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The Honourable Hedy Fry

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Good afternoon. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), this committee on heritage is studying systemic racism and religious discrimination.

Today we have two witnesses for the first hour, which goes from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. We have, as an individual, Don Hutchinson, author; and from the York Region District School Board, Cecil Roach, coordinating superintendent of education, equity, and community services.

You each have 10 minutes to present. I will give you a two-minute warning so that you know when to wrap up. We will then go to a question and answer round.

We'll begin with Mr. Hutchinson for 10 minutes, please.

Mr. Don Hutchinson (Author, As an Individual): Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to participate today. My comments will follow my written submission, which I understand was circulated last week.

Anti-religious discrimination in Canada has not been confined to any one religious community, and such incidents cannot be considered to be of greater or lesser significance based simply on which religious community is targeted.

While it is unfortunate that motion 103 highlighted one religious community, the motion did spark national debate and provided a mandate for this committee that goes beyond the concerns of or for any one religious community.

I will set aside comment on the use of the uncertain term “Islamophobia” except to suggest that the concern of this committee ought to be in regard to mistreatment of people from any and all religious communities. Islam is not a race. Muslims and people in any other religious community are from a variety of races. My comments will address the committee's study in regard to mistreatment of people based on their religion and reducing systemic discrimination based on religion.

Canada is a nation with a history steeped in religious tension, religious accommodation, and the development of robust political, legal, and constitutional principles in regard to freedom of religion, including prohibitions on discrimination based on religion.

A brief history of that religious tension and accommodation is set out in paragraphs 8 to 16 of my written submission, particularly noting the Constitution Act, 1867, did not assign responsibility for religion to either the federal or provincial governments, although both jurisdictions impact on religion. The federal government assumed a role in regard to religion through its criminal law and taxation powers. The provinces, through constitutional jurisdiction over civil rights, enacted human rights legislation that includes recognition of religious rights to belief, association, assembly, teaching, practice, and worship.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was included in the Constitution Act, 1982. The charter applies to all levels of government—federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, school boards, other government agencies—and Canadians.

The first freedom in the charter is freedom of conscience and religion.

In decisions on charter cases, the Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed several pre-charter legal concepts in regard to freedom of religion and religious accommodation, which are briefly described in paragraphs 17 to 20 of my written submission. In the charter, freedom of religion is intimately connected with the freedoms that follow in section 2.

Religion is also a stated ground on which discrimination is prohibited under section 15, equality rights. Section 27 requires the charter to “be interpreted in a manner consistent with the... multicultural heritage of Canadians”, which necessarily means a multi-religious heritage as well.

The Supreme Court has asserted a robust definition of freedom of religion that aligns with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stating:

A truly free society is one which can accommodate a wide variety of beliefs, diversity of tastes and pursuits, customs and codes of conduct.... The essence of the concept of freedom of religion is the right to entertain such religious beliefs as a person chooses, the right to declare religious beliefs openly and without fear of hindrance or reprisal, and the right to manifest religious belief by worship and practice or by teaching and dissemination.

The court continues:

Freedom in a broad sense embraces both the absence of coercion and constraint, and the right to manifest beliefs and practices. Freedom means that, subject to such limitations as are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, no one is to be forced to act in a way contrary to his beliefs or his conscience.

The right applies to individuals, groups, and institutions because religion is practised both individually and in community.

Canada does not have a doctrine of separation of church and state, a constitutional concept in the U.S.A. The Supreme Court has ruled that the Canadian state is to be neutral in regard to religion, not permitted to act as arbiter of religious beliefs or to favour one religion over another. Nor is government permitted to require no religion in its relationship with Canadians. All Canadians are constitutionally welcome to participate in Canadian life from the perspective or world view that informs the way they choose to live, without fear of mistreatment or punishment for doing so.

Statistics Canada confirms that our nation's largest identifiable religious community comprises simply the largest minority religious community in the country. Catholics, including Roman Catholics, comprise under 40% of Canadians. We are a nation of minorities.

Data on hate crimes from 2015 notes that 35% of reported incidents were motivated by anti-religious bias. Of anti-religious incidents, 37% were directed against the Jewish community, which comprises 1.1% of the Canadian population, and 34% were directed against the Muslim community, which comprises 3.2% of the Canadian population.

This brief historical tour and commentary is offered in a context expressed by a Mi'kmaq friend. Look back to learn how the issue has been considered in the past, assess the status today, and then look forward seven generations to consider the future impact of actions taken today. Looking forward seven generations would take us from Canada 150 to Canada 300. If that seems a stretch, at least look to Canada 200—which will take place within the lifetimes of many in this room—rather than be overly concerned about scheduled federal elections in 2019 or 2023.

The following recommendations are made in the spirit of the Constitution Act, 1867's provision that the federal government "make Laws for the Peace, Order, and good Government of Canada"; the Constitution Act, 1982's description of Canada as "a free and democratic society"; and a whole-of-government approach.

Parliamentarians are encouraged to engage openly with people of various religious beliefs, and this includes connecting with faith-based organizations in the community and those participating in the process of policy development.

Continue to protect. Remove from Bill C-51 its clause 14, the proposal to remove section 176 from the Criminal Code. Section 176 protects the ability of religious officiants and congregations to celebrate religious services without threat, interference, or disruption. If the Criminal Code did not already contain such a provision, adding it would be the kind of recommendation anticipated from this committee.

Retain clause 30 of Bill C-51, the proposal to remove section 296, the Criminal Code's blasphemy section. Blasphemy laws in other nations have led to persecution of religious and non-religious minorities, counter to the values of a free and democratic society. In Canada, all beliefs and practices, religious and non-religious, must be open to critical evaluation and peaceful dialogue, debate, and dissension.

Retain Criminal Code provisions dealing with hate propaganda and with mischief relating to religious property.

Move from protection to promotion. Seek opportunities to educate Canadians about our constitutional and legislated positions on religious freedom. It is important to move from the protection of rights to the promotion of understanding rights.

Ensure religious representatives are participants in appropriate government activities, including public events and situations such as donation matching for emergency disaster relief. Continue working with religious organizations whose work provides public benefit. Maintain and develop appropriate historical markers that recognize the contribution of religious individuals and communities to the development of the nation. Continue to collect and share data in regard to religious observance by Canadians.

The Government of Canada is encouraged to hold a first ministers conference with an agenda committed to the promotion of religious freedom.

The Government of Canada is encouraged to establish guidelines that facilitate faith-based activities across the public service with consistent application within all government departments. Encourage Canadians to continue support of religious and religiously based organizations that provide public benefit, including by means of the personal tax credit.

Continue to provide a well-funded chaplaincy for inmates in Canadian prisons and members of Canada's military. Continue military briefing on religion relevant to their theatres of engagement.

Re-establish the Office of Religious Freedom or a similar dedicated office. Matters of political theology and religious literacy are essential to global engagement.

Re-establish the annual Global Affairs consultations, where representatives from religious and other communities of concern may comment on developing global situations.

Canadians are affected by religious freedom challenges and systemic religious discrimination that happens in Canada and globally, requiring a whole-of-government approach.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

● (1540)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hutchinson.

Now I'll go to the York Region District School Board, for 10 minutes.

Mr. Roach.

Mr. Cecil Roach (Coordinating Superintendent of Education, Equity and Community Services, York Region District School Board): Thank you.

First, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I want to let you know, though, that I am not speaking as a representative of the York Region District School Board; the views will be my personal views.

I also want to begin in the spirit of reconciliation, and acknowledge that I sit on the traditional territory of the Algonquins of Ontario. I also recognize that as a later settler to Turtle Island, now called Canada, I owe a lot to the first nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples who looked after this wonderful country I now call home.

As an educator, I want to get to a place where our indigenous students learn in an education system that expressly admits that in the past, for them, education has meant the destruction of their families, their communities, their languages, and their very souls.

I also say that while we think about reconciliation, we cannot simply brush aside the ugly truth of our history, of colonialism, of attempting to whitewash the Indian out of the Indians through the policies, which included the horrors of the residential schools, and generally of our long history of anti-indigenous racism. Our latest census reveals that indigenous Canadians are resilient peoples. They are among our fastest-growing population. Let us lean into the truth of the ugly history of our relationship with indigenous Canadians and look to move toward reconciliation.

About the topic at hand, systemic racism and religious discrimination is an unquestionable reality in today's Canada. I have lots of narratives of individual acts of anti-black racism from my more than 25 years as an educator in both Quebec and Ontario.

One recent example was when, during some professional learning, a participant felt safe enough to say that perhaps black students wouldn't always be in trouble and get suspended if their mothers would stop having children with multiple partners, and if they had male role models in their lives. Another one from the not-so-distant past is what I would call casual anti-black racism. While a staff member was escorting members of the fire department to a secondary school, they passed a group of black students. The staff member said the students shouldn't worry because it wasn't the police.

As I've said, I have lots of narratives of individual acts of racism, but the reality is that systemic racism is not individual; it is structural. It's what the Honourable Murray Sinclair, whom I had the very distinct honour of meeting in 2015, told this very committee. Its the "racism left over after you get rid of the racists".

Yes, I would like to think about systemic racism and its impact on the black community in general and on black students in particular. First of all, systemic racism stems from values, structures, policies, and practices that result in discrimination against identifiable groups of people.

