



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage**

---

CHPC • NUMBER 131 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

---

**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, November 20, 2018**



**Chair**

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin**



## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Tuesday, November 20, 2018

• (1140)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.)):** I call to order our 131st meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

Today we're continuing our study of Bill C-369, an act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code on National Indigenous Peoples Day.

I thank the witnesses for being here and for your patience, because we did have votes.

Before we begin, I was going to propose to the committee that we will slightly amend the rounds so that we can try to have time for questions for both sets of witnesses. We will have a five-minute round of three questions, one to each party, after each set of witnesses. That might bring us only slightly over the scheduled time. I have that in mind.

Today we have with us, on the first panel, Aaron Wudrick of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. We have, by video conference, Elizabeth Edgar-Webkamigad from the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre. We have with us in person Alania Sanregret and Pauline Mawer from the Bonnyville Friendship Centre.

Just because of technical issues, we'll start with the video conference, if that's all right with you. Please begin your presentation.

Thanks.

**Ms. Elizabeth Edgar-Webkamigad (Director, Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre):** First of all, I would like to say thank you for the invitation.

My name is Elizabeth Edgar-Webkamigad. My Ojibwa name is Nenookaasi, which translates from our beautiful language to "hummingbird". I am Ojibwa, Odawa and Pottowattomi. I come from Wikwemikong, which is on Manitoulin Island, but I live here in Sault Ste. Marie and I have for the last 23 years.

I'd like to first acknowledge the beautiful territory where this university and this Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre are located. We are among the Ojibwa of Garden River and the Ojibwa of Batchewana First Nation, and along with the traditional historic Métis settlement, one of the largest settlements in our area. We are in the heart of the Great Lakes, and I'm certainly very honoured to represent Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre.

I'll give a little bit of history of this site. The Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre was formed in the early 1980s as a result of a number of former residential school students deciding to come together and make sure that the historical portion of their existence—being a residential school student and the legacy of that time in our history—was not forgotten. The Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre came out of the formation of that group of alumni.

I'd like to indicate that I've had the honour of speaking with a number of people over the last little while, once the invitation was received. I asked them questions about what kinds of things we should keep in mind when we're looking at having this conversation about why a day like this is so important. I thank the children of Shingwauk alumni; two of our local chiefs; some of the students who attend Algoma University; some of our staff; our instructors, both at Algoma University and Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig; and some of our local school boards and their staff. As well, I thank the event that I just came from in B.C. that was sponsored by Universities Canada and hosted by the University of Victoria—the gathering on reconciliation.

The message is clear that for the next seven generations, people must think today. If we're looking at Anishinabe people, one of the responsibilities we have is to think forward about those next seven generations and what kinds of things we can do today that help to ensure the good life—*mino-bimaadiziwin*—for them.

One of the messages that was really important and that was a common thread for all of the different people that I spoke to is how important it is to acknowledge resilience and hope. The resilience of Anishinabe people right across the land is important. People like me who are working in the field of education and cross-cultural learning want to create a sense of hope that our messages will continue to be heard.

There's a commitment to continued relationship-building. In that relationship-building, all of us are challenged to take action and tell the truth, and we make it a priority. In doing so, we give recognition and acknowledgement to Canada's first people and Anishinabe right across the land. If I'm given a day, I'm hopeful that not only I but other Canadians will have opportunity to reflect and certainly honour through participation and different events that might happen, and give some respect to the importance and significance of a special day.

My last message to you as you think about the work that you're doing is that one of the most pronounced thoughts that came from the event I just travelled back home from on Saturday is that not only is multi-generational trauma something that has come down through the generations, but almost as important—if not more important—is that we see multi-generational resilience. Anishinabe people—first nations people—are resilient people and there is some beauty in that.

Finally, one gentleman—a young man, an international student—who was at this gathering talked about his arrival into Canada. Landing at Vancouver airport, he saw a beautiful big totem pole.

• (1145)

He said, “I actually figured there must be some kind of significance to that totem pole. It's so big and so beautiful. I'm going to seek out a local person”—this was while he was walking through the airport—“to see if I can find out some history about it, to find out what it was.”

To all of us listening at the Universities Canada gathering on reconciliation, to all of our surprise, he spoke to a local. This young man was an East Indian. He spoke to a local, and he asked, “Do you have any idea what this is, this beautiful thing I'm seeing?” The person responded, “Yes, I'm local, and it has something to do with being Indian.” Then she said to him, “I think it's really important, what you're looking at.”

Then he said he said to himself, “If this is really important and it's Indian, how come I don't know anything about it? I'm Indian.”

He said it was at that point when he actually found out, when he came to school—he was going to school at the University of Victoria—that he was not aware that many people know Canada's history and that it is important for us, working in the university system, to make sure that Canada's history is being told in a good way, a kind way, and a truthful way. He said that he couldn't go back home to his home country without knowing that truth.

I really believe a day like this might help to create that dialogue, that respect, that reciprocal relationship-building and mending that allows people, all of us, an understanding of what Canada is about, with Canada's first people.

