, little understanding of indigenous concepts like community consent, and sometimes without even adequate information provided to the community or meaningful consultation.

[English]

As one major step toward decolonizing research, indigenous people are demanding more control over the data that is collected about them. They want to be able to decide how that data is used, how it is published, stored and shared. In particular, they highlighted the difficulty of simply accessing the data for their own community uses and benefits.

Indigenous people also asked for more say in setting the research agenda, so that the research can be designed from the very beginning to address the needs and priorities of indigenous communities. They also want research partnerships to move beyond simple tokenism toward more meaningful and enduring collaboration in research. In this regard, they highlighted the importance of the more long-term community research and research funding.

These communities would also like more support in conducting their own community-driven research and help in building up their own indigenous research infrastructure at all levels.

[Translation]

A strong message coming from the engagement events has been that indigenous communities need more support in developing indigenous research talent, which includes better recognition and reflection of indigenous ways of knowing.

[English]

We consider the work being done by the tri-agencies on strengthening indigenous research to be valuable and innovative, and vitally important for a better understanding of reconciliation with indigenous people. It has also been important for recognizing and correcting the many historical grievances that have been inflicted on indigenous people through ill-considered processes of scientific research.

[Translation]

Thank you.

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

[English]

Our third group are from Natural Resources Canada. Welcome. Close to my own heart.

We heard during our last study that natural resources, for many communities, hold huge opportunities, so we're very interested in your comments.

**Ms. Mary-Luisa Kapelus (Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, Department of Natural Resources):** Thank you.

My name is Mary Kapelus and I'm the acting assistant deputy minister of the indigenous affairs and reconciliation sector at Natural Resources Canada.

I'll begin by acknowledging that we are gathered today on the traditional unceded territory of Algonquin people. I'd also like to thank you for the opportunity to address this committee as you undertake your community capacity-building and retention of talent study.

[Translation]

This important work is timely at Natural Resources Canada, as we deliver on the government's commitment to advance reconciliation and renew Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples.

[English]

Before going further, I would like to introduce my colleague, John Kozij, director general of the trade, economics and industry branch in the Canadian Forest Service; and Jean Gagnon, surveyor general in the lands and mineral sector.

As my CIRNAC and ISC colleagues have referenced, we too believe it is essential to support capacity-building in indigenous communities.

● (0910)

[Translation]

As you may be aware, Natural Resources Canada is responsible for forestry, mining, energy and land-related sciences and geospatial information. This involves collaboration with provincial and territorial partners, universities, industry, and indigenous peoples. At Natural Resources Canada, it is paramount that this work recognize the importance of partnerships and mutual capacity building with indigenous communities.

[English]

It's with this vision in mind that NRCan recently created the sector for which I am responsible, indigenous affairs and reconciliation. This new sector provides a coordinated approach in the department's engagement and consultation efforts with indigenous peoples. This includes enhancing our relationships with national indigenous organizations, supporting the various sectors at NRCan in their activities with indigenous people, and advancing the federal whole-of-government approach to reconciliation.

I'll now go over five initiatives where NRCan directly supports community capacity-building.

First, the Canadian Centre for Mapping and Earth Observation supports capacity-building through the Inuvik satellite station facility. It's making Inuvik and Canada a global data destination. This \$20 million satellite reception facility is a global hub for geospatial services and data science in the Arctic built on partnerships with the Gwich'in, the Inuvialuit, the town of Inuvik, the Government of the Northwest Territories, Canadian and international space agencies, and the private sector.

[*Translation*]

This project also supports skill and capacity development of indigenous students who are recruited to work on projects related to collecting, managing and applying geospatial data, while providing an understanding of satellite operations.

Natural Resources Canada has also sponsored the development of user needs assessments for geospatial data in indigenous communities to increase data relevance for issues such as climate change, disaster management and ocean management.

[*English*]

The second area of NRCan's capacity-building is within the forest sector, which is an important generator of jobs, particularly in rural and remote parts of the country. The indigenous forestry initiative is the latest iteration of NRCan's 30 year legacy of capacity support for indigenous forestry.

[*Translation*]

Natural Resources Canada is working with communities to build capacity to manage forest resources and support the development of indigenous-owned and operated businesses.

[*English*]

For example, since 2016, NRCan has supported forestry management capacity-building with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, who directly manage forest crown lands in Nova Scotia by integrating indigenous knowledge and western science, leading to broader support for various forestry activities.

NRCan investments have also aided Chapleau Cree First Nation to develop the northeast superior regional chiefs conservation economy strategy, a cornerstone for forest sector economic development. This work has helped to establish the Wahkohtowin, an indigenous-led development corporation that includes a birch syrup business and a forest harvesting operation, bringing jobs and revenue to the local community.

[*Translation*]

The Indigenous Forestry Initiative fosters partnerships with indigenous communities. It isn't just program results—it is about how we build lasting relationships. Our boots-on-the-ground presence through regional forestry offices means that we are able to co-develop projects in communities.

[*English*]

The third area I would like to touch on is our innovative and joint efforts to build a cleaner energy future. Through the clean energy for rural and remote communities program, NRCan was provided with \$220 million over six years to support clean energy projects. We're collaborating with indigenous communities and organizations as they advance renewable energy and capacity-building projects to reduce their reliance on diesel.

With federal support, the Teslin Tlingit Council in the Yukon has built a forest-based bioenergy plant to heat their community. Teslin maximized the community benefits in each stage of the project. They oversaw the planning, construction and ultimately the operation and ongoing maintenance of their bioenergy systems.

Our off-diesel program has also allocated \$10 million in funding toward capacity-building projects related to clean energy. Through this first round of funding we're advancing 11 projects across Canada that range from community energy planning and energy literacy to youth training programs.

● (0915)

[*Translation*]

These projects are at the very heart of ensuring indigenous communities have greater decision-making regarding their energy future. Every project is community driven and aims to achieve broader socio-economic impacts.

[*English*]

For example, NRCan is supporting a project that will recruit, train and offer professional development to new full-time indigenous energy managers across multiple remote communities in western Canada.

We've also launched the \$20 million “Generating New Opportunities”, or indigenous off-diesel, initiative in Whitehorse last week. The goal of the initiative is to help transition up to 15 remote indigenous communities off diesel as their primary energy source.

[*Translation*]

Over the past 18 months, Natural Resources Canada engaged across the country to ensure diverse needs and perspectives were incorporated into the design of the initiative. This engagement resulted in a flexible design where participants can access the training and support needed to develop a clean energy project that meets the needs of their community.

[*English*]

Investment in clean energy solutions to reduce reliance on diesel in remote indigenous communities is one small but vitally important link in supporting reconciliation and self-determination.

The fourth area is the first nations land management program. Budget 2018 invested \$8.4 million over five years to pilot a land surveying capacity development program for first nations communities to address and remove barriers to effective land management.

Under this program, NRCan will provide 24 first nations communities with 12 weeks of in-community and customized hands-on training in the fundamentals of surveying.

[*Translation*]

The program aims to increase knowledge of the role and benefits of land surveys to support land governance and decision-making.



[English]

The retention of acquired skills in the community is important and will be maintained by training in the community, rather than requiring participants to leave the community, and by the development of in-house tools and procedures.

Finally, in 2014, NRCan embarked on early and ongoing engagement with indigenous peoples through the west coast energy infrastructure initiative. This initiative provides capacity for engagement between federal officials and indigenous communities on energy infrastructure projects. Working with partner departments, 235 projects were approved, valued at nearly \$61 million. For example, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation undertook numerous initiatives focused on restoring ecosystem health to Burrard Inlet, including establishing an environmental action plan, convening a co-managed round table to update the water quality objectives for the inlet, and installing a network of scientific instruments to monitor water quality.