Let's look back at Canada's immigration laws. Before Donald Moore led 34 representatives from the Negro Citizenship Association on that historic train ride to Ottawa on April 27, 1954, Canada's immigration policy and practice could be described as a perfect example of systemic racism. At the time, Canada allowed entry to subjects from British colonies or former British colonies; however, its definition of "British subjects" only applied to those from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Ireland. British subjects from the then-British West Indies, India, Pakistan, and Africa were denied entry to Canada.

This policy, resulting practices, and the attitude that stemmed from it did not specifically say that Canada did not want black or brown

people as immigrants, but the result was a systemically racist exclusion from Canada of people who look like me.

I like to tell this story because I consider myself a son of Donald Moore. It was his landmark brief to the then-Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Walter Harris, and his subsequent press conference that resulted in the relaxation of Canada's immigration laws and allowed West Indian nurses and domestics into Canada. My mother was one of those domestics.

This was a perfect example of systemic racism, as are structures, attitudes, and practices that today result in black students being overrepresented in non-academic streams, suspensions and expulsion rates, and high school dropout rates. For black Canadian parents, the school-to-prison pipeline is not just an American reality.

Systemic racism has an insidious nature. As an educator, I've witnessed well-meaning, caring teachers send newly arrived black students to the guidance department to change their destination from academic to applied, because after all, if you come from Jamaica, you couldn't possibly be a candidate for academic English. I would argue that this type of attitude and belief that devalues students is also internalized by students, who come to believe that the academic track is, indeed, not for them. One black student said to me when I started teaching English in Ontario, "Come on, Mr. Roach, you know black kids don't do OAC English".

● (1545)

That June I took it upon myself to walk through every single OAC exam and what I saw shocked me. In a school with a significant black student population, black students were nearly absent from the exams that determined university entrance. I remember musing to another black teacher that perhaps we were intellectual anomalies who were able to be successful in school and get to university. He was quick to point out to me that almost every black teacher he knew had their primary education outside of Canada.

Back then we used the term "institutionalized racism". What's interesting is that more than 20 years later, we are having the same debate about the systemic racism in schools and the impact that streaming has on black students.

I know that for most educators the idea that we work in a system that has an established systemic bias to the success of black students seems like an enigma. After all, we see ourselves as caring professionals with good intentions for all our students. Some have called this the “but I’m a good person narrative”. This emotional response is something that we have yet to manage as we look to move forward with the work of eliminating systemic barriers to the success and well-being of all students, including black students and others left at the margins. The great thing is that many school districts are beginning to do the work to develop critical consciousness in staff and to help them recognize that systemic racism exists in our society and in our institutions and that we must take explicit and deliberate actions to combat it.

I know that motion 103 calls for the condemnation of Islamophobia and all forms of religious discrimination. I also know that some seem to question whether we should call the irrational fear or hatred of Muslims “Islamophobia”. First of all, Islamophobia is real, and it’s particularly real for Muslim Canadians whose very belonging to this country is sometimes questioned simply because they are Muslims. For my Muslim colleagues in education, it is real when their children are called Osama terrorists at school. It is real when a small minority carry out terrorist acts in the name of Islam and they ask me whether I think it’s safe for them to send their children to school. It’s real when, after an attack in some European city, they choose to drive their children to school rather than have them take public transportation or the school bus. It is also real when their children come home wanting to change their names because of the incessant Islamophobic bullying that they suffer at school.

We know that in Canada hate crimes against Muslims have increased by an alarming 60% in one year, and they are second only to Jewish Canadians as targets of hate based on religion. We also know that law-abiding Muslims face great scrutiny at airports, at border crossings, and generally when going about their everyday lives as ordinary Canadians. Of course, we saw this irrational fear of Muslims explode into violent murder at the Quebec City mosque when six Muslim men were murdered in cold blood while they prayed. In my view, calling the irrational fear or hatred of Muslims “Islamophobia” is absolutely the right thing to do.

We also know that anti-Semitism is very real for Jewish Canadians. In Canada, Jews are still the number one target of hate based on religion. Hateful acts and hate crimes against Jews have spiked recently. In education we are seeing the rise of anti-Semitic graffiti, students making anti-Semitic comments or posting anti-Semitic images on their social media. We also cannot ignore the fact that white supremacists seem to now feel emboldened and are crawling away from their computer screens, publicly demonstrating their hatred for Jews, Muslims, for immigrants, and for all racialized people. The question then becomes how to fight against systemic racism and religious discrimination which, I’m sure we all agree, lessens us as Canadians.

I would make a couple of recommendations.

● (1550)

First is that the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Government of Canada act relentlessly in naming and shaming anti-black racism, anti-indigenous racism, anti-Semitism, and Islamo-

phobia. When acts of hate occur anywhere in our wonderful country, the condemning voice of our government has to be front and centre.

Second is that the Department of Canadian Heritage develop an anti-racism action plan, which includes funding for community initiatives aimed at peacefully fighting hate and building inclusive communities. Some of this funding should explicitly be directed at students and young people who, I believe, are ready to take on the task. This initiative must include accountability measures that are both qualitative and quantitative.

Last is that the Government of Canada declare indigenous education as a national emergency and develop a plan of action with defined timelines to ensure that the national dropout rates of indigenous students fall within the average of white students. I would call for the same thing for black students, but I realize their education falls under provincial jurisdiction.

I hope I’ve stayed within my 10 minutes. I want to say to the members of the committee, systemic racism and religious discrimination is a national scourge that lessens us all as Canadians.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we go to the question and answer part. The question and answer together is limited to seven minutes.

I will begin with Ms. Dzerowicz for the Liberals for seven minutes.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thanks, Madam Chair.

Thanks to both of you for your wonderful presentations, and thanks for coming all this way to be part of this discussion and deliberation.

Mr. Roach, even though you’ve indicated that this is all your personal opinion, I think because you’ve been so long in the education system, I’ll focus some of my questions on getting some of your expertise. Is there a definition within the education system right now around a hate crime, and is there any collection of data, whether it’s formal or informal, done within the education system?

Mr. Cecil Roach: First of all, in our district we have not been collecting the data. However, we have a protocol for dealing with any incidents of hate. We have them at all levels of secondary and elementary. Our protocol is that the students are suspended for at least one day of school, and included in the suspension is a one-day learning piece where we provide resources to develop understanding for young people. We believe that we will never give up on young people, and we really make an effort to educate them.

In terms of a working definition, we use the 17 grounds of the Ontario human rights code as a way of coming at incidents of hate.

•(1555)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Part of the reason I mention it is that a consistent feedback we've received from most of our witnesses is that there is no consistent definition of "hate crime" across the country. There is the collection of data on hate crimes across the country, but it's not apples to apples everywhere. For me it's important for us to have that within our education system as well, whether it's with our children or with our teachers. That's the reason I've asked that. It's good to know that there is a protocol.

Mr. Cecil Roach: If I may add, part of our protocol is to connect with the hate crime division of the police, in our case the York Regional Police services. We have a relationship with them. The protocol is to connect with them and they do the collection. We also connect with our community agencies around these kinds of incidents, which unfortunately I'm afraid are on the rise recently.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

You made a statement that I was going to quote, so you're a little bit ahead of me. It's what Senator Sinclair said about the fact that people have a hard time understanding systemic discrimination and systemic racism. He said that "systemic racism is the racism that's left over after you get rid of the racists". Then he talks about the justice system and he says that we will still have racism perpetuated by the justice system "because the justice system follows certain rules, procedures, guidelines, precedents, and laws that are inherently discriminatory."

I'm trying to figure out what we can do at the national level. Is there something similar within an education system...? When you look at all of our recommendations, we talk about a national action plan and we talk about a big education plan, but for me, if there are some inherent systemic issues around discrimination within the actual education system, is there something that we need to do to try to draw those out and try to fix them as we're trying to come up with an education plan?

Mr. Cecil Roach: What you have to do is you have to name it and then you have to work on education about it.

One of the things that we're doing as a district, as a particularly large complex organization, is looking at, for all those who work for us, if they have attitudes that we know are contradictory to some of our basic principles, how we work against that, or how we ensure that those who come to us come through a kind of psychometric type of approach where we know they don't hold certain views about people.

What happens with systems is that over time they seep into people's attitudes about other people. That kind of seepage is insidious and is hard to get rid of unless you actually take explicit, deliberate training for getting at that. I know we're looking at anti-oppression as a way of approaching how we work with our staff around understanding, because it's a very personal thing when you tell people they're complicit in a system that is systemically racist or has systemic barriers that are preventing identifiable groups of kids from reaping the full benefits of our education system.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: When you talk about naming and shaming, it's your first recommendation.

What is it that you want government to do? We can do it when we see it. How do we give guidelines to other people to do that? Can you be a little bit more specific in that recommendation?

Mr. Cecil Roach: I think when things happen.... I know there are high-profile things. When we have white supremacists parading about our country, I think it's important our leaders come out and call them what they are. Call them out and let folks know that they don't represent who we are as a nation. I mean, we really believe in Canada. It's the spirit of Canada. However, there are some legacies that we have to deal with, that we have to be up front with.

As I said, there's the truth that we have to face before we start moving forward. I know we talk about truth and reconciliation. We quickly jump to reconciliation, but we are afraid of dealing with the truth, right? I think we can't get to reconciliation until we face the truth, regardless how ugly the truth is. It is something we have to face, manage, and deal with so that we can move forward.