*Meegwetch.*

• (1150)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We will now go to Aaron Wudrick, of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, please.

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick (Federal Director, Canadian Taxpayers Federation):** Madam Chair, good morning, and thank you to the committee for the invitation. My name is Aaron Wudrick, and I am the federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. We are a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy group with over 140,000 supporters across Canada. Our advocacy is centred on three areas: lower taxes, less waste and government accountability.

I'm very pleased to appear today with respect to Bill C-369 regarding the proposal to make National Indigenous Peoples Day a statutory holiday. I think it is worth saying at the start that it goes without saying that the objectives underlying this bill, which are the recognition of the historical wrongs endured Canada's indigenous peoples and the need for reconciliation with all Canadians, are not

controversial. I think that the idea enjoys wide support across the political spectrum and with all Canadians.

The fundamental question, though, is whether creating a new statutory holiday is either necessary or desirable in advancing this goal, and we should consider some of the costs that it will impose.

Simply put, statutory holidays are not free. They come at a cost to the economy, to employers and to taxpayers. The size of that cost will, of course, depend on who is affected. I know that certain estimates on this bill have mentioned it impacting 6% of the labour force. The Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses has put forward a figure of \$3.6 billion in lost productivity. We had a member of Parliament who suggested that the cost to taxpayers would be just under \$200 million. That is a day's worth of federal payroll.

Now, this does not mean we never have any statutory holidays, but it is an obvious reason that we don't have an unlimited number of them.

I think another important point worth considering with respect to whether or not a holiday is the best way to advance the social goal at hand here is to look at Remembrance Day as a useful analogy. While it is a holiday in some provinces and for federal workplaces, it is not in others, including, importantly, for schools. Indeed, many veterans themselves expressed concern that if Remembrance Day were to become a school holiday, it would actually deprive children of a very important opportunity to reflect and learn about something that is very important.

I think you can make a similar argument with respect to National Indigenous Peoples Day. The important thing about this day would be that Canadians take time to learn, reflect upon and understand the history and cultures of our indigenous peoples. That may not necessarily be best achieved by creating a holiday. I can tell you that as a young person, I didn't take very much time during the May long weekend to learn about Queen Victoria.

That said, if the committee does feel the need to have a statutory holiday to mark this day, I would suggest that it consider repurposing an existing holiday, one that is already recognized in most of the country, and of course I am thinking of the civic holiday in August. It would imbue that day with a particular meaning and purpose, but would also avoid the additional costs to businesses and taxpayers that a new holiday would incur.

That's all I have. Thank you.

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

We will now go to the Bonnyville Friendship Centre, with Alania Sanregret and Pauline Mawer, please.

**Ms. Alania Sanregret (Program Manager, Bonnyville Friendship Centre):** The Bonnyville Friendship Centre is located within the town of Bonnyville in Alberta. It was incorporated under the Societies Act on January 30, 1975. In accordance with our mandate, we are dedicated to bridging the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous community members culturally, socially, economically and recreationally by promoting communication and understanding among all people.

The Bonnyville Friendship Centre consistently provides programs and a broad continuum of services that assist people in the community. According to the 2017 municipal census, the population of Bonnyville is 6,422 people. That is the town of Bonnyville. The Municipal District of Bonnyville, which we also serve, has a population of 11,660 and incorporates first nation communities of Treaty 6 territory as well as the Elizabeth Métis Settlement, and we do stretch our services out to a number of other settlements.

The Bonnyville Friendship Centre creates a healthy, positive and productive community by working together to empower families and individuals through innovative and cultural services. Therefore, on behalf of the board and staff of Bonnyville Friendship Centre, I, Alania Sanregret, program manager, and Pauline, our assistant executive director, have taken the honour and opportunity to be speaking on the proposed Canadian Heritage Bill C-369.

We recognize that we are gathered here today on unceded traditional territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin people, and we would like to thank Georgina Jolibois for introducing Bill C-369 and beginning this conversation regarding honouring the indigenous people of Canada.

Our friendship centre utilizes every opportunity to celebrate and promote indigenous culture in our community. We celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21 every year by hosting a free community event that highlights our cultural strengths, resiliency and the knowledge of indigenous people. We host approximately 1,000 community members every year, bringing in indigenous dancers, drummers, Métis fiddlers and speakers.

In addition to the cultural activities, we share a spiritual component in which our local elders coordinate a sacred pipe ceremony where prayers are offered for prosperity for our community in the upcoming season. The date that has been chosen for National Indigenous Peoples Day is June 21, and that is the summer solstice celebration, which has been a celebration of indigenous people across Canada since before the rivers began.

Our pipe ceremony is held seasonally in our centre, and it's another way our centre calls attention to our cultural strengths. Attendees are dignitaries, schoolchildren, teachers, agency partners and residents of the town and Municipal District of Bonnyville. Even though June 21 has not been recognized as a statutory holiday, our agency in Bonnyville grants the staff a day in lieu in order to facilitate the work that is done on that particular day.