[Translation]

Through this work, the community harvested clams out of the inlet for the first time in 44 years.

In response to this situation, the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council developed the First Nations Referrals Officer Certification Training Program, a technical training initiative for first nations communities in B.C. The purpose of this initiative is to better understand and manage consultation-related referrals and improve natural resource management decision-making in their territories.

[English]

**The Chair:** Please wrap up.

**Ms. Mary-Luisa Kapelus:** In conclusion, we're changing how we work with indigenous people in all resource sectors by creating lasting relationships that support indigenous-led and -owned projects.

[Translation]

Thank you for your attention.

[English]

I'm happy to answer your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We have our final presenter, the Office of the Auditor General.

Thank you for being here. Please go ahead.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jerome Berthelette (Assistant Auditor General, Performance Audit, Office of the Auditor General):** Madam Chair, thank you for this opportunity to present the results of two audits from our spring 2018 reports: one audit was on the socio-economic gaps on first nations reserves and the other was on employment training for indigenous people.

Joining me today are audit principals Dawn Campbell and Glenn Wheeler.

The Office of the Auditor General of Canada has a long history of auditing federal programs and activities that affect indigenous

peoples. Although successive governments have made numerous commitments to improve the well-being of indigenous people, I am sorry to report that our decades of audits indicate that the results of the programs for indigenous peoples have been unacceptable.

As you will see from the findings of the two audits we are discussing here today, recurring issues include the lack of information and the poor use of available data to understand and improve the impact the programs have on the lives of indigenous peoples.

• (0920)

[English]

In the first audit, we concluded that Indigenous Services Canada did not satisfactorily measure or report on Canada's progress in closing the socio-economic gaps between on-reserve first nations people and other Canadians. We also concluded that the use of data to improve education programs and thereby improve socio-economic well-being was inadequate. We found that the department's main measure of socio-economic well-being on reserves, the community well-being index, was not comprehensive. While the index included Statistics Canada data on education, employment, income and housing, it omitted several aspects of well-being that are also important to first nations people, such as health, environment, language and culture.

We also found that the department did not adequately use the large amount of program and other available data to accurately measure and report on whether the lives of people on first nations reserves were improving. For example, we calculated that the gap in levels of high school graduation, or the equivalent, between on-reserve first nations people and other Canadians widened between 2001 and 2016. We also found that the department overstated first nations' high school graduation rates by up to 29 percentage points because it did not account for students who dropped out between grades 9 and 11.

Indigenous Services Canada also made poor use of the education data it collected to improve education results. For example, the department spent \$42 million over four years to prepare first nations students to enter post-secondary education programs; however, we found that only 8% of those enrolled completed this preparatory program. Despite these poor results, the department did not work with first nations or educational institutions to improve the success rate.

Our second audit examined how Employment and Social Development Canada managed two programs, the aboriginal skills and employment strategy and the skills and partnership fund. The common goal of these two programs was to increase the number of indigenous people who had sustainable and meaningful employment. For both of these programs, the department worked with indigenous organizations across the country that provided training and employment to support first nations, Métis and Inuit clients.

Overall we found that the department could not demonstrate that these programs increased the number of indigenous people who got jobs and stayed employed. Specifically, we found that the department did not define the performance indicators necessary to demonstrate whether the programs were meeting their objectives. For example, the department established an annual target for the number of clients employed after receiving services; however, the department counted any employment obtained as a successful outcome, whether the work was short term, seasonal, part-time or full-time. This means that it did not know how successful the programs were in helping clients find sustainable employment.

We also found that the department did not analyze the program data it collected to identify trends, problems or good practices that could help indigenous organizations improve their services and results. For example, the department spent \$130 million between the 2010-11 and 2016-17 fiscal years on wage subsidies for employers who hired clients for specific lengths of time; however, the department did not track whether these clients continued working after the subsidies had ended.

[Translation]

In addition, the department did not consistently monitor indigenous organizations to ensure that they fulfilled their obligations under funding agreements, nor did it use the information from the monitoring it did to know how well the programs were working.

This means that the department missed the opportunity to explore ways to improve program delivery and to work with indigenous organizations to identify areas in which capacity needed to be strengthened.

Following the tabling of our reports in Parliament in May, Indigenous Services Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada each prepared an action plan to address our recommendations. Your committee may wish to ask them for an update on the implementation of their commitments.

I would like to note that the committee may also be interested in several of our previous reports that address issues related to capacity development as indigenous organizations take on more responsibilities for programming. Notably, you may be interested in our June 2011 status report on programs for first nations on reserves, in which we identified structural impediments that explained the lack of progress in improving programming.

Another is our fall 2015 report on establishing the First Nations Health Authority in British Columbia, which identified factors that facilitated the transfer of health responsibilities to first nations.

This concludes my opening statement.

We would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

• (0925)

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

[English]

Okay, we're moving into the question period.

We will begin with MP Mike Bossio.

**Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.):** Thank you all for being here this morning. I greatly appreciate it. It is some valuable information that you have shared with us.

I would like to get from Indigenous Services Canada a better understanding of the current landscape of training and talent retention on reserve. In your experience, what are some of the most common challenges communities face to retaining qualified individuals on reserve?

**Mr. Keith Conn:** As we alluded to earlier, the demand for training and development is wide and deep when developing individuals, whether through college or university or other forms of training institutions across the land.

In my health experience, among the challenges is accessibility to getting the right training in place for community members who want to occupy the health field. We also have issues around housing in retaining individuals. Where would you house people?

The other part of the challenge is the competitive nature of the health field. Salaries and wages pose a challenge in trying to be competitive with the labour market.

Another issue is language. We have developed programs. John Kozij and I had the pleasure of participating, in what was at the time HRSDC, in the skills development training to match the local jobs by planning and organizing sports to get individuals who didn't complete high school to complete high school programming to transition to jobs. What I'm getting at is that it is a large coordination issue in some respects.

I will have some of my other colleagues share, if they will, concerning the education sector as well.

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** In terms of even the educational infrastructure approach, I would say that it really is, as Mr. Conn was saying, a question of having access to education and having some of the barriers—salaries, housing, competencies...but we are working on a number of retention programs and developmental programs so that skill sets can stay at the community level.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** The week before we went back to our ridings, there were 338 youths on the Hill. A number of them were from the north, from Attawapiskat. They had a teacher there with them. I was talking to the teacher about the school and the fact that there were very few, or actually, no indigenous teachers at the school. What are we doing, looking forward, to try to solve that issue?

I am really curious about Natural Resources Canada going in and actually training individuals on site to do land surveying. That's a really interesting model.

Are we looking at tapping into that in any other ways, in any other areas where we can actually go on site to where these schools are and take the indigenous youth from a young age who appear to have that capability and almost try to stream them in certain directions that will benefit those local communities? Even if it's not within the one reserve itself, do we look at it at a nation level and try to spearhead it from that direction? Is there any thought towards that?

• (0930)

**Mr. Keith Conn:** Adrian?

We have an education specialist here who we'll have to draw upon, if he can please join us at the table.

**Mr. Adrian Walraven (Acting Director General, Education, Education and Social Development Programs and Partnerships Sector, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Thank you very much.

In response to the question, speaking in the domain of education, part of the way forward that we're trying to work collaboratively with first nations across the country to develop is one that's going to be regionally tailored and locally driven. While the issue of teacher recruitment and retention is a common one across the country, how we address it and how we work together to improve the situation will be different in different parts of the country.