•(1600)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: We have to put it on the table.

I'm running out of time.

But very quickly—

The Chair: You are, you have about one minute left.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

Social media in our school system can be a force for good and a force for bad.

How should we use this as part of an approach to reduce and eliminate systemic and religious discrimination?

Mr. Cecil Roach: I think we have to embrace social media. I tell my staff all the time, really, if you put this in the hands of our students, they will solve it.

There's a small percentage of them who hold views that are insidious. However, the majority of our students are good students who want to do the right thing. I say let's embrace social media. Let's use social media as a force for good.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Hutchinson—

The Chair: You have 20 seconds.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Well, 30 but....

Mr. Hutchinson, what I was going to do is ask whether or not you had seen Ontario's anti-racism strategic plan, and whether you thought that might be a good basis for us to be working forward on in terms of our whole-of-government approach at the national level.

Mr. Don Hutchinson: I think the Ontario plan and the paper prepared by the Ontario Human Rights Commission in regard to the discrimination, as well as the Supreme Court of Canada's 2013 decision in the Whatcott case, would all be very helpful in informing your thoughts.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Okay.

Thank you so much.

The Chair: I think, Ms. Dzerowicz, when I say you have 20 seconds, I know it's because it's always going to go 10 to 15 seconds over. I always give you that.

As it was, we went to 7:03 on this one.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

The Chair: That's fine.

The next person is up is David Anderson for the Conservatives.

You have seven minutes, David.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being with us today.

Mr. Hutchinson, you mentioned that we really should be focused on the mistreatment of people rather than on the consideration of the religions. I think that's been the concern of most of us right from the beginning. That was one of the reasons we made the amendment in the House that we did.

I want to come back to your written submission. You mention Islamophobia, and basically, because this was a central issue around the motion, I would just like to have a comment on what you said. "I set aside comment on the use of the etymologically uncertain and self-applicationally expansive, and thus not properly definable, term Islamophobia".

I'm just wondering if you could explain that a little bit more. Fill that in a little more for us. What were you saying when you said that?

Mr. Don Hutchinson: The expression deals with the use of the term "Islamophobia". It's defined differently by different groups and by different individuals. Usually when it's presented, the definition in the mind of the presenter may not align with the definition in the mind of the recipient. It's become a hugely problematic word that deals with a fear of a religious community. If you look at it etymologically, it has somehow been twisted into dealing with a race when, as I've said, Muslims are from a variety of races, as are people in other religious communities.

That's the great concern with the etymology of the word. I think substituting "anti-Muslim behaviour" or "anti-religious behaviour directed towards Muslims", would be a more appropriate term of reference.

Even in regard to the Jewish community, anti-Semitism has come to mean both religious and racial discrimination, but it would be much better to talk about anti-Semitism racially, as it's most often used, and anti-Judaism in the religious context.

Mr. David Anderson: We have not had a lot of testimony about Bill C-51 and clause 14. Now, you reference that.

Can you just give us a little more information about what you're talking about there? Bill C-51 has come before the House. I think it's at the justice committee right now.

Could you just reference your concerns about what's going on there?

Mr. Don Hutchinson: Over the last half a century plus, the Supreme Court of Canada has given a definition to clergy that is broad and expansive. It includes imams, rabbis, and people in religious traditions that do not have titles for their leadership, such as the Brethren. It started actually with the Jehovah's Witnesses

challenging conscription during the Second World War. The men were recognized as religious leaders, and then they had elders. The Supreme Court of Canada has developed this broad and expansive definition.

In the Gruenke case, clergy-parishioner communications were redefined to be religious communications, so that it could apply in religious communities. In the reference re same-sex marriage, the concept used by the Supreme Court of Canada was religious officials and religious officiants. Amending section 176 to "religious officials", or "religious officiants" would solve the problem, as would leaving it as is and working with the fact that the courts have already defined "clergy" to be more broad.

The reality is that the other sections of the Criminal Code that were referenced in an email I received from a member of cabinet don't fully cover the disruption of religious rights and ceremonies. Some of the penalties are quite strong and really should not be exercised as an indictable offence except in indictable situations. I'll stop there.

• (1605)

Mr. David Anderson: One other thing you mentioned that we haven't heard much about was the Office of Religious Freedom. You were involved with its establishment. Why do you think it needs to be re-established? What is the importance of that?

Mr. Don Hutchinson: The global arena engages both what I refer to as religious literacy—understanding the religion of leaders in another country—and political theology, in that a number of countries are majority communities of one religion; Myanmar is majority Buddhist, and Iran is majority Muslim. The religious community has a significant influence on the governance structure of the nation.

I participated in briefings with the former ambassador of the office with members from the Department of Foreign Affairs, and I will say that I was shocked at the disinterest in understanding the religious realities of the world we live in, and the ideological realities of dealing, for example, with Communist China, or with Russia or North Korea. The ideologies are themselves a religiously structured mechanism for oversight and control in those nations.

Mr. David Anderson: You're saying we need an office like that in order to understand that.

Mr. Don Hutchinson: A dedicated office rather than an office that has multiple responsibilities would serve better, because the current office has responsibilities that overlap and are at times in contradiction with one another. I would go a step further and suggest that in addition to an office of religious freedom, the primary concerns of any government in regard to human rights matters should be to have independent offices, staffed with people who specialize in those areas, to inform our department of Global Affairs.

Mr. David Anderson: I want to ask you one more question, because I think that's all we have time for. I would like you to summarize the thesis of your book—I know you have it here—and just tell us a little about where you see religious freedom going in the future in Canada.

Mr. Don Hutchinson: The book is *Under Siege: Religious Freedom and the Church in Canada at 150 (1867-2017)*, and I know several members of Parliament have copies—somewhere in the neighbourhood of four to six dozen. I have some with me. They're for sale because everybody else already bought theirs. I'd give them to you for free, but I like to treat people equally.

The premise of the book is to take a look at where we've come from and where we can head. We need to understand that we actually have great religious freedom in this country, but what's missing is the promotion component. The media's not interested in telling us good news about our freedoms. Parliament and the legislatures are in the ideal position to give greater promotion to our freedoms as parliamentarians engage with the public and with religious bodies.

I was really excited today to see in the Prime Minister's announcement in regard to matching funds for Myanmar, that we're back to where we were until about 18 months ago, where World Relief and World Vision are back included with the group that includes the Red Cross and others.

The Chair: Thank you.

I think we've gone well over time, 38 seconds over seven minutes.

Mr. David Anderson: Would you ask the gentleman if he could give us a copy of the book to be considered as testimony for our deliberations?

The Chair: Mr. Hutchinson, could you give a copy of the book to the clerk for the committee to use as testimony?

Mr. Don Hutchinson: I certainly can.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): I apologize, Madam Chair. I have a point of order.

It's just this. I don't know if Mr. Hutchinson gave us a written copy of his presentation. He made references to several court cases, some of which would be hard to follow. I'm wondering if he could give our analyst the names, if he hasn't done so.

•(1610)

The Chair: I think he sent it. He said he had sent it.

Mr. Scott Reid: Thanks.

Mr. Don Hutchinson: The Whatcott case is actually in footnote number 30.

The Chair: Thank you.

We are moving well into other people's time.

Next is Ms. Hardcastle for the New Democrats.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am privileged to be here today.

Mr. Roach, I was really intrigued when you were discussing the ideal that in order for us to move forward with a meaningful plan for truth and reconciliation, we have to face the truth. There is a direct relationship in collecting data in order to face the truth.

You talked a bit about a protocol that you have in your work environment and how it includes the police. I'm wondering what your thoughts are on how we should be moving forward with data

collection. We've heard witnesses address data collection, and I know in having discussions, and even dealing with truth and reconciliation aspects, that we have some shortcomings in how we deal with data collection. I'd like to hear a little about your experience on that.

Basically, if you feel like your brain is exploding and you want to take up all of my time, go ahead.

Mr. Cecil Roach: As far as hate crimes and hate acts are concerned, I think data collection is critically important. Currently, the onus is on our law enforcement agencies to collect the data, and most of the data we have actually comes from law enforcement.

In dealing with our indigenous student population, the whole issue of data collection is a bit of an interesting one. In school boards in Ontario, we ask them to self-identify, but we know what self-identification has meant for them historically. We also have to recognize that this is the reality. Having indigenous Canadians identify themselves as who they are is going to take some time, and I think part of the time is for us to actually face the truth of the history of our relationship with them.

I know that many boards are afraid of collecting so-called race-based data—I call it demographic data—but boards are now moving to that. In fact, the Government of Ontario is requiring school boards to collect demographic data. We are one board that's in the process of collecting such data. We had started down that path, but unfortunately that was somewhat held in abeyance for a while.

We need to know how we are doing. We need to know how identifiable groups of students are doing. I know folks like to say that all students are the same, but we know that the benefits the students are getting from the education system are not the same. Until we can actually say that, it doesn't make sense for us to say that all students are the same.

I always find it interesting, for example, when we talk about the data of religious freedom and so on, and I consider Don a good friend because I was his daughter's principal.

Does freedom, for example, exclude LGBTQ folks from the kinds of services that we know they are legally entitled to as Canadians? What does that actually mean? I would just worry and hope that this is not the path we're heading down.