We do have some reservations about the bill.

To show appreciation and to honour indigenous people of Canada, declaring a statutory holiday will provide an opportunity to celebrate and educate through honouring both the tragedies and triumphs of indigenous people in Canada.

However, should June 21 become a statutory holiday, schools would be closed. We celebrate on June 21 regardless of whether it is a school day or not. We greatly value the opportunity to expose indigenous culture to children and youth in Bonnyville who may not have ever learned anything about indigenous culture. We believe that June 21 should be reserved for the celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day to ensure that youth are encouraged to take part, and that an alternate day would be optimal for a statutory holiday to honour indigenous people. We believe that if June 21 becomes a statutory holiday, we may miss out on the opportunity to involve our young community members in our traditions and celebrations.

As well, funding for this event from Canadian Heritage as well as Alberta Indigenous Relations takes into consideration the number of participants as well as the date, depending on who we're applying to for our funding. If involvement declines, we may consequently have a decrease in funding, which would then lessen the impact we have on the community.

● (1155)

We support Bill C-369 and the creation of a national statutory holiday to commemorate the impact that indigenous people have had on the formation of Canada. However, we propose that we keep National Indigenous Peoples Day as a celebration and choose an alternate day for the proposed Bill C-369.

We presently celebrate Victoria Day as a statutory holiday to recognize the ruling monarch when Canada was formed on July 1, 1867. Would it not be pertinent to allocate a similar regard to our country's indigenous people, to celebrate and share the strong and profuse culture and traditions of indigenous people in Canada?

We recommend that this committee continue to consult indigenous people during this process and that Canadians use this conversation to learn and celebrate the history of indigenous people in Canada.

In summary, celebrating indigenous people on a statutory holiday will honour Canada as a nation by recognizing the lives and the culture of indigenous people past, present and future. Much needs to be considered when designating a national statutory holiday and other commemorations.

That is all I have.

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

We'll now begin our question period with five-minute questions.

Wayne Long will start.

**Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses this morning.

Mr. Wudrick, it's good to see you again.

● (1200)

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** Thank you.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Can you just remind me and the committee who makes up the Canadian Taxpayers Federation? Who sits on your board? Is it a combination of citizens and regular taxpayers? Can you just tell me who makes up your board?

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** We have, I believe, five or six members as our board of directors right now. They're all volunteers. I believe there are now two women and three men, or two and four. I don't know what other kind of—

**Mr. Wayne Long:** I guess my question is this: Is it just representatives of businesses, or is it citizens and other regular taxpayers? You're called the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, but is it just businesses?

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** No, no. We have one lawyer. We have an accountant. We have someone who runs a public relations firm. We have someone who works in government relations. We've had people from all walks of life sit on our board. When we say that we're the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, the choice of the word "taxpayer" is really to emphasize the fact that people pay taxes and expect services in return. We try to be the counterweight to groups that are trying to push for more spending all the time without consideration as to where that money is coming from.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** What per cent of your members would be businesses?

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** Maybe 10%. There are business people who support our organization, but I couldn't give you a percentage.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Okay. You mentioned in your testimony that your group came up with \$3.6 billion in lost productivity.

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** That was the CFIB's number.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Do you have any idea how it came up with that figure or how it calculated that figure?

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** I do not.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** You do not.

Did your group do any calculation on the costs of not doing reconciliation? Do you think there's a bigger picture here?

I know that you talk about the cost of the holiday. Obviously, I know that you're not suggesting we get rid of Christmas, Victoria Day and Remembrance Day—I respect that—but has your group at all considered the cost of not doing it?

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** I don't know how you'd begin to quantify that. Obviously, reconciliation is an important goal. I don't think there's anybody who disputes that. The question is how you would quantify the impact of not having a holiday on the ability for Canadians to experience reconciliation.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Do you think that reconciliation should be free?

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** No, I think there are going to be costs involved. I'm simply saying that we have to always have the cost up front and in mind when we're making these types of decisions.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Do you feel that reconciliation is only meant to generate economic benefits?

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** No. If that were the case, if we were only going to have holidays on that basis, we wouldn't have any at all.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Will you not admit, though, that there's a bigger picture there with reconciliation with indigenous groups, with first nations, that supersedes just the sheer cost?

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** Absolutely. It's not just about dollars and cents. I'm simply noting that there is a cost involved with that, and

we can't ignore that fact. Also, as I pointed out in my remarks, can we achieve these objectives with or without this holiday? I think that's a fair question.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Again, you don't know how the CFIB came up with the \$3.6 billion. From your organization's standpoint, what do you feel the cost is?

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** That sounds high. I think it's somewhere in between the two figures I quoted. The cost to the federal payroll would be \$195 million. There's obviously a cost to private employers as well. I think you're probably looking at figure somewhere between \$200 million and \$3.6 billion.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Ms. Sanregret, could you just speak to the cost of not doing reconciliation?