In particular, in northwestern Ontario, as I'm sure you're familiar with, there are particular challenges given northern remote isolation posts. Housing is an issue. Addressing the actual drivers of what education costs to deliver, with salaries and teacher retention benefits, is part of it.

What we are trying to do in the domain of education in the areas of your question is to establish regionally driven strategies on how we can address practical problems such as this. That starts with the overall effort we are trying to do to improve our funding relationship with first nations across the country, providing stable and predictable base funding and then tailoring whatever additional funding might be required to the local circumstance. Certainly the northern remote issues we are facing with teacher recruitment and retention are a big part of that. We are having joint discussions and action-oriented conversations with first nations at the national level through meetings convened with the Assembly of First Nations, and at the local level with organizations such as Nishnawbe Aski Nation in Ontario and other partners across the country.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Right now, our indigenous youth have to leave their reserves to get that post-secondary education and become teachers. Do we have any idea of how many have actually left to become teachers and then never gone back?

That is one of the biggest problems, right? How do we do it closer to home so they're not losing touch with their local communities, or they leave the community and then become ostracized trying to go back to the community? We have a double problem that we're trying to address there.

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** Working with our first nation partners, that situation is going to require integrated solutions. To have someone go out and be trained as a doctor, teacher or administrator and then come back to the community, you need proper housing, proper supports within the community, a competitive salary, all of these types of things that create that enabling environment for retention. Those are the types of conversations we're having and need to have to move toward.

**The Chair:** Thank you. I think you can provide us an answer to the question specifically as to what percentage of indigenous people go back to their home communities after post-secondary education.

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** I don't have that data with me today, but it's something we could address as a follow-up.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll move on to MP Kevin Waugh.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Thank you to each and every one of you for attending this morning.

I'm going to pick up with the data. You don't have the data. You haven't had the data, as the Auditor General has stated, for over two decades.

It's interesting. We continue to throw money...and I see it right now in education. There are some groups in this country that are getting more education dollars than others. You have picked winners and losers.

Mr. Walraven, I'm going to start with you.

I have seen this government throw a lot of money at skills. Two weeks ago, we had the Department of Employment and Social Development here, and there were horrific numbers. There were 318,000 people who went through training, and only 100,000 got jobs. Over 217,000 people didn't get jobs after the training. There were 4,500 people who went back to school, which was good. But you see where we're coming from.

In Manitoba, there are certain areas that are getting more dollars for education.

How is your department looking at the education dollars? There are some students getting up to \$18,000 per year, and others still getting \$10,000 per year. How do you pick winners and losers in the education system in this country?

• (0935)

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** What we've done over the last couple of years in working with our first nations partners is that we've co-developed a strategy that addresses this issue specifically.

In the coming fiscal year, we are implementing a new way of funding first nations' education that is configured to provide, in every jurisdiction, base funding that is provincially comparable, so that we are providing the same base resources that align with teacher salary rates and other base costs. Then, through regional education agreements and regionally driven conversations, which can be based on treaty, territory or a local community-specific situation as well, we are figuring out, based on locally driven priorities, what the above and beyond is that we need to go toward.

We know that to properly fund and get the types of education outcomes we need to address, we will need to go above and beyond base provincial comparability. The first step in that process is rolling out base funding that is equitable and provincially configured across the country, and then the second step is regionally tailoring the next wave of investment.

We have one regional education agreement that was recently concluded in British Columbia with the renewal of the tripartite education agreement. We are actively working to develop similar agreements in other parts of the country.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** I take it that there will be differences in funding because of the regional...

Can you explain that a bit?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** There will be, in part because teacher salary rates and other base costs in education vary across the country. A teacher's salary range in Alberta is different from what it is in New Brunswick.

What we are trying to do is to address that base comparability, and then, in all areas, talking about the important things that first nations want to prioritize—language and culture investments, vocational training and a variety of other areas that we haven't quite been hitting the mark on in an era of underfunding—and then addressing those in conversations going forward.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Are we going to do a better job on graduation and literacy rates and tracking them? Is your department capable of that, or are you just going to have it done by these regional education...?

Who is going to do the job of tracking education rates? When a grade 9 or 10 student leaves, can we bring them back and get them over the line of a grade 12 education?

Last week, I toured two facilities in my city of Saskatoon, the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group. Both have done wonderful work, but who's going to track it? That was the question I asked both organizations last week: Who is tracking this data?

Who will track your data on graduation rates, as the Auditor General has pointed out, and those who leave the education system for one reason or another, and how do we get those people back in the system years later?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** We're working on two fronts.

In the short term, the department continues to work and improve how it tracks performance in working with first nations. We are developing a national outcome-based framework through the new fiscal relationship work. We also have our ongoing obligations to report publicly to parliamentarians and Canadians on how our program results are evolving.

At the same time—and I think this is the more important point—we are working actively with first nations partners to address the questions you're raising in terms of mutual accountability. First nations want to be able to demonstrate progress in their own first nations' education systems, as much as we would like to make sure we're selling that success story as much as possible to all Canadians.

At the national and regional level, we are developing structures that would allow us over time to have mutual responsibility when it comes to that, through public disclosure and ultimately accountability to first nations citizens, which all Canadians can also reflect on based on publicly available data reporting.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** You're still developing it. How long will that take?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** It will take time in different regions on different pace levels. In British Columbia, we have a new results framework that is already established and is currently being implemented. In other parts of the country, we are in the process of developing these conversations. In some parts of the country, working with our first nation partners, we haven't yet made as much progress as we would like. But the key point here, I put forward for

the discussion, is that we are committed to making sure we are developing the way forward jointly with our first nation partners because otherwise it is not ultimately going to be successful.

● (0940)

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** I must have some time left, then.

**The Chair:** You only have 20 seconds.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** I'm fine. Thank you.

I knew it was time.

**The Chair:** All right, we're moving on to MP Georgina Jolibois.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, NDP):** Good morning, and thank you for coming.

I appreciate this. However, I'm not going to focus on the government departments. I live in an area where all of these things you're talking about occur, and the dismay at the solutions and what's coming out.

I'm not going to focus on the negative today but on the Auditor General's report, as well as SSHRC.

To my knowledge, that the work you at the SSHRC have done throughout Canada is very important work. Can you describe what SSHRC has been doing thus far in Canada?

**Dr. Ted Hewitt:** Do you mean globally or with respect to indigenous people?

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** I mean in Canada with respect to indigenous peoples.

**Dr. Ted Hewitt:** Okay.

You're asking the question about SSHRC. I'd be pleased to try to answer with respect to the other funding councils as well, CIHR and NSERC, which are also doing important work. I want to make that very clear. If I'm speaking here about my agency, I'm responsible for that.

For many years we have funded indigenous research, which we define as research that is done by and/or with indigenous communities in Canada. We have expended over the years tens of millions of dollars on this type of work through a variety of programming, whether it be team grants, individual researchers or otherwise. For example, we've invested over \$20 million in the last five years on work on indigenous language preservation and so forth.

We have an indigenous research policy, which first and foremost validates and supports the importance of acknowledging indigenous ways of knowing and indigenous knowledge as legitimate data for consideration. We have a policy that ensures that indigenous peoples are at the table when projects are being peer reviewed. At this point we're engaged in this larger project with our other partner agencies and with the CRCC, implementing and using many of those principles that we developed over the years in our support for indigenous research.

If I may, I would like to turn to floor over to Ursula to talk a bit about the additional things we are now doing as part of that project.

**Ms. Ursula Gobel (Associate Vice-President, Future Challenges, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council):** Thank you.