To summarize, I think data is the way to go. We need as much data as possible, data that's disaggregated and that we can look to in order to determine how we are doing, what kinds of services we need to offer, where our resources need to be allocated, and so on.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle: Do you think we should be tapping into NGOs to provide this, or is there some kind of direction we should be changing in how we do things at government levels as well to mandate it?

Mr. Cecil Roach: I would recommend that we work with our law enforcement agencies. Folks have obligations to report these things to law enforcement agencies. We also know that there are a lot of hate crimes that are unreported. Just from my experience in working with colleagues, they tell me about things they didn't bother to report. They just figure out strategies for their kids to manage it.

Let's work with our law enforcement agencies to figure out how we can collect data, particularly in the area of hate crimes, religious discrimination incidents, and so on.

● (1615)

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle: Mr. Roach, you know that in 2005 we had a national action plan against racism, and it reached the end of its mandate in 2005. I'm not sure how familiar you are with that and if you have any thoughts on—

Mr. Cecil Roach: I am familiar with it.

This is the challenge that we face, because it depends on government priorities, obviously. I'm calling for a national action plan, and I think we need the kind of action plan that will survive changes of government. I'm not sure how we do that, but I think it's critical that we put those kinds of things in place because Canada, as a country, has to move on. As we now discover, we are becoming an increasingly diverse country. I think we need to not just become welcoming but work on how we include those diverse communities that are making our country home. We need an action plan that will help us to do that, and one that can survive changes of government.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle: Thank you.

Mr. Hutchinson, can you answer that question as well? You're familiar with the mandate that ended for that national plan against racism. I'm sure you're familiar with that. What are your thoughts on how that could be re-engaged?

Mr. Don Hutchinson: As I mentioned in regard to religious discrimination, I think it is critical that the recommendations from this committee, as Mr. Roach has said, look beyond the next election, or even the election after that. The communication that we've heard from Gord Downie, who was listening to aboriginal voices; that I mentioned hearing from a Mi'kmaq friend; and that extends throughout a lot of the aboriginal community is that we need to look seven generations to the future.

That's 150 years. I suggested looking at least 50 years down the road. We need to do the same thing in regard to other areas of discrimination. It has to be something that survives governments. It may start here, but it must be given a life of its own to continue, through NGOs and other government agencies. That may require a reporting mechanism that brings back progress reports, probably to this committee if it's a recommendation of this committee that it end up being approved by Parliament.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we go to Mr. Breton for the Liberals for seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Roach, in 2016, there was an unfortunate event in your school board that the media reported on quite a bit, when a principle in the school board made comments against Muslims on social media.

The matter was taken to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which decided that a strategic plan against racism had to be established, if I am not mistaken.

Your school board implemented proactive measures rather than recommendations to make sure this did not happen at the school board again. An expert panel also reviewed the incidents. According to our information, however, there have been other similar cases in recent years. Recently, last spring, the expert panel made specific recommendations to the school board.

How were those recommendations received and are they being implemented? Moreover, if you think the recommendations are good, can they be exported to other school boards? Finally, how can the government use that type of recommendation?

● (1620)

[*English*]

Mr. Cecil Roach: Thank you.

Yes, our board did go through a very tumultuous time. We had 21 directions from the Ministry of Education including, for example, the establishment of a human rights office, which we've done. We do extensive training in human rights and in equity, in terms of the establishment of an integrity commissioner and so on, and there is now a clearer policy around managing incidents, such as what happened with the Islamophobic post by the particular principal.

I have extensive connections throughout the boards in the province, and I think we are all learning from this and have grown from this. The recommendations were, I think, well received, and they outline the kind of work that most boards should be doing anyway, whether it's data collection, or managing complaints of discrimination, or dealing with human rights complaints, or the kind of training that all school leaders, system leaders, and teachers need to undergo, in order to manage a board as diverse as our board.

In the school district, since 2012, we're a growing board, but all of our growth comes from immigration. Last year, through our reception centre, we had 3,000 new students enter and that's the only source of growth. We know in some of our regions, such as East Gwillimbury, which is a small community northeast of us, it was 24,000 and it will be 81,000 by 2025, and we know that all that growth is coming from immigration. Speaking with the mayor, she'll tell you the next place of worship to be built will not be a church.

Clearly, we are at the cusp of change. I think it will be a massive change throughout the country, and the census has told us this. The question is how we work as a nation to create the kind of welcoming communities where families like my family can grow and thrive and benefit from the wonderful opportunities this country has to offer. I believe that we need to do that by ensuring that all of our students, regardless of their social identities, are treated fairly, that they're respected, and that they're welcomed.

Yesterday we had a conference for our LGBTQ students, and we had over 300 students and their allies attend to look at the kinds of strategies we need to put in place to make sure that our schools are places where they feel safe, where they feel included, and where they feel respected.

I think we have work to do, but we are on our way to doing the work, and those recommendations certainly were a good spur in terms of getting us on that road.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton: These events are still recent, as are the measures that were implemented. From what we have heard, there has been a lot of awareness raising and education for all staff.

In your opinion, has systemic racism decreased since these recommendations were implemented? In your opinion, have other school boards in Ontario or elsewhere applied the measures you have implemented?

[English]

Mr. Cecil Roach: I think what has happened has forced us to be clear in terms of a process for managing incidents of hate and discrimination, because we really had to rebuild trust with our communities in terms of how we managed these kinds of issues. We had lost the trust of a lot of communities.

Whereas since last year we've unfortunately seen a rise in incidents of hate.... Some like to say it's Trump, but I think those things have always been there. As I said, some people have been able to crawl out of their dark corners and speak more loudly than they have in the past, but I think most school boards across the province know that they have to be very explicit and deliberate in managing and dealing with these issues, and calling things what they are. When it's racism, we're going to name it racism. When it's Islamophobia, we're going to name it Islamophobia. When it's homophobia, we're going to name it homophobia. We're not going to hide behind euphemistic language with these things.

• (1625)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton: Thank you, Mr. Roach.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

We have a few minutes left before we ask the witnesses to make way for the next hour.

Mr. Roach, you've repeatedly talked about truth. I think one of the things we saw in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was that they actually faced the truth. I have heard from many people that there is a danger because of the politically correct environment in

which we live, so that people don't like to speak the truth because it names them and somebody thinks that they can then name them something if they speak the truth. How then do we get the truth through what you talked about, which is data gathering?

I think the thing about data gathering is that it's not just statistics. Statistics tell us something, but they don't tell us everything. Regarding that qualitative and experiential stuff, how do you see the federal government, which has no role in primary and secondary education, finding a way to ask the primary and secondary boards to collect data themselves for input into some sort of national database? Can we work through the Canadian Association of Principals? What is a way to get that to happen?

Community data comes from the police. Statistical and demographic data comes from StatsCan. How do we get at that life lived for school kids between the ages of K to 12 when we have no jurisdiction?

Mr. Cecil Roach: That's the million-dollar question, actually. As I said, I believe that, if we start funding community initiatives and if you ensure that some of that funding goes to young people, particularly young people who are in schools and universities, who can come up with the kinds of plans that ensure that we build safe and welcoming communities that are inclusive, I think that will help.

I also think that, perhaps in working with the ministers of education, the Government of Canada can figure out some sort of strategy around the kind of support that can be offered in this area. I know that the big issue with collecting data to get at the truth is that it's somewhat expensive for many districts. For a board like ours of 125,000 students, when we attempted to do the data collection, it was going to cost us about \$300,000. It's not cheap.

Finding ways of working with our first ministers is a possibility, I think. Also, through the federal budget, using monies earmarked for that, is certainly one way of helping,

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Hutchinson, I'll give you a couple of minutes to add to that information about data collecting.

Mr. Don Hutchinson: It's amazing what StatsCan can do—

The Chair: Yes, I know.

Mr. Don Hutchinson: —and what StatsCan has that isn't made public, unless you ask for it and unless you can understand the tables. They are collecting data on this type of activity already through different kinds of polling, as are a number of NGOs. Certainly, in the Jewish community, there's polling of students taking place in the high schools. In the LGBTQ community, there's polling taking place. It's happening through NGOs. Also, polling is taking place in the evangelical community.

I think that Mr. Roach's suggestion to work on providing a funding base, and perhaps something that's a joint federal-provincial type of initiative, could be very valuable. Statistics Canada can easily adjust questions that they ask between the census polling that will help you generate answers as well. For example, "Have you been subject to discriminatory behaviour? Have you been subject to something that you would consider hateful, based on your religion or based on your race?", and those types of things because they're already collecting the religion and race data.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Roach, for coming and presenting to us. It was very informative.

I will now suspend for a couple of minutes while we get to the next hour.

Thank you.

• (1625) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1635)

The Chair: Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the heritage committee is studying systemic racism and religious discrimination in Canada. In our second hour, we have the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims with Barbara Landau, co-chair, and Shahid Akhtar, co-chair. As well, we have the Assembly of First Nations, and it's our honour to welcome Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde and Jed Johns to this table.

We shall begin. You have 10 minutes within which to give your presentation, and then we will go to a question and answer session.

I shall begin with the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims. You can share your time, but you have only 10 minutes between you.

Thanks.