**Ms. Alania Sanregret:** I could not speak to a financial cost, but I can speak to—

**Mr. Wayne Long:** A social cost.

**Ms. Alania Sanregret:** —a social cost. When we talk about reconciliation, I often hear about residential schools almost to the extent of not really addressing any of the other issues and struggles and tragedies that have occurred in Canada.

The indigenous population is approximately 9%, 8%—I can't think of an exact number—but the overrepresentation of indigenous people in our child welfare systems, our criminal and family justice systems is very far above that. It's over any other cultural group.

I guess financially the cost of not looking to heal.... The point of reconciliation is to heal, to heal the old wounds and the wounds that are still continuing, because this is still going on today.

We may not have residential schools and we may not have the marked difference that was going on during the sixties in the welfare scoop, but we still have that overrepresentation in children's services. We still see indigenous people being charged with crimes that non-indigenous people may not be. I've sat in courtrooms many times and have seen indigenous people receiving time they have to serve in prisons, whereas non-indigenous people may not receive the same amount of time. There's a lot of background, a lot of reasons for this that would probably take days to talk about.

•(1205)

**The Chair:** Unfortunately we're already over time, so if you just have a quick—

**Ms. Alania Sanregret:** Okay. All right.

As for the financial and social cost of reconciliation, it would be a safe return on investment to invest in reconciliation in all ways.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Ms. Alania Sanregret:** You're very welcome.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** We will now go to Mr. Shields. I believe you're sharing your time with Mr. Yurdiga.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today and sharing.

Ms. Sanregret, I found your comments about trying to figure out the best way to handle it interesting.

**Ms. Alania Sanregret:** Yes.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Is it better on a day when you have the school experience that day, versus another day? I think that's a challenge you have.

One of the things the MP sponsor was talking about was the sense of moving forward. I think the totem pole example that you talked about was a good—

**Ms. Alania Sanregret:** Actually, that was Elizabeth—

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Yes, that was mentioned by her, but the idea is learning going forward and moving forward. I think she strongly pointed out the moving-forward aspect rather than looking backwards all the time. What is your response to that?

**Ms. Alania Sanregret:** To move forward, we need to acknowledge what has happened. We've seen that in world history. If we do not acknowledge what has happened, it's almost impossible to move forward without making those same mistakes again. The acknowledgement, without shame or blame or guilt, is very important. It's important to know that this is what happened.

A large percentage of our population still does not know about residential schools, about the changes in legislation on reserves that were made during the 1800s and 1900s. Those things are not known—how reserves are funded, what the Métis settlements are in Alberta. Acknowledging the wonderful things that indigenous people have done in Canada and acknowledging the tragedies that have happened are all part of learning. Then we can move forward. We need to know what we're moving forward from.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Thank you.

Mr. Yurdiga is next.

**Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Thank you very much, witnesses, for coming out here today.

I had an opportunity to talk to a lot of indigenous people in my riding, and I heard about costs. They're anywhere from \$400 million upwards, and this bill primarily deals with federal employees.

I heard a comment from an elder. Everybody's supportive of the holiday. We have to acknowledge the first people, the first Canadians, with acknowledgement, remembrance and sacrifice.

She came up with a concept that this is a sacrifice, and she doesn't believe federal employees should be paid for a day off. That money

should go to infrastructure, because first nations people were good enough to share the land with us, and it should be a day that we give back.

I'd like to address this to Mr. Wudrick. What are your thoughts on this?

**Mr. Aaron Wudrick:** That's very interesting. From our standpoint, there's no additional cost to taxpayers there. That's simply redirecting money that would go from one place to another place. From a fiscal standpoint, that seems fine with us.

**Ms. Alania Sanregret:** I find it very interesting as well. I would want to take into consideration that there are some federal employees who don't make a whole lot of money, and if there's a day off, having extra additional funds going into education and supporting indigenous children would be incredibly beneficial.

**Mr. David Yurdiga:** Thank you.

Mr. Blaney, do you have a question?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** I have a short question.

I am sorry I am late.

The date was discussed. I see my friend has a note. I am a former veterans affairs minister, and we used to commemorate the sacrifice of veterans on June 21. I am a Quebecker, so we have June 24. I found this very convenient.

Have you already shared any thoughts, or maybe you'd like just to wrap it up for me, on the best time to commemorate both—to celebrate first nations, but also to commemorate the tragedy of what happened in the past?

Madam Sanregret, would you comment?

• (1210)

**The Chair:** You have one minute.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** That's good enough.

**Ms. Alania Sanregret:** Personally, I think June 21, because indigenous people traditionally celebrated on the equinoxes and the solstices. For our organization, that has some problems associated with it, so I really don't know when we should do it.

We have a civic holiday in August. My kids have always asked what it was for, and I have never had an answer. Just consider and weigh every option.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Thank you.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** We'll continue with Mr. Nantel for five minutes.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** First, I would like to thank all the witnesses.