It's very important to us as a funding agency situated in Ottawa that we have the advice and hear the voices of indigenous communities. We have welcomed tremendously the advice of the indigenous advisory circle, which reflects indigenous scholars from across the country, and also now indigenous community members and a commitment to continuous improvement.

We hear that a lot, but our president mentioned our policies and guidelines that are regularly being updated. We most recently addressed the issue of greater accessibility and support for indigenous students, recognizing some of the administrative barriers that were in place. How do we provide that opportunity for indigenous graduate students to have consideration, should they wish it, for a longer duration, given their needs as caregivers? How can we ensure that merit review committee members recognize traditional knowledge and different epistemologies and methodologies in graduate training? That should be recognized. So we're constantly re-evaluating and ensuring that our administrative processes and our guidelines are respectful of indigenous communities' needs and truly endeavour to support their growth.

Now in the context of tri-agency harmonization, Ted reviewed all of the activities that have been under way for several months. There are clear areas that have been identified across regions and by Inuit, first nations and Métis people: issues related to ethics and ethics policies, issues related to eligibility, issues related to data governance, each of these areas. Coming to a better understanding of the needs of the community, the distinctions between communities and regions and across first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and within the mandates of the tri-agencies, how can we better harmonize our practices?

That is complex work, but we are committed to doing it. We have established a tri-agency working group directly with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, for example. Being at the table and really rolling up our sleeves and addressing these issues with the voices of the community front and centre has been our approach.

● (0945)

**The Chair:** You have a couple more minutes.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** Auditor General, with all the reports that have come out—and so far, over the last three years, when I hear a report from the Auditor General, it is often dismaying, disappointing and frustrating because I come from and I live in these areas and then I see very little movement.

How can we continue to be open and positive and continue to pressure the governments to make necessary change on the ground?

**Mr. Jerome Berthelette:** Madam Chair, it's a difficult question. I've been working with the Office of the Auditor General for 18 years and in those 18 years, I've been involved in a number of the audits that have been reported to Parliament. I've worked with two Auditor Generals and both of them have been dismayed by the lack of progress made in terms of indigenous well-being generally.

Given what I've heard today, I am more optimistic with how departments are starting to pay attention to some of the issues that we have raised in the past and how they are approaching their interactions with and the management of their programs and services.

We have identified four structural barriers to success. One is the lack of clarity about service levels. The lack of a legislative base is second. The lack of appropriate funding is third and lack of organization of local service delivery is fourth. What we have seen in the presentations and what we've seen as we go out into the field is that it seems to us that each of these barriers is being addressed, as the department moves forward. That gives us some hope.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Next is MP Dan Vandal, and then I'll have a couple of questions.

**Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.):** Thank you for your presentations.

You've just referenced the lack of progress in the last 18 years. I can speak for the last three years. That's how long I've been here and our government has been here. We've invested record numbers of dollars in infrastructure and education and health. I believe it's close to \$17 billion of new money in those initiatives. There's actually construction going on and there's more focus on those very important factors.

In the 10 years prior to that, there was no investment by the Harper Conservatives. Can you draw a correlation between the lack of results with no investment and significant investment in the last three years?

**Mr. Jerome Berthelette:** Madam Chair, I don't believe I'd be able to draw a correlation because it's only three years. We're going to need more time to determine exactly what difference the additional funding makes.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** Absolutely. Would you agree that it's more important that ever now to ensure that we have good systems of monitoring and evaluation, given the historical investments our government is making?

**Mr. Jerome Berthelette:** Madam Chair, the office would say that yes, ongoing monitoring is important. By having access to the data and sharing the data with the first nations, then in collaboration, the first nations, the departments and the government can work together to make sure that the investments that are being made result in significant change.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** Absolutely. I agree. Partnerships are key and we are laying that groundwork that started three years ago.

One of our success stories, or one of the communities' success stories, is with boil water advisories. Some 78 have been lifted in the last three years. There are 60 that are left, but that is 78 fewer than there were three years ago.

My question is for Indigenous Services, the operators of those water systems. What are we doing to assure partnership communities that we have operators?

• (0950)

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** I can do that. Let me just pull the statistics on the operators.

You're quite correct that we have now lifted over 70 water advisories.

From an infrastructure perspective, one of the things we have been working on is capacity-building at that level. We've trained circuit rider trainers; we have over 60 trainers in the country who can train local resources. We have had operator training. We have had community leadership training in the environment, and water as well. We have trained in various delivery models that adapt to the various regions we have. We've worked with the First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group and the Ontario first nations technical group. We've worked with Alberta on inspection, training, development and infrastructure capacity.

We have local resources, but we also have senior resources that the local resources can call up and say, "I have a problem. Can you help me?"

We have to put a lot in place, as well, to ensure that the water treatment centres are well managed and that we have that capacity in place.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** That's excellent.

Are you confident that once 100% of the boil water advisories are lifted by 2021, we will have the adequate people in place to operate them?

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** With all the investments we're putting in place in training and what we're learning with first nations and with our practitioners, we're also building other tools. As we put the water systems in place, we will continue developing the training and doing seminars, even yearly seminars, to look at new technology and new possibilities.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** That's it. Great.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

My questions are for NRCan.

Following up on the discussion we had with many of our indigenous communities, seeing Natural Resources as a real opportunity for economic development, years ago, in about 2004, the government collaborated with industry on preparing something that I think was called the exploration and mining tool kit. This was an attempt to explain a complicated sector, from exploration to extraction to closure.

In how many languages have there been updates? I understand there was one in 2006. How many indigenous languages has the tool kit been translated into? How are you promoting this basic information so that people understand how to work with this vital industry?

**Ms. Mary-Luisa Kapelus:** Madam Chair, I do not have that data with me right now, unfortunately, but we will be able to get the data for you on the number of languages and promotion.

What I can tell you, though, is that we have gone leaps and bounds ahead in the mining sector, working with partners. Right now, we have a Canadian minerals and metals plan that we're working with. We're actually co-developing a chapter with indigenous partners.

In my short time in the department, I've noticed already, within the last year, a lot more advancement in the co-development efforts and how we're working and informing the way forward for the path in mining.

I don't know if John has anything else to add.

**The Chair:** I urge you to consider separating the two sectors. Just as with pharma, there's pharma and biotech, there's exploration and extraction. To combine the two, a lot of people would think that if you have somebody in exploration, that means they're going to have a mine opening any day now. Therefore, for the public record, I'd urge us to try to keep those separated, because it's an extremely long and complicated process.

Okay. Then you're going to get back to us on questions.

**Ms. Mary-Luisa Kapelus:** Yes.

**The Chair:** We'll move on with our MPs.

MP Arnold Viersen.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

Ms. Ferland, around education, I imagine that across the country it varies dramatically. I heard a bit about there being base funding and then matching funding. It is more expensive to get a teacher in Alberta than in Newfoundland. In B.C., they have their own education authority. Where I live, one of the tribal councils, Kee Tas Kee Now, is bringing in its own education authority.

What I'm looking at is how the funding goes to one of these authorities, and is there an ability for, let's say, a voucher system such as we see in other parts of the world coming through that system at all?

• (0955)

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** Chair, thank you for the question.

I'm going to invite my colleague, Adrian Walraven, to take this question.

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** We are actively working with Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council to establish one of those regional education agreements that I was speaking to earlier. All of our discussions and the joint development of these regionally-led strategies with first nations are predicated on us establishing a direct, provincially comparable base-level funding so that if a student is being educated at an on-reserve school, he or she is going to benefit from essentially the same funding package that he or she would receive if they were attending an Alberta provincial school off reserve, in an adjacent community.