Mr. Shahid Akhtar (Co-Chair, Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

We will divide our time into five minutes each. Considering that we have only five minutes each, I'll put myself on fast-forward.

The Chair: I'll indicate when you have one minute left.

Mr. Shahid Akhtar: Thank you.

The Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims is the first bilateral Jewish-Muslim organization dedicated to creating co-operation between Jews and Muslims in combatting anti-Semitism and prejudice against Muslims. CAJM was established at a time when Islamophobia was not even a known concept; the word had not even been coined.

I will just mention three very brief points, because you have our written submission as well.

My first point is, since you're dealing with systemic racism and religious discrimination, there is no worse demonstration of systemic racism than the genocidal elimination of an entire group based on race, religion, or ethnicity. There's no worse example of that than what is happening to Rohingya Muslims in Burma. The committee can play an extremely important role, because the government that is perpetrating these crimes against humanity is headed by an honorary Canadian citizen.

You, Madam Chair, and members of your committee know that Canadian citizenship, honorary or otherwise, is a badge of honour. Anyone who tramples Canadian values should not be allowed to do so. Parliament has to be very cognizant of this fact. Through you, I hope the message will be taken back to Mr. Bob Rae, the special envoy appointed by the Prime Minister, that he has to convey the most forceful message to this government that the genocide, the carnage, the ethnic cleansing has to stop, and it has to stop immediately. If it doesn't, I would urge you to persuade your

members to withdraw that honorary citizenship, that honour, from Aung San Suu Kyi.

My second point is about the shameless act of the Quebec lawmakers, taking away the human rights of a specific group, an identifiable group of women, just because they happen to be Muslims. With Bill 62, the lawmakers are nudging the province and the nation in the direction of those dark ages when it was okay to tell women what to wear and what not to wear. The discrimination is rationalized with the lame excuse that some people feel uncomfortable by the way certain Muslim women dress.

As Jews and Muslims, we are concerned that if this approach is accepted, who will be next? Will Orthodox Jews be next? They have been the victims of discrimination as recently as the 1960s, where at the beaches there were plaques saying "Jews and Blacks not allowed". Will the Buddhists or the Sikhs be next because somebody doesn't like their robes, their turbans, or their kirpans? Are we restarting a debate where burkini and bikini are contesting with each other?

• (1640)

Anti-Semitism is directed not only at but between Jews and Muslims. I would very much want the committee to take it upon itself to persuade the members of Parliament to use Canada's international credibility to call for an international conference between Israel and all Muslim countries. Bring them together to create back-channel relationships with those Muslim countries that do not at this time have diplomatic relationships with Israel or with each other.

With that, I will skip the next point I had and move to Barbara Landau, my co-chair.

The Chair: Before we go to Ms. Landau, I was going to say that you might be able to bring up that second point in an answer to a question.

Mr. Shahid Akhtar: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Landau.

Ms. Barbara Landau (Co-chair, Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims): Thank you.

While Canada has an excellent world reputation, we cannot be complacent. Sadly, there are continuing divisions within and across religious, cultural, racial, and other lines. I'm going to comment on some current areas of tension and then offer recommendations. I've already submitted notes from October 4 and new notes, but my statements were too long so I'm compressing them today. I have my written submission.

Number one is the language of motion 103, or a competition of victimhood. There's tension within and between the Jewish and Muslim communities, as Shahid said, over the language of M-103. Behind so many conflicts is fear, fear of not having incidents of racism, discrimination, or identity taken seriously. While the fears are legitimate, often the tactics used for raising them are divisive and exacerbate tensions between groups that are both victims of stereotyping individuals. The controversy suggests that the absence of a specific mention of anti-Semitism implies that hatred directed at Jews is being ignored, despite a similar motion previously endorsed by the government that specified anti-Semitism.

Motion 103 was put forward at a tragic time in Muslim Canadian relations when six innocent Canadian Muslim men were murdered at Friday prayers. To its credit, at least nine progressive synagogues responded with empathy by forming circles of peace around nine mosques during Friday prayers. Muslims responded with tears of gratitude and immediate bonds of friendship were felt by both groups.

However, a large Jewish organization, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, CIJA, responded quite differently. It circulated a newsletter to its extensive email list with a fear-inducing story about a sermon delivered several years earlier by a visiting speaker. The message was anti-Semitic but without context or any evidence that it sparked anti-Semitic incidents. This coincided with CIJA's message denouncing M-103. CAJM criticized this approach as divisive and lacking in empathy in a letter published in the *Canadian Jewish News*, which is in my submission.

A similar incident was reported in the *Toronto Star* with respect to prayers led by Imam Ayman Elkasrawy at the Masjid Toronto mosque. Several papers reported that some of the prayers were anti-Semitic. B'nai Brith Canada urged Ryerson to fire the imam from his job as a teaching assistant and as an assistant imam at the mosque. Again, CIJA circulated an article raising fears of anti-Semitism and potential terror. The imam apologized and offered to dialogue with Jewish leaders to find out what caused offence. His apology was not accepted and he was not given an opportunity to correct any offence. He was fired without investigation from both jobs.

Bernie Farber, former CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress and Mosaic Institute, offered to meet. He didn't believe that the imam was an anti-Semite after meeting him. Mr. Farber invited him to attend several cultural sensitivity sessions, which he arranged with Dr. Karen Mock and other multi-faith clergy. He asked a journalist to observe. The journalist wondered if the prayers were interpreted correctly and asked several Arabic scholars to translate. The translations showed the quote had been mistranslated to appear more negative.

We need to take seriously the reality of both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and not fan the flames of fear and hatred of each other as a way to justify our shared—

• (1645)

The Chair: You have one minute.

Ms. Barbara Landau: Okay.

We need to focus on improved education about each other's history, culture, and sensitivities, starting at an early age.

Number two is the definition of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. There are recognized international and Canadian definitions that I've supplied in the materials. What I start with is that each group should propose its preferred definition and label, not have the label chosen by another group as this feels disrespectful.

Regarding Bill 62 in Quebec—Shahid mentioned that bill—while Quebec wants to preserve its distinct identity, the negative impact on the lives of a small number of religious Muslim women is of greater concern than any real threat to Quebec's identity.

The multiculturalism committee should introduce educational programs to reduce unreasonable fears. I want to mention the BDS, bomb threats, and exclusion of Jewish university students on campuses in Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. They certainly raise concerns as does the issue in Alberta of the Catholic school board's refusal to teach a public sex education and gender-identity curriculum, despite the evidence of the marginalization and discrimination against LGBT students.

There are specific recommendations that we've made under the headings of "Prevention", "Partnership", and "Protection". They are in my materials.

The Chair: Ms. Landau, they're in your material, but again there may be opportunities during the questions—

Ms. Barbara Landau: Yes.

The Chair: —for you to plug it in somewhere.

Ms. Barbara Landau: I want to thank you for inviting us to speak.

The Chair: Not at all. Thank you, Ms. Landau.

Now I go to the Assembly of First Nations.

Grand Chief Bellegarde and Jed Johns, you have 10 minutes. Since you're not sharing, I'll give you a two-minute warning.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde (National Chief, Assembly of First Nations): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[Witness speaks in Cree]

All my friends and relatives, I'm happy to be here, thanking the Algonquins on their unceded traditional territory lands.

[Witness speaks in Cree]

I am from a small reserve called Little Black Bear in southern Saskatchewan, Treaty 4 territory, and we're Cree Nakota back home.

It's a big honour to be here today to talk about racism and discrimination. I say good afternoon to you all.

We always talk about acknowledging people as friends and relatives, as indigenous peoples. I want to share our world view with you. In our world view, when it comes to racism and discrimination, we don't see colour. In our world view—and I want share this with you because it's very important—when we go to ceremony, we don't see black people, white people, yellow people, or red people. We're the two-legged tribe.

When we go to ceremony, we acknowledge, of course, the Creator —

Mr. Pierre Breton: Excuse me, Madam Chair, there is a problem with the translation.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: I'll go slow.

The Chair: No. We will just suspend for a minute. You haven't lost your time.

It's good now. We'll begin again.

[Translation]

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: I speak a bit of French.

[English]

Let the timer know I get another two minutes.

The Chair: I'm the timer. You have it.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Our world view, I want to explain very quickly, is that we're all connected as relatives and friends. We don't see colour. We're the two-legged tribe. When we go to ceremony, of course, we acknowledge the higher being, the power, and we acknowledge father sky, mother earth, grandmother moon, grandfather sun, and our relatives as star peoples. We acknowledge one in the east, the south, the west, north; there are spirit beings there. But we also acknowledge our relatives, the four-legged ones, the ones that fly, swim, or crawl, and the male and female plants.

I'll share our world view quickly. When we say, "All my relatives, all my friends", I'm acknowledging you all as two-leggeds but I also acknowledge what I just acknowledged. That's our world view. I believe if the whole world can adopt that view, public and private sectors, we would be free of racism and discrimination, because we're all part of that family and we're all connected in that bigger world of life. I begin with that.

Our Assembly of First Nations comprises 634 first nations across Canada, 58 different nations and tribes, approximately 1.4 million people, 50% on reserve and 50% off reserve. Those are big numbers, but our AFN has been around for many years, always pushing for social justice and equality and equity for all of our peoples. For more than 50 years now, we have been doing that. We also welcome partners and allies who also work with us diligently and steadfastly for the same principles that I espoused. This committee is studying how to undertake a government-wide approach to reducing or eliminating systemic racism and religious discrimination. We know, as first nations people, that we have experienced that many times over.