I am really pleased to see how the witnesses we have been welcoming consistently show us that this bill was not only necessary, but also urgent. All of the presentations point out that it was high time to fix this, to give people the time they need to reflect on what happened and recognize the successes of First Nations. To this end, June 21 is a step in that direction, as opposed to Orange Shirt Day.

As I listen to the debate, I am thinking in particular of the issue of children who are not in school because of a holiday, for example. There is the whole notion of mediation, which seeks to promote First Nations and allow exchanges between white people and First Nations communities. From this point of view, I cannot help but go back to how July 1 is celebrated. There's not much in terms of mediation activities on Victoria Day. By the way, some people are very happy with that. I am one of them.

However, there is funding for the July 1 celebrations. Funds are also allocated to festivities and mediation activities for Quebec's national holiday. I think it's less than 50 cents per person.

Do you not think that we should first ensure that we have the funding needed for the festivities and mediation, recognition and reconciliation activities?

If there is no mediation activity, if there is no time to organize celebrations, although June 21 may be a perfect time to do so, it's sort of like whistling in the wind. Everyone would have the day off and stay home to watch a movie.

My question is for everyone, but perhaps we should start with Ms. Edgar-Webkamigad, who is with us by videoconference.

[*English*]

**Ms. Elizabeth Edgar-Webkamigad:** Thank you for the question. I think it's a valid question.

I too have worked here in our community for the last 23 years. At one point, I was the executive director of our Indian friendship centre. We too, just like my colleague who is sitting at the table talking about her community in Alberta, would look to offer celebrations on June 21 and make them open to the whole community so that everybody could come and experience a bit of our first nations culture. That day is definitely a day of celebration.

Now, if you look at September 30, which is known across the land as Orange Shirt Day and is a movement that is newer or more recent, we are still seeing people who are becoming educated and aware. It's important to note that the young ones at school are bringing that message home.

I had one of my colleagues talk about when her child came home from school last year with a calendar, and on September 30, it said, "Orange Shirt Day". She didn't realize that Orange Shirt Day was dedicated to remembering our residential school students, all of them, the ones who made it home and the ones who didn't. She thought, out of ignorance, that it had something to do with getting ready for the month of October, which is the very next day, and the celebration of Halloween.

Because of cross-cultural education and awareness that happens in our communities, and now that we see September 30 being talked about in the media and on social media, people like my colleague are now informed.

That day, on the Friday previous to the weekend, we had our different school boards acknowledging and putting messages out on media about September 30 and what it was about. We had our local post-secondary institutions acknowledging and putting forth action so that community members, both indigenous and non-indigenous, could come together to acknowledge, pay respect, and make a stand on the commitment to recognizing and remembering the legacy of residential schools.

I agree that it is a challenge. Do we put everything into June 21? Do we acknowledge September 30? Which day do we pick? That remains certainly a challenge that you at your table will have to think about, but I know that people are going to move ahead regardless. Those of us who are interested in making sure that we are moving forward in our relationships are going to be doing things regardless.

If we have the support of the federal government in acknowledging a national day, then we hope that it allows Canadians the opportunity to not worry about, "Do I go and attend this event and lose pay if I go on June 21 because it's a work day and I have to take a vacation day for it, or will I have that opportunity to be paid?"

•(1215)

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** To have an event you need funding, though.

**Ms. Elizabeth Edgar-Webkamigad:** Yes, absolutely.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** The time for questions is up.

[*English*]

Thank you to all of our witnesses on the first panel. Thank you again for your patience while you waited for us.

We are going to suspend briefly. I am going to ask you to keep it very short so that we can get to our second panel. Thank you.

•(1215)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

•(1220)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** We will now resume our meeting.

We now welcome Marie Wilson, former commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and Clément Chartier, who is president of the Métis National Council.

Ms. Wilson, the floor is yours.

**Ms. Marie Wilson (Former Commissioner, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, As an Individual):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon, everyone.



[English]

Let me begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on traditional Algonquin Anishinabe territory, and say how grateful I am to be here today. I want to point out what is perhaps obvious, which is that I'm still wearing a poppy today. With no offence intended to the protocols of the Canadian Legion, I did it intentionally because, as you will hear, I want to focus our attention on remembrance.

The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was officially over three years ago, and it was the honour of my lifetime to serve as one of its three commissioners. While I appear before you today as an independent party, I want you to know that I have reviewed my thoughts for today with both of my commissioner colleagues: our chair, then Justice but now Senator Murray Sinclair, and Chief Dr. Wilton Littlechild.

I have also reviewed them with Dr. Barney Williams, the TRC elder who was a member of our survivor advisory committee. I wanted to make sure we are all still on the same page of understanding the issues before this committee as they relate to our TRC findings and calls to action. I want you to know that indeed we are. While I do not speak for them, I am assured that we are still of a shared opinion, beginning with this reminder of what we said at our official closing and what we have each said repeatedly ever since, which is that the long-term work of reconciliation has barely begun.