This is the base. This is the starting point. We are building up and discussing with partners the multi-faceted additional needs in terms of where we go next.

To refer to what I understood you were asking, we don't have a system that is currently under conversation with our first nations partners about vouchers or anything that specific. The primary focus of these conversations right now is that.... I have to say that we are being more transparent than we ever have been historically, in terms of opening up our books, showing how we fund, and having funding-sufficiency conversations on that basis. Things will evolve from there.

In different parts of the country, first nations are coming forward and saying that this is great, but in terms of actualizing their education objectives they need this on top of what they have, or they need to prioritize additional resources in these areas. We are seeing that, certainly, with a focus on language and culture. We are seeing that with a focus on holistic lifelong learning strategies that would integrate early years, post-secondary and vocational training.

I think the committee is very interested in how students come back in their teen years if they drop out. How do we get students back in the classroom? We are having those conversations, but they are first nations-led and regionally driven. Our attitude is, how can we help? We're going to work together to figure out strategies going forward.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Is there any modelling on funding that follows the student? Are there any discussions around that whatsoever? For post-secondary education, I've talked to the chiefs who say they only have funding for maybe one or two students. It's kind of band directed, which has its own intricacies. They can take that funding wherever they go. They don't even have to go to school in Alberta. They can go to school in Halifax, for example, and the funding continues with them. Is there anything looking at a similar model for elementary and secondary school?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** In the domain of elementary and secondary schooling, across the country but also in your riding with Treaty 8 first nations, the department's role is that we either provide funding to the first nation and first nation organizations to support a student who is in an on-reserve classroom or to pay tuition costs when that student goes off reserve. That dual conversation really fixates on what the unique needs are when the student is in an on-reserve classroom and what are the enabling supports we have to have. For tuition rates, we have to continue to work in a tripartite fashion with our provincial partners and local education. Formal agreements that manage those tuition costs are the way we're going.

**The Chair:** We're at the five-minute round stage, so things will be moving a little quicker.

MP Terry Duguid.

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's been a very enjoyable morning subbing in at this committee.

Again, I want to thank the presenters for all of their good work. I think all of us around the table would acknowledge that we need more of that good work to continue.

My riding of Winnipeg South hosts the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Senator Sinclair, a Manitoban, was the chair of the commission, as you know. We're very, very proud of the roots of the centre in our community. We had Pablo Rodriguez, our Minister of Heritage, visit us on Friday when we toured the centre.

We really got some insights on the really impressive work that's going on there with digitizing the stories of residential school survivors and some of the research that's going on. I think, again, all of us would agree that we need more of that good work to continue.

Former Grand Chief Ron Evans, who is the grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, came to see our caucus a month or two ago. He raised the issue that the term "reconciliation" is thrown around. There isn't a lot of precision with regard to what constitutes a reconciliation measure. He called for co-developing a standard, much like with have ISO standards for the environment and industrial safety, to bring some precision to this rapidly evolving area you're working in.

I wonder if you would have a comment on that, whether there is a need for a research project to look at best practices around the world with indigenous peoples in other countries and to begin this process of codification. Again, we've heard all about monitoring and measuring today and why it's important.

• (1000)

**Dr. Ted Hewitt:** I'll start if I may.

It's a really, really good question. What I would say is that from the very, very start, we have taken a very broad view of reconciliation at SSHRC, the tri-council, and with the work we're doing together. There's a view that research on reconciliation is research about what the term means, how it's evolved and so forth. We've taken a broader view to say that we want to support everything we can support within our remit with the money that Parliament gives us in this particular area to support any activity at all that supports reconciliation.

We have not taken a view that we would define it and then communicate that to our partners in indigenous communities. We've always taken the view that we would listen to their views of what constitutes reconciliation and the things that we need to do to undertake reconciliation. It's a very dynamic approach. We've had many stories that we could share. There are many experiences that we've had on this, but we've taken this more dynamic approach to this to try to support the process in the best way that we can.

Ursula, do you want to add to that?

**Ms. Ursula Gobel:** Yes, I do.

Thank you for the comment. In fact, our very first event as part of this initiative was organizing collaboration with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. We were honoured to be welcomed at an elders gathering at Turtle Lodge. Elder Dave Courchene brought our question to the circle of elders in the context of our goal. There was a lot of discussion around the term "reconciliation" and the meaning therein. What was clear in that gathering was that reconciliation begins and is guided by indigenous people.

Our commitment to new relationships with indigenous people, first nations, Inuit and Métis people in the work that we're doing has guided our work and continues to do that. We have never met with a community to say that we're here to consult with you. It is about engagement and a commitment to a new relationship.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

You have about 30 seconds.

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** Then I want to brag, Madam Chair.

I'll just leave this with you. It's a success story. Southeast Collegiate—and again, I'm a very parochial guy—in the heart of Winnipeg South in Manitoba serves the first nations on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The graduation rate is 92% with 98% indigenous staff.

**The Chair:** That's what we want everywhere.

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** It is adjacent to a personal care home where the kids have access to elders.

Thunder Bay is looking at this model. It's not one-size-fits-all, but we need to look at what's working.

• (1005)

**The Chair:** The time's up for bragging, Terry.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Ah, come on. I'm enthusiastic.

**The Chair:** I hate to cut that off, but we are moving on to MP Steven Blaney.

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is certainly pleasant to recall successes in education. However, this morning we have with us the Auditor General's representative, and that office published a very critical report last May on the state of education among first nations.

Two conclusions came out of that report. The first was the growing gap between the high school graduation rate of students living in these communities, and the higher rate among students who live elsewhere. The second concerns the University and College Entrance Preparation Program set up by Indigenous Services Canada to facilitate young indigenous people's access to post-secondary studies. Despite that, the success rate is apparently also quite low, at about...

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Eight per cent.

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** What is the success rate?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** It's 8%.

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** It is about 8%.

I'd like to remind you of the interesting recommendation made by the Office of the Auditor General:

[English]

Following the tabling of our reports in Parliament in May, Indigenous Services Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada each prepared an action plan to address our recommendations. Your committee may wish to ask them for an update on the implementation of their commitments.

Madam Chair, how do we proceed so that we invite both Indigenous Services Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada to follow up on this very important recommendation that is tackling the very issue we're dealing with on building capacity? If we want to have a drinking water operator or to have people who provide maintenance in our schools, we need native skills, and that goes with education.

Madam Chair, through you, I seek guidance so that, as a committee, we can ask for an update on this important recommendation made by the Auditor General's office to have better success with natives graduating from high school or entering a post-secondary program.

**The Chair:** Very good.

Do we have a response to this question?

[Translation]

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** Thank you for that question.

To make things a little easier for me, I will answer in English.

[English]

Thank you very much.

Madam Chair—just to provide a response—we accept some of the points that the Auditor General pointed out about how we measure graduation rates.

To be clear—

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** You not only accepted them, but also made recommendations.

Is it possible to have a follow-up on those recommendations?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** Yes. I was getting to that.

We have committed—and I believe this was in the record of a discussion our deputy had at the public accounts committee—to follow up on a scheduled basis, very much as you're saying, to report on how we are progressing and how our results metrics are evolving through our co-developed strategies going forward.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** When can the committee expect to have access to that follow-up?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** I think we can provide that precision as a follow-up item to today's conversation, Mr. Blaney.

**The Chair:** You have another minute and a half.

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** My next questions are for Ms. Ferland.