I'll go just quickly by sector. Within the justice sector we see things like Angela Cardinal—she's a victim of an assault—sharing a bus with her aggressor. That's in the justice system. We see Anthony Peter-Paul even being denied a smudging ceremony in Saint John. That's not recognition of our system of trying to get connected. In Saskatoon in the 1990s there were the "twilight tours". What I mean by that is the Saskatoon Police Service taking first nations men outside the city and making them walk back in minus 30 and 40 degree weather, which resulted in the Stonechild inquiry in Saskatchewan.

We see the policing services that are under question when it comes to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. What are you hearing from the families? The policing services have to be reviewed, because when it comes to our peoples, they are not applying the same kinds of resources to research, to investigate, and then the communication piece is not back to the families. The policing services have to be reviewed, no question. Then there are the numbers: 4.5% of the population of Canada is first nations people but the jails are full, so we have a disproportionate number of our people in that system.

Also looking at policing services in our reserve communities, they are not deemed as essential services—policing is not even deemed as

an essential service. Within that system of justice and even on the larger piece when it comes to the Constitution, part 1 dealing with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, part 2 dealing with section 35, we question that. Why is it that our rights are frozen in time, that they are not the living tree that should be brought up to date as well, but everybody else's rights are? They don't evolve.

Am I supposed to exercise my treaty right to hunt with a bow and arrow? They don't evolve, but everybody else's rights do. It's almost as if they are contingent rights, so within that whole system of justice, overhaul has to be done.

In education, for on-reserve kindergarten to grade 12, we get \$6,500 per child for tuition, yet in provincial school systems it's double that, \$12,000 or \$13,000. In French school systems, it's \$20,000 per child. That's a big variance, a big gap. Even in the universities, how many first nation people.... What is this thing called tenure, a tenure track? For first nations people, how many people really get tenure in that system? We can talk about that, but still in the education system it's there. You can break it down kindergarten to grade 12, or you can break it down to universities and tech, both systems.

In the health care system, holy smokes, we can spend a lot of time giving examples. In Winnipeg, Brian Sinclair died waiting for 34 hours for health care services. This is the modern day and it's in a big city. Then in the north, it's like a two-tiered health system for our people. There are no hospitals or qualified doctors in a lot of instances. It's a two-tiered health system in the north. In northern Manitoba and northern Ontario, there is a two-tiered health system. There's no access to these services.

We can go on and on.

● (1650)

Then on the social side, we know the discrimination in the child welfare system. We know it and we see it. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal says that there are still inequities when it comes to children. Even the funding model for child welfare is flawed because it doesn't kick in until our kids are apprehended. That's when it starts. The whole funding model is flawed. This whole system, when it comes to child welfare, is hugely flawed. There are huge racism and discrimination pieces in there.

Now that we've outlined that, how do we fix it? What do we need to do?

We go back now to recommendations. We talk about reconciliation and how important it is. We're all talking about reconciliation now in Canada to fix these things. One of the most important ways is for the full adoption and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That, to us, is a road map to reconciliation. It's a road map to ending discrimination and racism in this country and throughout the world. That's one piece.

We talk about the tools to eradicate all these things. There are two doctrines, the doctrine of discovery and the doctrine of *terra nullius*. They're fast becoming viewed as illegal, racist doctrines, not only in Canada but throughout the world. That's very important because that's going to affect everything when it comes to land, resources, and territories. Get comfortable with this concept of assumed crown sovereignty and assumed crown jurisdiction, because it results from those two doctrines.

At the heart of the UN declaration is recognition of our status as peoples and nations in the global human family. Every provision in the declaration must be interpreted "in accordance with the principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, equality, non-discrimination, good governance and good faith".

I ask this committee to support things we're working on.

I ask the committee to support the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and to implement all the recommendations that will be forthcoming.

I ask the committee to support the implementation of all 94 calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I ask the committee to make sure there are proper investments in K-to-12 and post-secondary education.

I ask the committee to work with us on developing a new fiscal framework in Canada, so there's long-term, sustainable, predictable funding for first nations.

I ask the committee to work with us on this law and policy review. All the laws that are racist and still discriminatory have to be brought in line with article 35 in the UN declaration. They have to be fixed. We have to have a process for the law review and the policies. Comprehensive claims, specific claims, additions to reserve, the inherent right to self-government, all have to be fixed because they're based on termination of rights, not recognition of rights and title. I ask you all to support that work.

Implementation of treaties according to spirit and intent is very important. They are treaty relations with the crown, because that treaty relationship was based on sharing the land and resource wealth, not cede, surrender, or relinquish. We have a lot of work to do.

We need to get more first nations people on decision-making boards and authorities, the Supreme Court of Canada, the National Energy Board, boards of governors, CEOs, you name it, wherever these decisions are made, it has to happen.

I know I'm running out of time, and I'll cover some in questions, and we'll take it from there.

Ekosi.

●(1655)

The Chair: You have 30 seconds, if you want to continue.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: I had four or five points.

We have to overhaul the justice system, and work towards restorative justice systems instead of punitive justice systems. What does that look like? There are many facets that have to be looked at.

There are two pieces of legislation we want to get done. One is on indigenous languages, an indigenous language revitalization act. That's an investment in human capital. The fastest-growing segment of Canada's population is young first nations men and women. You need to know who you are and who you come from. Studies have shown when you're fluent, you're more successful in school, and therefore, more successful in life. Language is key.

Then the UN declaration and that reconciliation framework is all part of that.

The Chair: Thank you so much. We will flesh things out in the questions and answers.

The first questioner for seven minutes will be Ms. Dhillon for the Liberals.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Good afternoon, welcome to all of you today, and thank you for coming to testify before us.

I'll start with the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims. I would like to commend your organization for working together as two communities under one umbrella. It's unique.

My first question is for Mr. Akhtar. You didn't get to finish your second point, so if you would like to finish that, go ahead.

Mr. Shahid Akhtar: Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. One of the second points was that Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are two sides of the same coin. We have this habit of trying to isolate them as two different things.

●(1700)

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Right.

Mr. Shahid Akhtar: What that does is it, inadvertently perhaps, creates resentment in the group that is not addressed. Any time, in any discourse, when you talk about religious discrimination, and you talk about anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, they should actually be uttered together in the same sentence, in the same breath, because it is exactly the same thing.

Don't go on technicalities of definitions because if you do that then anti-Semitism.... Do you know what that means? It means prejudice against Semites. Who are the Semites? They are Saudi Arabian, Palestinians, Jordanians. Those are the Semites, so don't become a prisoner of those technical, dictionary meanings. Go by what actually has an impact. Talk about people who are suffering. If Jews are suffering and they want to call it anti-Semitism, accept that. If Muslims are suffering and they want to call it Islamophobia, accept that, but do something where you can take away the root cause of that.

My point also was, Madam Chair, if you don't move fast enough on this, what is going to happen is I'm really afraid, and Jews and Muslims are afraid, that we will be creating an environment like to the south of us, which Donald Trump's election has done. It has emboldened people who have exactly the same sentiments but were hiding. Now they've come out and pro-Nazi and white supremacist march. That is quite likely to happen in Canada as well, unless your committee, your Parliament, your government does something.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Thank you. You echoed similar thoughts to Mr. Roach, one of our previous witnesses.

I will ask you the following question, and I will divide the time with Mr. Bellegarde. Between the two of you, do you have any recommendations to us for our system in Canada?

Ms. Barbara Landau: I'd like to take that one.

I would like to see the re-establishment of a multiculturalism funding program, with federal-provincial representation, to encourage anti-racism education by convening a national symposium to share best practices and curriculum materials for educating youth and law enforcement officials about diversity in race, culture, religion, sexual identity, and gender issues. I think it could also be a vehicle for first nations. It could be used for both, for all of the discrimination.

Another recommendation is partnership. We've spent more than 20 years bringing communities together, and we've done it successfully in so many different ways—we've included that in the materials—ways to get to know each other, ways to have an understanding of each other as human beings and of our cultural practices, and demystify and anti-stereotype each other. Certainly, our Jewish community has reached out to first nations, as well, and has made that a priority among the Reform Jewish community. We could talk more about that later.

As to protection, a combination of education, clear legislation, and tools such as restorative justice processes, which I totally encourage, for those who accept responsibility and are willing to redress their wrongs, and clear penalties for those who are unrepentant. We need data collection, as the previous.... Was it Cecil Roach speaking?

Victims of hatred and prejudice should have a coordinated government body dedicated to collecting data, and a confidential reporting system for complaints. Hate crimes legislation needs to ensure a strong response to speech and actions that cross the line.

Again, I think the co-operation between a multiculturalism committee and the provinces would be a vehicle to do that.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Thank you.

Mr. Bellegarde, could you please continue with your recommendations. I think you ran out of time.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Sure.

I think education and awareness leads to understanding and leads to action. The education school systems across Canada.... I know this is a federal one, but lobby the provincial premiers and everyone across Canada to change the school curricula to teach about inherent rights, treaty rights, aboriginal rights, to teach about the residential schools and the history and the impact of residential schools, and the Indian Act. The curricula have to change. That's one big piece.