It's clear from private member's Bill C-369—and I want to thank Madame Jolibois for bringing it forward—and also from the convening of this committee to carefully consider it, that you are devoting efforts to following through on some of our TRC conclusions that fall to the federal government to enact. In that light, and in the spirit of reconciliation, I am indeed very pleased to be here today. I hope you will find my comments useful to support you in your work and to help you in your deliberations.

I want to begin by having all of us remember what brought us into this room today: the historic thing that happened in Canada early this century. Indigenous residential school survivors took the federal government and the churches that ran those schools to court. A massive legal settlement that supported the survivors' case included the obligation to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the first national TRC in the western world and the first to focus on harms to our nation's own children.

After six and a half years of work, our 10-volume TRC final report, informed by official government and church records, documented the history of the so-called Indian residential schools. We reported that they were built on a foundation of attitudes: a belief that indigenous people were inferior; that their cultures and identities should, could and would be extinguished; and that the fastest and cheapest way to do that was to put their children in residential schools, far from parental influence and cultural teachings.

What price does a country pay for such attitudes? Almost 7,000 residential school survivors made statements to our TRC, recording the harms and heartaches of their school days: family rupture, fear, humiliation and abuses of all kinds. The most definitive harm was death itself. So many told us they spoke for the voiceless, those they

had seen die and those they knew to have died or disappeared—their schoolmates, friends and siblings.

A few years ago I visited the burial ground of Regina Industrial School, one of Canada's earliest Indian residential schools. Those graves were unmarked and the cemetery overrun. I still remember the overwhelming feelings. What if the children lying here were my ancestors? What if the children and grandchildren in my life were taken away by government agents, police or religious leaders, with promises of good education, only to end their shortened lives in such an abandoned field? Let me be sure you understand that this is not the only such residential school graveyard in our country.

• (1225)

We know for sure that 3,200 indigenous children died at those schools—highly disproportionate for Canadian children. A thousand others were sent home in the latter stages of illness, or to “Indian” hospitals, to die there within the first year.

All told, likely double that number died. It was closer to 6,000 or more, because so many others were only partially documented: a first-name child here, a no-name child there, sometimes a home community reference for another and only maybe the gender of the child. Some were sick, some died in fires in condemned school buildings, and some drowned or froze to death trying to run away from school horrors. Too frequently, no cause of death at all was even noted. Countless indigenous children lie in school cemeteries long since abandoned. Some are in mass graves and some were buried before parents were ever told of their passing, the cause of death or the gravesite location.

Our TRC created the national residential school death register, the only national effort ever made to record all the names of all students who died and to locate their graves. We are nowhere close to finding them all. As we have said in our report, that will require much more research, analysis and resources. As well, we say that reconciliation on this front also needs ongoing education and continual remembrance that this loss of life happened on our own soil as a result of our own laws and policies.

A few years back, a farmer came across what appeared to be four burial sites at the edge of a field. There is both remembrance and reconciliation in what happened next. The church that ran a nearby residential school and indigenous spiritual leaders collaborated in a traditional sending-home ceremony for the little souls in these newly found graves, as well as for so many other former students from that school.

We have a very long history of noting the names of the fallen on public monuments to victims of war. Learning the names of the deceased makes it real, transforming them from statistics to somebody's relatives and helping us relate to the enormity of the tragedy. Even more powerful is the experience of hearing those names aloud.

That day, they were children's names. They didn't go to war. They went to school.

In the midst of such a reverent ceremony, I got thinking about Remembrance Day. My grandfather was a soldier in World War I. Several of my uncles fought in World War II, and my father served the final year of that war here in Canada. All of that influenced our family culture. I spent many bittersweet childhood days gathered around public cenotaphs learning about Remembrance Day in school. My husband and I have raised our children and grandchildren to do the same: to learn about those wars and others since, to learn to honour the fallen, and to learn to remember, lest we forget.

For me, the comparisons are obvious. Our Truth and Reconciliation Commission motto was "For the child taken, for the parent left behind". As a country, we understand fully the heartache of a mother who has lost a son or daughter to war. We make great efforts to bring home with dignity and ceremony anyone lost, and to honour the parent left behind. Each year, as we did recently, we honour a Silver Cross Mother to represent all grieving parents. We mark Remembrance Day in a national ceremony in all our schools and at monuments throughout the country in honour of all veterans, living or dead. We acknowledge, collectively, those never found with the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

• (1230)

When have we ever demonstrated such reverence for residential school children, also lost in a state-sanctioned context of proven harm? We have failed to keep any track of them, much less bring them home in ceremony. We have shown unceremonious disregard for any parent left behind. How many days have we ever gathered together nationally to remember thousands of children who died on Canada's own soil? As for the missing in circumstances still unknown, where is our national monument to the unknown child?

As I have said in other contexts, we are a country still learning to remember. Indeed, we are a country with much still to learn about many things, especially about each other. The 94 calls to action of our Truth and Reconciliation Commission are all about that, and some of them specifically about the missing children.