If I understood correctly, you are responsible for the implementation of regional infrastructure projects at Indigenous Services Canada. We only have one minute left and I am not sure you will have time to answer me, but I'm trying to obtain some figures that seem very pertinent for the report we will be preparing.



My first question is the following: how much does the federal government, through your department, invest in infrastructure and training in communities?

This is my second question: out of the total amount invested in infrastructure, how much is invested in drinking water treatment systems? Mr. Vandal referred to this earlier. This is an important concern, both in terms of infrastructure and training.

My third question is the following: can you tell us how many indigenous drinking water treatment system operators there are in communities today in Canada?

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** Thank you for those three questions.

Regarding the number of indigenous operators, I'll have to get back to you on that.

• (1010)

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** That's fine.

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** With respect to infrastructure, 3,565 projects are under way at this time, and 2,000 have been completed. Some 1,057 projects have training or capacity reinforcement components; 55 of these have to do with drinking water treatment, 619 concern housing and real estate, 5 involve education, and 378 involve other types of infrastructure.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Thank you. A project, however, may last several years. What is your annual budget for infrastructure and drinking water treatment systems? If you do not have that answer today, you may send it to the committee later.

I'll ask you one last question to make sure that you have an opportunity to get back to us later. How many communities do not have potable water at this time, and what measures have been put in place to put an end to the need for boil-water advisories?

[English]

**The Chair:** You'll be providing that information to us in writing.

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** Absolutely.

**The Chair:** Questioning now goes to MP Mike Bossio.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** I'd like to follow up on my colleague MP Jolibois' earlier question about the Attorney General's office and the lack of data.

Is this new?

**Mr. Jerome Berthelette:** No, this isn't new.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** This has never been done before essentially. I would ask Adrian to come back to the table because he'll be following up on this. Sorry for the musical chairs constantly back and forth.

When I look at the national outcome framework—to follow up on where others were going—and that reporting to Parliament, that is new, isn't it?

Adrian.

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** The way we are approaching mutual accountability is absolutely new. The things that we are trying to discuss in terms of results, measurement items, graduation being one of them, are not necessarily new. We have been trying to use that as our primary metric for quite some time.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** But the approach you're taking now, which you're hopeful is going to bring about the outcome where we are going to have realistic numbers and a better understanding of those....

For me, how do we move forward if we don't know where we've been or where we are? I think the Auditor General's office was alluding to this, that they're hopeful that this is finally going to bring us to a place....

I see you nodding your head, Jerome, that you are hopeful that by having this data it will bring us to a greater understanding of how we move forward to ensure that we will have the outcomes that I think everybody around this table wants to see for indigenous peoples.

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** Absolutely.

As I think was already mentioned in today's conversation, there is a mosaic of results out there. We are seeing tremendous success in many first nation education systems. Southeast Collegiate was mentioned today. The Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia have extremely strong education results.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** And it's 100% community, indigenous led and driven.

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** Yes.

We need to be able to tell parliamentarians how things are evolving and Canadians how things are involving. As I said before, one of the key parts is first nation leaders and communities themselves want to make sure everyone knows how success is being manifested on the ground. We are integrating that joint interest in our collaborative discussions.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Thank you.

I apologize, I don't like to cut you off, but I don't have much time.

Mr. Hewitt, also the research work that you're doing now, this is new. I actually have two grants in my riding for the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. One is exploring the meaning of mutually respectful relationships and the engagement of indigenous knowledge in research practices, and the second one is decolonizing food systems as the root of indigenous cultural resurgence. Once again, taking into account indigenous traditional knowledge is vital research for us to take to understand where we come from, where indigenous peoples come from, so that we can then move forward once again as a society.

•(1015)

**Dr. Ted Hewitt:** That is absolutely true; it is new. As agencies, we've always funded what we would call indigenous research. For example, the CIHR has set a floor of 4.6% of its funding to support indigenous research. SSHRC spends every year—year in, year out—about 10% to 12% of all of its funding on indigenous research. That's been going on for some time. What's new is the way we now approach this to say that we are interested now in talking to our communities, in funding research that is done by, and sometimes with, but definitely for indigenous communities. If you're a researcher in Canada and you say you're doing indigenous research but you don't meet that bar, then we're not going to fund you. That is a big change from the past. We are by no means done yet. We continue to learn at every meeting, at every opportunity, in every discussion. When we do wrap up, we'll have a series of recommendations that will have been generated by our partners through this process.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Once again, going back to the Auditor General's office, is it reasonable, given that this is new and that a lot of what we're trying to accomplish here is new, that it's going to take some time for it to bear fruit and that it isn't going to be something that we're going to judge the results of—which I think you alluded to earlier in one of your answers—in one year? It's going to take a number of years to judge the results.

**Mr. Jerome Berthelette:** Madam Chair, I think in the larger context, yes, it's going to take some time to judge the results. In the shorter term, I think what we would be looking for if we were to conduct another audit would be sustained management attention to following through on the actions the departments have stated here today that they have undertaken. Without that sustained management attention, it's likely that the progress I am optimistic will be made won't occur. I would be looking for that going forward.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

That concludes our five-minute round. Typically we have only one questioner at the three-minute round. Committee members, do you wish to have the rest of the time in three-minute rounds or go back to the seven-minute round? Do you want threes, fast questions?

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Saw it off in the middle at five.

**The Chair:** Saw it off in the middle. We're so compromising today. Okay, we have co-operation. We'll have five-minute rounds.

Georgina, you have a three-minute round.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Why don't we just make it a five?

**The Chair:** MP Jolibois, do you want to go to five?

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** Okay. Five is good.

**The Chair:** This is good.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** Thank you. I appreciate that, Madam Chair.

I want to go back to the education question. On the ground where I come from, the people who I have contact with are these very students and these very organizations that provide support. Yet when I hear that the tracking number isn't there.... To answer the question about wanting our young people to return, they aren't returning because there are so many barriers.

How can we improve that to bring them back to our communities, to look after our services and programs and to run our reserves? Who can answer that question?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** I think the crux of the answer is that it's not going to be up to us as Government of Canada officials to determine what the answer is. First nation communities, indigenous communities will have their own strategies and their own ground truth solutions to practical problems like those you are articulating. Our job is to support them financially—

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** INAC can support them when those discussions occur, don't you think?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** We are financially enabling those types of education discussions on the ground. Through a new co-developed approach to education, we are now moving into implementation for elementary and secondary, and we're in the midst of finalizing a new policy framework for post-secondary. When you couple that with what is going on with the indigenous early learning and child care framework across the whole lifelong learning spectrum, we are trying to properly support integrated solutions-oriented conversations that are community-led, first nations-led, which I think will ultimately be the decisive factor in figuring out solutions to the issue that this committee is talking about.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** Thank you.

Back to SSHRC, regarding indigenous traditional knowledge, throughout the years, I've had numerous discussions with educators, politicians, government officials, researchers themselves and elders. Can you describe the traditional knowledge as you see fit? Because there's the copyright, and there's me as an indigenous person. If I'm a researcher, this is my information. Can you help me figure that out?

•(1020)

**Dr. Ted Hewitt:** I'm going to try.

First of all, what we said is that when researchers or students, typically graduate students, apply to us for funding, in the projects they design and in the projects they elaborate, they can certainly—and we encourage them to—go well beyond traditional western bases of knowledge, such as published reports, evidence that's provided through observation and experimentation, etc. If they say they want to use oral history or any other indigenous way of knowing that they believe is valid, that their community believes is valid, we will accept that. It goes through peer review, but the peer review is managed with indigenous people involved. We've been pioneering on that at SSHRC for many years, and it has been a very enconced principle. Traditional knowledge is what our researchers and students tell us it is.