• (1705)

Ms. Anju Dhillon: The curriculum should include more education about the first nations.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Yes, right from K to 12.

The provincial systems have to be overhauled, everyone right across Canada. I know that's not the jurisdiction here, but that should be supported in every province and territory. The United Nations' CERD committee, the committee on the elimination of racial discrimination, had Canada under review. There's a lot of recommendations in there. Take these and follow them and implement them because they talk about land claims.

I always say it shouldn't be "land claims". What about "land restoration" for indigenous peoples? All their policies and everything else in here deals with that. We need to find ways to implement and respect the treaty relationship we have with the crown, because it's all about sharing land and resources.

This is a citizenship guide. When new immigrants come to Canada, you should change the existing citizenship guide, because they have to swear allegiance to Canada and its laws and treaties. We said there should be a male elder and a female elder. There should be a drum song. There should be a smudging to welcome these new people to Canada.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Yes.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: I'm going fast.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Carry on.

The Chair: You only have 10 seconds.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: That's it, then.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: I wanted to thank you for the introduction you gave us about us all being a two-legged tribe. This is who we are, and this is how we should all think. Thank you very much for sharing those wonderful thoughts at the beginning of your presentation.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dhillon.

I go to Scott Reid for the Conservatives.

Mr. Scott Reid: Thank you very much.

I have a couple of questions to ask you, Chief Bellegarde. Perhaps before I do that, I should ask you to finish the recommendations that Ms. Dhillon tried to assist you to answer. Failing that, I might ask you if you have your recommendations in written form to submit to us. That means they'll be taken into evidence and we can cite them.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Thank you for that. What I'll do is leave what I have. I have the written one, and I always acknowledge my staff for doing great speeches, which I never read. Well, parts of them I do. We can leave this because there are recommendations in there. I'll also leave with you a letter that I wrote to the premiers on what to do.

Mr. Scott Reid: Okay.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: There's an 11-point action plan here. I'll leave this as well and submit it as evidence.

The Chair: Submit it to the clerk and he will make sure it's distributed to all of us.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: One of those 11 points is to change your curriculum.

Mr. Scott Reid: Okay.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: It's in there.

Mr. Scott Reid: I'll just say the obvious with regard to recommendations that apply to areas of provincial jurisdiction. We can't make that happen. As a committee of Parliament, we can't actually make anything happen. We can only make recommendations. Hence, we can serve as a transmission belt for ideas including those that are in provincial jurisdiction.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Okay.

Mr. Scott Reid: I wanted to ask you about two specific things. The first one is about the concept of *terra nullius*. I'm a former resident of Australia and in Australia the land process was to actively use the doctrine of *terra nullius*. The doctrine says the land in question is effectively uninhabited territory, that there is nobody with whom we are attempting to work out any kinds of relations, treaty or otherwise. This is a doctrine traditionally applied to completely uninhabited lands. You arrive in a place and there's nobody there, as was the case when Europeans came to Iceland and found it empty.

My understanding is that in Canada we have not actually used the doctrine of *terra nullius* and that what happened in Australia was a departure from the traditional British practice. Am I incorrect in my understanding of history?

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: They're not concepts. They're doctrines, and there are two.

Mr. Scott Reid: Fair enough.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: You have the doctrine of discovery and the doctrine of *terra nullius*.

Mr. Scott Reid: Yes.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Here in Canada, as indigenous peoples, we view them—and so do a lot of other countries—as illegal racist doctrines. That's why there are these terms people are starting to use now—"assumed crown sovereignty" or "assumed crown jurisdiction".

Let's take subsection 91(24) of the British North America Act where the federal government is responsible for Indians and Indian

lands. That's what it says in subsection 91(24). Now in the current laws, my reservation back home is called Little Black Bear. Is that federal crown land set aside for the use and benefit of Indians? That may be true in common law or civil law, I guess, but not in first nations law. That's not how we view it. We view our land as sovereign land, sovereign territory. Everything else we'll share, but our reservation is sovereign territory, not crown land set aside for the use and benefit of Indians.

How did the crown gain title to indigenous peoples land and territory? By planting a flag. That's what those doctrines dictate. We're saying that's not right, because there were indigenous peoples right across Turtle Island. That's how we see that. Now there's a movement. It's not to put fear into everyone. It's all about the principles of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect and mutually benefiting from sharing the land and resources.

• (1710)

Mr. Scott Reid: I think I see what you're getting at now.

The United States Supreme Court, in interpreting its Constitution in the 19th century, said they regarded the relationship between the United States government and their aboriginal peoples as effectively sovereign dependent nations. Is that heading more in the direction you're thinking is appropriate?

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: There is a jurisdictional piece, sovereignty and jurisdiction. Yes, the feds are responsible for certain things. The provinces are responsible for certain things. Some of it is shared. First nations jurisdiction has to be re-established or re-recognized as well.

For example, citizenship or membership in Little Black Bear, is our jurisdiction. Some of it is shared. It's just working that out right now. That's how we're starting to work when we start talking about recognition of the inherent right to self-government or self-determination.

Mr. Scott Reid: I had originally intended to split my time with Mr. Sweet.

Do you have a question, Mr. Sweet?

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Absolutely.

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Mr. David Sweet: First, I want to thank the witnesses very much. I really appreciate the heads-up on that.

Mr. Akhtar and Ms. Landau, again, I appreciate all your work. I particularly appreciate your work in reaching out between your communities. I don't know a lot, but I do know that the Muslim community and the Jewish community are very diverse in themselves.

Ms. Barbara Landau: Right.

Mr. David Sweet: You mentioned there is tension between Muslims and Jews with motion 103.

We have heard evidence here that there's a lot of tension inside the Muslim community itself. We've had a number of witnesses talk about their concern that the term "Islamophobia" has been hijacked.

My concern hearing Muslims come to our committee and testify that they're concerned about this word is one of importance to me. It's one of the places where we had the only difference, where we wanted to amend the motion to say that hatred toward Muslims because this word is so politically electric. How's that? Many of the Muslims in your community had come to us and said they have some real concerns about the etymology of this word, about how some people use it.

When you mention being a prisoner to definitions, their concern is about down the road being subjected to the inability to be able to see reform happen within their community, for greater freedom for their community and themselves. I'm wondering if you would address that for me.

The Chair: You are now over seven minutes.

That's why I have a problem with sharing time. When you share two minutes, two minutes is not enough time to get in a question and answer, seriously.

We have a problem. Perhaps we can see if you can answer that question very quickly, please. I'll give you 30 seconds to answer it, because we have to restrict our time.

Mr. Shahid Akhtar: Is my time starting now?

The Chair: It's starting now, yes.

Mr. Shahid Akhtar: Very briefly, I believe in the motive and the political will to act. You have to see what works. The Muslim community is extremely diverse, like many communities, like your community. You mentioned 600-some numbers but there is a problem that overall that culture has somehow accepted that you can get away with criticizing the discrimination against Muslims with all kinds of representations of them in the media. That is happening. Discrimination is happening.

The point is that you have to do something about it. If you can do it and it doesn't matter how you define it, the impact has to be that the Muslim community should feel it is mainstream, that it is Canadian. We are Canadians first, anything else much later.

I have just one very quick remark to Mr. Bellegarde. You have to think outside the box. Not only that, kick the box away. Forget about the box. Think originally. Think to solve the problem. That's your 30-second answer.

• (1715)

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we go to Cheryl Hardcastle for the New Democrats.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle: Thanks.

I'll try not to do too much preamble so that you can use up my time.

I'm sure all of you, particularly Chief Bellegarde, know that my colleague Romeo Saganash has tabled a bill that would ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with UNDRIP. Rather than ask you to talk about that, I would like you to link that to the point you are making about how we would harmonize our laws. We would have to have evidence and ideas. Concepts need to be data-driven.

You mentioned the missing women's inquiry and the gap between the information that we have and data collection and the sensitivity of that with policing, with law enforcement. Just maybe talk a little bit about how you would envision us moving forward as a country that would have laws that are executed in harmony with UNDRIP, and how our recommendations here would enhance that.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: That's a good question.

We're embarking on that now. The Prime Minister came to our chiefs assembly on two occasions. He's coming again on December 5, 6, and 7, I believe, with a number of the ministers. There was a commitment made to jointly work on a law and policy review two years ago and then just last year, as well.

On the policy side, we can start seeing things happening a little bit. It still has to be tightened up. On the policies that we're keying in on, you can go department by department on what policies need to be changed.

I'll just take the four within Minister Bennett's department: comprehensive claims, specific claims policy, additions to reserve policy, and the inherent rights policy. All of those policies, those frameworks in there, are really outdated because they're based on termination of rights entitlement, not recognition of rights entitlement. They have to be brought up to speed with what the judicial branch is saying in Canada, like recognition of rights through the Tsilhqot'in decision.

The Supreme Court is saying a lot of things, making Supreme Court decisions about aboriginal rights, title recognition, and treaty recognition and implementation, but the legislative and executive branches of government don't keep up with what the judicial branch is saying. We need to fix that, and we have to work very quickly to get those policies changed. Those are just four. There are other ones.

You can go department by department almost, on which ones need change. Those are policies. We're trying to work co-operatively, because we want to jointly hold the pen. We don't want the government just doing this. We have to do it together.