In this committee's discussions to date, specific reference was made to TRC call to action 80:

We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

Specifically, this call is for a national day for truth and reconciliation.

**The Chair:** Ms. Wilson, I've let you go a little over time already. I was going to ask if you would be able to....

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** I am coming to a conclusion. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Yet I note that in the bill you are considering, Bill C-369, it is also being referred to as National Indigenous Day. I just want to take my remaining minutes to clarify our TRC intentions to this specific call to action.

There is a flow and pattern to our 94 calls to action, and 80 exists in the context of those surrounding it, those that are talking about identification, documentation, consecration, protection and remembrance. More specifically, some of them are about missing children and burial information and about memorialization and commemoration through national, provincial and territorial monuments and markers and an annual day of remembrance.

Of all the days that are already familiar to Canadians, the national day of truth and reconciliation envisioned by the TRC would have most in common with Remembrance Day. It would be a solemn day for all Canadians to remember 150,000 children who attended and suffered, and thousands who died in Canada's own state-sponsored facilities. As we have said, to ensure the public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

As a final point, let me offer some distinctions between the purpose of a national day for truth and reconciliation, as we've proposed it, and National Indigenous Peoples Day as it already exists.

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Ms. Wilson, perhaps we can bring that out in the questions. I've let you go several minutes over. I want to be mindful of the ability for people to ask questions as well.

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** That's fine with me. Thank you.

**The Chair:** I expect you will get the questions to bring in those answers.

Could we go to Mr. Clément Chartier, please?

**Mr. Clément Chartier (President, Métis National Council):** She can take three minutes of my time.

**The Chair:** That's excellent. She already has in some ways, but if you want to take another minute or two....

**A voice:** Is there agreement?

**A voice:** Yes.

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** Thank you.

I want to be clear that as commissioners we never intended that the new day we were proposing in call to action 80 would either replace or redefine any day that already existed. We did not specifically comment on National Indigenous Peoples Day. However, we do talk about a nation-to-nation relationship throughout our report. A day for the recognition and celebration of the first peoples of Canada and their founding status within this country is more closely related to the day we already know as Canada Day.

As we all know, the spirit, tone and activities of Canada Day are very distinct from the spirit, tone and activities of Remembrance Day. So too would the spirit, tone and activities of National Indigenous Peoples Day, as we already know it, be very distinct from those of a national day for truth and reconciliation, as we are calling for it. One is about recognition and celebration; the other is about sacrifice, loss, courage, commemoration and remembrance.

I have some things that I could tell you about the experience of National Indigenous Peoples Day because I'm from the Northwest Territories where it is a statutory holiday, but I'll skip over that. I want to give a last word to the survivors.

It strikes me that the poignancy of September makes it the right month for such a sombre recognition as a national day for truth and reconciliation, and our TRC elder agrees. Returning to school was not a happy event for thousands of indigenous children and their parents. As we were told over and over again, often through tears, for many it is still a haunting memory.

One of the multi-generational survivors who spoke to me as commissioner captured it so powerfully in her forced English. She said, "September...everybody cry month...back of truck...all the kids gone...everybody cry." Another one said, "In September, after the kids were all gone, the communities were so lonely and empty that everybody was crying. Even the dogs cried."

Finally, I want to say in recalling the apology in the House of Commons, where there were apologies uttered from all the national parties, that it was a demonstration of the importance of reconciliation as a non-partisan issue. I just want to say that I hope that can be the spirit in which you are able to continue your important deliberations. The work of your committee and the dialogue that it has allowed are very important. Your conclusions about the creation of a national day for truth and reconciliation have the great potential to contribute to that ongoing work.

I'll just leave it at that. I thank you for your indulgence.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Clément Chartier is next, please.

**Mr. Clément Chartier:** Thank you, and good afternoon.

I fully endorse former commissioner Wilson's recommendation, but I will add a little bit to that. I didn't know we were going to be here together, and it's kind of ironic.

I want to preface my statements by saying that September is certainly a month that's very significant. For 11 years—actually, 12 years—I was removed from my community in that month. For 10 years I went to the Métis residential school at Île-à-la-Crosse, 30 miles upriver or downriver—I'm not sure—from the Beauval Indian Residential School, and twice to The Pas in Manitoba to the Charlebois residence.

The only significant difference is that Métis residential schools have yet to be dealt with. We're excluded from the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement because they said it was a church-run institution, and the feds didn't give them any money, whereas they gave the same religious order monies for the treaty Indian kids downriver. We're not included in the Prime Minister's apology, Canada's apology, although I was on the floor of the House of

Commons to accept that apology for some two or three hundred Métis who were fortunate enough to attend the Indian residential schools—and, of course, we are not included in the mandate of the TRC, nor are we beneficiaries, although generally we could be, but we're not specific beneficiaries to the recommendations, the 94 calls to action, this being one of them. I didn't know. I haven't read them, because there's no reason for me to read them, because I'm not covered by the TRC. In fact, I wasn't even invited to the final session where it was released. I watched it from two blocks away from my apartment, live, while it was happening at the Delta Hotel.