Second, the intellectual property element of this has become a really hot topic because, I think, for indigenous researchers who work in their communities and gather information and knowledge, they do own that information. They can use it as they see fit. The problem, as I see it, and the challenge that we hear about frequently is when researchers from universities, colleges or elsewhere who are non-indigenous go into the communities, gather significant data, draw conclusions, and then don't share that information back with the community. Then the claim becomes "That's our information because we gave it to you", and the researcher says, "Well, I own the intellectual property."

We're trying to deal with that as well. It's a frequent topic at the various events we're organizing and in the feedback we're getting, but we understand that 100%.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** Do I have any more time?

**The Chair:** You have about half a minute.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** Thank you.

Let's go back to education. Again, what can we do better to continue to track or to get into tracking the graduation rate to improve?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** I think it starts with our effort to try to develop what our first nations partners see as meaningful results. Certainly, measuring the outcome of an education period like graduation is important. However, there are also other things that we are hearing from our first nations partners that they would like to prioritize, that tell the story of how things are getting better. We have to build that into our ongoing, consistent, co-developed efforts to pave a better way forward.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I do have a question.

Mike, can I go in?

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Yes. Absolutely.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** I'm going to Mary-Luisa as well.

**The Chair:** Good.

No, it's not for NRCan this time. It's for education.

Does the department have statistics on teacher turnover? On many reserves, you have a very high turnover of educators, and we know that having consistent, strong teachers is the key to success. Can you provide us with statistics on turnover and how that's disrupting educational life? It could be one of the factors for why we're seeing such low completion rates.

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** We will have to come back to you with the exact answer of whether or not our administrative data has that information. However, what I can tell you is that the anecdotal information we hear from communities and from our partners is overwhelming in that area. There are concerns across the board that we work with and discuss at the local level, particularly in northern and isolated communities, about how teacher rotation impacts the student experience, which then impacts outcomes. It's something that we have to work on. I'm not 100% sure at this moment if we have a specific dataset on that issue.

**The Chair:** All right. That's reasonable. Please get back to us with the information and with how many teachers are fully qualified. I think there's a provision in some places to accredit teachers to come in. That just means that those students don't have the same quality of educators as other locations.

Whatever information you could pull, I think, would be valuable for the committee.

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** Again, I would offer a precise answer as a follow-up, but our program in working with first nations partners does require that we have certified teachers in the classroom. Although I think anecdotally there might be some case examples where either elders or other community leaders participate in the education experience, the overwhelming data I am familiar with—but I think we need to be precise on this our follow-up—shows that we have a majority of certified teachers in first nations classrooms on reserve.

• (1025)

**The Chair:** MP Mike Bossio.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mary-Luisa, I love the idea of this program that you have set up on site for land surveyors. Are there any other areas that you have identified where a similar type of approach can be taken with regard to a different skill set locally, directly? As we know, in the natural resources sector, there's a huge opportunity in many indigenous communities, but a lot of them, once again, don't want to travel outside of their communities to get the training.

**Ms. Mary-Luisa Kapelus:** I'll let John start with the forestry sector.

**Mr. John Kozij (Director General, Trade, Economics and Industry Branch, Canadian Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources):** Thank you for the question.

Maybe I could focus on what we're doing in the off-diesel space. Under our clean energy for rural and remote communities, there's a \$220-million program over five years that has been created to really address our Paris climate change targets. Embedded in that program is a capacity stream. We understood that, if we're going to embark upon a set of initiatives to reduce diesel use in communities, it's going to take some time. We'd be establishing relationships with communities, and we needed a capacity stream that looked at that front-end piece of moving communities into clean, renewable projects.

In the area of biomass, which I'm more familiar with, we've often talked about how there could be a 10- or 12-step program to move to biomass for heat or power generation. That's because you're talking about the front end, understanding how to do forestry management; training people in forestry operations; looking at the types of systems you can use and whether or not you're just going to use them for heat or power, combined heat and power; and then looking at host capital installation, the capacity of the people to be able to run those facilities over time. In terms of that whole gamut of activities, from the front end to the back end, we have to have capacity right through.

In addition, we've just announced the challenge-based program, where we're working with the Indigenous Clean Energy Network to build on their 20/20 catalysts program to build a series of clean energy community champions in a number of different first nations, primarily, but also in Métis communities across Canada, so that they can go back to their communities, develop clean energy plans and come back to us with funding proposals to be able to proceed forward.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** To stick with forestry, you mentioned the regional forestry offices. Once again, are you doing capacity-building there so that they're 100% indigenous-led and managed, managing their own indigenous forests on their own lands?

**Mr. John Kozij:** I'm responsible for two programs. One is the indigenous forestry initiative, and also the biomass piece of the CERRC program. The Canadian Forest Service has five regional centres. We've empowered those centres and built the capacity to have a regional liaison office service that works with communities to develop proposals to come to us for the indigenous forestry initiative, which is primarily around enabling indigenous people to enter the forest industry or create indigenous businesses in the forest industry. The other side is around coming forward with clean energy, biomass-based solutions to our program.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** I've visited Haida Gwaii, and I see the tremendous difference it made when they took over the forestry in the late 1980s. That was the catalyst that has completely transformed that community to be more self-sustaining, I think, than most other indigenous communities out there.

**Mr. John Kozij:** Haida Gwaii is a very interesting example where the province and that first nation worked together collectively to build, manage and develop the forest industry. It is a model for other regions.

**The Chair:** You have about 30 seconds.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Okay, good.

On the move away from diesel, once again, that capacity-building you're trying to do at the same time, how far have you progressed on that? Have you been able to move any communities off of diesel yet? Are any communities managing that process 100% indigenous-led right now?

• (1030)

**Mr. John Kozij:** We just launched the program. We rolled out some of our first projects in Gitksan in the fall. In that circumstance, it was putting a boiler system on an arena, and now they have more ambitious plans.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Also, is this the first time this has been, once again, attempted in this way, local training and capacity-building like this?

**Mr. John Kozij:** We partnered with ISC prior to launching the CERRC program on the biomass side. We had a biomass north program, and then we also developed a biomass program, what we call south of 60°. It has a range of activities. We've done fuel stove switching to more efficient stoves, which has had remarkable outcomes in terms of reducing biomass consumption, as well as reducing particulates in the air, which is important. We built this program off of a record that we had both in biomass north and

biomass south that intimately links capacity-building with our development program.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

MP Kevin Waugh.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Sunday, I was in Yellowknife. Forty semis were loading diesel to go to the mines for the diamonds. It's all diesel. With a winter road, they have two to three months to get the product into them so they can continue throughout the year. You talk about diesel in the north. How far are we from not needing diesel? They have a hydro system there that costs \$1.2 billion to build and yet you talk \$220 million, which is really not a lot of money. I spent three days in Yellowknife, and they are absolutely 100% dependent on diesel.

**Mr. John Kozij:** Yellowknife is a very interesting community. If you ever have an opportunity to do a tour in Yellowknife, you'll find a number of biomass boilers attached to various public buildings, not unlike what you'd see in communities in P.E.I. There are opportunities to have renewable solutions in even those communities that we think can't do that fuel switching.

In our biomass program, our emphasis has been on helping indigenous communities get off diesel. There are obviously a number of opportunities to move off diesel in those commercial circumstances, but our emphasis has been moving those indigenous communities off diesel because of the tremendous co-benefits that go with that, the reduction in hydrocarbons in their communities.