On the laws, that's another process that we have to work together on. There are certain laws that have to be changed. One of them will be the Indian Act. It will have to be changed. How do we work to move beyond the Indian Act? That's a federal statute that's been on the books since 1876. That's one law.

Then you have others such as navigable waters and the fisheries. Some of them have to be changed in light of treaty recognition, aboriginal rights entitlement recognition, and the UN declaration. There has to be a very specific joint process to do that. We're in the process of trying to do that now, working out that work plan with objectives and time frames, working from the Assembly of First Nations, and working with this government now. That work has to be undertaken, and the results have to be measurable. It's a little slow, but we're trying to get it done.

That's my answer there. Policy is one set of work, and the law is another set of work.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle: Thank you very much, Chief.

I know that this committee's work is really going to be delving into what we can do about evidence-based decision-making, which means data. Maybe I'll come back to you.

I'd like to hear from Ms. Landau. There are some sensitivities around collecting data. You know that from the inside. What are your observations on how we can move forward on that?

Ms. Barbara Landau: The idea of collecting data about incidents of discrimination in all of our communities is tied to what we're going to do about it. I think the most important thing is, if you're just collecting it in order to collect it, it's not very useful. If you're collecting it in order to improve the educational process for students, teachers, police, or employers, if you're using it with an objective of reducing the gaps between people, that would be very helpful.

One of the things I worry about is that our communities are often very separated. Even though Shahid and I are the best of friends, he lives in Mississauga, and I live in Toronto. We don't get to see each other very much. Our communities are separate. This is certainly true for first nations.

I really like the idea of re-establishing a multiculturalism funding program to work with different groups where you don't have jurisdiction, but you can get co-operation across different communities. What can you do to stimulate events that bring people together to learn about each other, to celebrate each other's traditions, and learn how not to discriminate?

• (1720)

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle: Chief Bellegarde, do you want to tie in with those comments about the data collection? Maybe you were envisioning more specifically some of the issues around the missing and murdered women inquiry. In order for us to move forward in a meaningful way, we have to have a safe space, like this, where we can talk about what best steps we need to take to embrace that. As Ms. Landau said, in order to educate, to improve, to remove the gaps, sometimes we have to tread on difficult areas.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: I'll just quote from the CERD report. "The Committee recommends that the State party...(c) Systematically track and maintain data on the number of reported racist hate crimes, prosecutions, convictions, sentences and penalties and compensation to victims and provide this data to the Committee in its next periodic report."

The United Nations is saying that Canada has to do this. This is a recommendation from the CERD committee. Even with regard to just collecting data, you have to look at the question of who has it. There's a system through the RCMP. There are municipal police forces. Is there an overall, coordinated sharing of information now when it comes to, for example, the number of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls across Canada? There has to be a sharing of information in a centralized collection. It has to get done. You have to break down those systems because they're operating in different jurisdictions, in federal and provincial jurisdictions. You have to find a way to break that down.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now go to Ms. Dabrusin for the Liberals for seven minutes.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Thank you.

I'd actually like to pick up from where Ms. Hardcastle was about data because it's come up several times from different witnesses, and it's been in different reports. I was looking at Ontario's anti-racism strategic plan. In it, they say that they need better race-based disaggregated data that could be broken down to better understand whether specific segments of the population are experiencing adverse impacts of systemic racism.

I would like to hear from both of you about what kinds of disaggregated data you believe we should be collecting. What do you think we need to do to make sure we do that properly?

I could start, perhaps, with your group.

Mr. Shahid Akhtar: I will leave the answer to Dr. Landau. I'll just briefly mention that your committee should also recommend establishing a body—perhaps an independent body—where people who are the actual victims of any hate crime, any suffering, or any discrimination can go safely and independently, and say they are safe, without relying on the data from the law enforcement agencies that Mr. Bellegarde mentioned or the data that some other courts or systems provide them. That way you'll have independent data.

As far as other details are concerned, I'll defer to Barbara.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I would like to clarify that, for this, I'm not talking about hate crime data. I'm actually talking about disaggregated data from government to better understand how our services apply or what the impacts of different government policies may be. This isn't about the hate crime piece specifically.

Ms. Barbara Landau: Can I just clarify? You're not looking at hate crimes. Are you looking at things like bullying in school? Are you looking at the sources and what people are sensitive to? Are you looking at driving while black? I mean—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Why don't I help you out? The policy that the Ontario government is putting into place says "disaggregated race-based data across government-funded programs will help us monitor the impact of its policies and programs on different segments of the population [and] help us identify institutional outcomes". There's a hate crimes piece that I think we've covered. This is another piece of data that the Ontario government is looking to collect. I was just wondering about your thoughts on that, if you have any.

• (1725)

Ms. Barbara Landau: Again, it's really hard to...because you're talking about an Ontario policy. I have a copy of something here that may be what you're referring to. Again, if you had an umbrella group that could talk to the different provinces about what they're trying to do, what their objectives are, and how you might facilitate that.... What you don't want is to go at cross-purposes. You don't want to be developing one set of mechanisms, and then the provinces or specific groups within the community are developing different data collection mechanisms. I just think we need broader co-operation and a definition.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Okay. Thank you.

I don't know if you have any thoughts about it.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: I was trying to understand where you were trying to come from with the question. Then I thought, “Are you talking about Stats Canada? Are you talking about an independent body to collect this?” Then I started thinking, “Man, are we going to be studied again as first nations people?”

Who's collecting the data? Is it a safe, fair process? Whose data is it? I have all these questions in trying to understand your question.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Sure.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: As first nations people, how are you going to collect this data? Is it sensitive? Again, who is going to own it, what are you going to do with it? There are privacy issues, and there are intellectual property issues. All these things come to mind, so you start questioning. Do you want an independent body to do this, or do you look to Stats Canada to do this? There's the whole jurisdiction piece as well. That's our data.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: That's an interesting point, but this is part of what the Ontario anti-racism action plan has and what they are doing is trying to reach benchmarks as to what the impacts are of policies and how things are working. It might be something you like or don't. I'm simply trying to get your input.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Yes, I can see how you.... Do you know that there were people who were scared to put down that they're native, aboriginal, or first nations at one time? Even when you're trying to develop a represented workforce strategy where you have a question or something and you have to check the box, some will not want to do it. In some cases some might do it, but there are also people who aren't Métis or first nation but say “Yes, I am”, then they check the box. There's abuse of that. I see that happening in different instances, for access to bursaries, or programs, or scholarships, or spots to become a doctor, or whatever. There's an abuse of that.

It's almost changing around now, where there's more acceptance, but at one time you were taught “You don't tell people that you're an Indian, or you're a Métis, because society will just frown upon you and you're not going to get anywhere and you're going to have to show that you're better than the white guy next to you”. There's all of that, so how do you measure it? How do you capture that data?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: This was one of the pieces that was put forward to us, so I'm trying to look at it and see what I should do with this. If we were going to make a recommendation based on this idea of creating a framework and guidelines to collect data, disaggregated data, what should I be thinking about? You've listed a bunch of things, but is it something to which you'd say, don't do it?

National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Let me do a more formal response and have time with my staff to dialogue about this to really understand it, because I have too many questions around it. I'm not really understanding where you're coming from.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I appreciate that. I only have one more minute so I don't have much time. Perhaps you can give me an answer in writing if we run out of time.

One of the other pieces that came forward in this Ontario action plan that we were looking at was a tool kit to focus on building self-reflection and recognizing biases that can impact how health professionals provide their services to indigenous people. It said that it's being informed by indigenous perspective. That is something that they're working on. It's come from many witnesses that you can only really address bias if you recognize it and confront it. I was wondering if you've had any involvement in this tool kit, and if we were going to be working on developing a tool kit, what should go into that development?

We're probably not going to have enough time, unfortunately, verbally.

The Chair: If you can put that in writing and send it to the clerk, we will be able to see what your thoughts are on that particular question that Ms. Dabrusin asked.

We have come to the end of the presentations, and it's a pity because there are so many other questions that I know we all want to ask and tunnel down into. I think what Ms. Dabrusin was talking about with disaggregated data is.... For example, if you're going to apply a lens that is based on race or religion, etc., to what is happening in the country, you need the disaggregated data to do so. For instance, with gender-based analysis you have to collect disaggregated data, something that says how many women are working in the construction sector, say. When you look at that you can see women number only 5% or 2%, so how come only 2% are women? Do they face barriers, what are those barriers, what do we do to remove those barriers?

That is what the disaggregated gives us, the information to look at policies, programs, and services to see if they're being applied with an equity lens, or if some people really having a hard time and other people aren't. Then you can ask why, get that question asked, and then come down to the solutions based on seeing that some people are doing really badly and why that is. I think that was what it was meant to be.

I understand you, Chief Bellegarde, when you talked about abusing it. I have always felt that way about quotas. Once you start quotas, everybody is going to say, “I don't I have them. I need to get a space on that board. I'm a whatever.” Nobody knows if you're a whatever, so it does tend to lead to abuse. I get that, but this is about finding out how people are faring, the reality of people's lives.

Thank you very much.

You can't leave, guys. There is no motion to adjourn.

• (1730)

Mr. Scott Reid: I'll move that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Reid.

The meeting is adjourned.

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