Prior to coming to NRCan four years ago, I worked in the lands and economic development services program. I was responsible for the federal contaminated sites program on reserve. The number one federal contaminated site on reserve, as you probably know, is failing fuel tank farms. It's not the dumps. The more we can get communities off diesel, the greater the co-benefits in—

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Why does nobody talk about nuclear reactors?

I was in Nunavut last year. I was in Yellowknife this year.

**Mr. John Kozij:** It's not my field but I'd be happy to get back to you on that.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Isn't that clean? Isn't it the cleanest?

I come from a city that has chemicals, the head office of the biggest uranium miner in the world. We never talk about that. Yet 660 indigenous people in northern Saskatchewan are out of a job because we have shut that down.

Ms. Ferland, I see you have 10-year grants. To date, how many eligible first nations have applied because they have until April 1?

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** Keith, do you have the answer?

I'll invite my colleague Lynne Newman who would have that answer.

**Mr. Keith Conn:** Come on down, Lynne.

**Ms. Lynne Newman (Director General, Fiscal Arrangements, Chief Finances, Results and Delivery Officer Sector, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** There are 10-year grants with the new fiscal relationship. There was a call-out to all 600 first nations last spring; 250 first nations have expressed interest in the 10-year grant. We are now finalizing assessments of eligibility with our co-development partners at the First Nations Financial Management Board and finalizing recommendations to the ministers. We hope we will have final numbers quite soon.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** How will you support them with capacity? That's what this report is all about. About 40% out of the 600 are interested.

• (1035)

**Ms. Lynne Newman:** A couple of programs are available through the P&ID, and through others as well. I'm probably not using the right term, but the ambition or the idea of the 10-year grant is to allow first nations to deliver programs the way they desire to do that.

The capacity programs they will have available through the department are through what we call P&ID, for instance. There will also be ongoing support through various capacity development providers, the First Nations Financial Management Board being one, and others as well. But certainly, the department's objective is to support them as much as possible through capacity development.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** If they miss the April 1 deadline, can they still go in?

**Ms. Lynne Newman:** Absolutely, this is the first year. We will see how this year goes. Many first nations will see how it goes, I suppose. We anticipate that going into year two, they will express interest; this is the beginning of an on-going process. The offer will be going each year.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We're moving questioning to MP Georgina Jolibois.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** I'm going back to teacher retention.

Thank you, I really appreciate this.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** Self service.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** I want to focus on how can we improve. I know we're asking the same question, but I'd like to spend more time on this. It disturbed me what I heard earlier about teachers' qualifications. Within the provincial system, the teachers follow standards and they have a teacher's licence. Don't reserve teachers have the same standards? Do they have the same qualification?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** Madam Chair, as I think you've heard me say, across the country there are different local conditions, and so in terms of teacher retention the local context matters in determining what strategies we pursue in partnership with first nations.

Our program, in working with first nations, requires teachers in first nations classrooms on reserve to be certified teachers. I think the

crux of your question, however, is how we can better support that, especially in remote and isolated communities. How can we better support that retention objective? I think if you speak with our first nations partners, part of the mix, or at least one of the foundational issues to address, is funding. To be able to properly incentivize and pay equity-plus-type teacher benefits is a key part of the mix in increasing retention.

There are other more complicated but equally important issues in housing, overall community well-being, and the kinds of things that make people not just want to be professionals in the classroom and in their professional lives, but also to be vibrant members of the community.

You have to look at that holistically, and those are the types of conversations we are trying to have, with a particular emphasis on the unique needs of northern, remote and isolated communities.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** This is the last question I want to ask. I'm assuming you weren't able to have that discussion with the previous government. Is the current government, the Liberals, open to having that discussion, to looking at that, in your opinion?

**Mr. Adrian Walraven:** I think it's important to mention that budget 2016 was a game-changer, in the sense that it provided unprecedented investments that enabled us to provide the types of base, core funding I've been talking about today. Our objective now in conversation is to not rest on our laurels and talk about that being sufficient in terms of funding, but to talk about funding sufficiency in terms of how we tailor it to the local and regional context, and how we tailor it to specific first nations priorities for where they want to go.

Certainly, teacher retention and recruitment is one of those key priorities. There are active strategies across the country that try to address this, and our conversations with first nations partners is going to be one of talking about how we can reinforce that financially and non-financially.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** I want to go back to access to clean water. I find it disturbing that the government is currently talking about its success rate in lifting the advisories. That is very disturbing for the people on the ground who don't have clean water to drink, to wash with, and to live by.

As to avoiding short-term water advisories, every week I get an update from two of the tribal councils in my riding saying that these reserves are now back on water advisory. How can the government, or the department, be truthful and look at this? This will go into the Liberal side, and if the Conservatives are ever back in government—

• (1040)

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** October.

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois:** —they will have to take a look at this. How can we improve this altogether?

**Ms. Claudia Ferland:** You're correct. We still have to do a lot of work to do on the water front.

One of the things we believe in is investing in training, while ensuring that water facilities are properly maintained and will continue to provide water for the community members.

We know that many first nations across Canada experience challenges with the operation, the maintenance, the size of the water systems, and where they're located. This is why—going back to the purpose of this committee—we're investing in training and retention of individuals, in addition to putting in systems that work for communities so that we don't fall into making it too long-term. We want everybody to have clean water.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bossio.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Speaking and following-up on what Mr. Waugh had to say earlier, has anybody at Natural Resources explored a company in B.C. called Carbon Engineering?

Carbon Engineering is taking carbon from the atmosphere and converting it into a synthetic gas that can be burned in almost any engine, including aircraft engines and the like. To me, that would be an ideal solution for remote communities where, if you were able to set up one of these facilities, they could produce their own energy without having to ship it up north. Therefore, it is 100% carbon neutral, because you're actually taking carbon that's already been emitted into the atmosphere.

**Mr. John Kozij:** I have heard of Carbon Engineering. I will admit that our programming is built upon deployment. When I say “deployment”, if diesel generation has done anything, it's being durable. In northern communities, where it's cold and where that's their only power source and heating source, you have to have a durable solution. It's not the time to put experimental solutions in those remote communities.

Our goal has been to deploy proven technologies on the biomass side, wind, geo-thermal and solar in those communities, and to create

a constellation of efforts, so that when those diesel systems are near the end of their running life, people will have the opportunity to see examples of clean energy deployment across the country that have worked. They can then make decisions when to replace diesel generators and move to a clean energy solution.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** I would hope that you would be considering any of these new technologies. They've got an operating plant in B. C. that is generating quite a bit of fuel right now. I realize it may not be at the level, but is that not part of the purpose of government, to try to accelerate and be the catalyst for these projects to move forward?

**Mr. John Kozij:** I completely agree with you. We have a scope of different initiatives that are willing to invest in both pilot and demo-scale initiatives, and look at other clean energy alternatives. For the CERRC program, we're going with durable solutions, so that communities can keep the lights and heat on when they need to.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Finally, on capacity-building, in Haida Gwaii you have the Watchmen; in the Northwest Territories you have the rangers, and there are guardians across the country.

Are you taking advantage of these three programs to expand them as far as driving forward capacity around environmental controls, project management and oversight of different natural resource sectors are concerned?

**Ms. Mary-Luisa Kapelus:** Yes, we are. That's part of this new sector that we've developed, which, as I mentioned earlier, I'm leading. We're working with partners to talk about these areas. The guardians have come up quite a lot as a model and they would like to pursue these issues in other areas. Again, that's part of our co-development on the way forward with our indigenous partners.

**Mr. Mike Bossio:** Brilliant. Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** That concludes our time at this committee. I appreciate everyone's attendance.

The meeting is adjourned.

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