Anyway, it is total exclusion. It is exclusion from settlement with respect to World War II veterans. The Métis nation veterans are the only veterans in this country not yet dealt with. Also, there was the sixties scoop; we're not included in that either. However, we are working with this government to try to rectify these particular issues.

I make that point to state that I never have embraced June 21 as a celebratory day because we really had nothing to celebrate. My position at that time was that once you give us our land back, once you recognize our governments, once you make reparations for the harms done to our nation, then we can celebrate. However, many of our people do celebrate June 21, as you have heard, so it has become celebratory. I don't take that away from anybody. Our people do embrace that.

I would not want to see June 21 taken as a response to the 80th call to action, as was mentioned by the former commissioner, because it takes something that has been embraced by all indigenous peoples and makes it into something narrower—reconciliation based on the TRC's recommendation, which to me is much narrower.

Reconciliation has to be broader, but even so, tying reconciliation to that particular day I don't think is very good. I do support the September date. I'm not sure if it's the 30th or which date in September, but I do support a different day for that. In fact, the former minister of Heritage Canada did consult with me on this, and I said the very same thing: not June 21. Make it any other day, but not June 21, because while I don't embrace it, many of our people—in fact, I'd say the majority of our people—do embrace it, and we don't want to change it to something else from which we then feel excluded. Then we would have to cease celebrating it.

Basically, yes, I support call to action number 80 for those whom it's meant to cover. At some point we probably will participate in it, because I can't believe that Canada, at some point in time—whether it's 20 years, 50 years or 100 years—won't finally deal with Métis residential schools. They are going to have to do it at some point in time, even if they didn't put in monies for the repression we suffered. We suffered even worse, I believe, than the kids at Beauval, because at least there the federal government gave them money so they had decent food and decent clothes. They also had open spaces.

•(1240)

Where I went, we had a yard that was surrounded by barbed-wire fence. Other than going to school and going for meals, we were enclosed like cattle. We suffered the same kinds of physical, sexual, emotional abuses and the same deprivation from our families.

Again, I just want to punctuate the point that it shouldn't be June 21. Any other day in September would be a good one, because that's very symbolic. I didn't hear that before, but it makes absolute sense, because when September came around, we were ripped away from our families and shipped off.

That's my contribution.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We will now go to our question and answer period, beginning with Dan Vandal.

Welcome to our committee.

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

Thank you very much for your powerful presentations. Thank you, Clément Chartier, for being in St. Boniface on Friday morning for the commemoration of Riel's execution.

I only have five minutes, so I'm going to ask a few important questions, and I want to go back and forth.

First, this is a private member's bill that names the holiday as National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Are you suggesting, Marie, that the day should be named “the national day of truth and reconciliation”?

•(1245)

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** Yes, because I think if it's meant to be squeezed into National Indigenous Peoples Day as we already have it, that would be missing the point that we were trying to make.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** Okay. That was clearly the point of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

You also clearly stated that your preference would be for a September day of remembrance.

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** Yes, but I want to underscore that I'm not saying “instead of”; I'm saying “in addition to”.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** Yes, that's clear. Very good.

Clément Chartier, are you in accordance with a September day for truth and reconciliation?

**Mr. Clément Chartier:** Yes, I am.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** You're also in support of naming the day “the national day of truth and reconciliation”.

**Mr. Clément Chartier:** Well, that's a very broad term. As long as it's not tied to the 94 calls to action, if it's a broad statement—

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** Yes.

**Mr. Clément Chartier:** —which it should be, then sure, I find nothing wrong with that particular date.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** I just want to make sure there's nothing lost with the translation.

I want to go back to Marie Wilson.

We've heard a few times that if it's a statutory holiday, something is going to get lost, that we'd rather have the children in school learning about reconciliation than have a statutory holiday when they can go do something else.

In Manitoba, Remembrance Day is a holiday, and I've never experienced that.

I'm interested in your perspective on that claim by several witnesses over the last few weeks.

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** I'll tell you one thing that I've said a million times throughout the work of our commission: There is no one size fits all in any of this, and that's what happens to us in the way things get interpreted.

Where I live in the Northwest Territories, it is a statutory holiday. I also know, because I have children and grandchildren, that it is talked about in school as a way of preparing for why they have the day off. It's a way of equipping all children in the classrooms for that.

I'm talking about National Indigenous Peoples Day now. Is that what your question is related to?

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** My original question was about Remembrance Day. In Manitoba, Remembrance Day is a holiday and, as your experience, we learned about Remembrance Day the day before.

During the actual day, we would go to the Legions, and—

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** Where I live it is also a holiday. It is talked about, though, in the school. It's not an either-or. I can tell you that public ceremonies are huge. People come out in a relatively small city to pack the biggest available public space there is. Whether that would happen if there was not a statutory holiday, I don't know. I think it's an issue of availability for people.

I do want to say this, though. On the question of a national day for truth and reconciliation, we have contemplated it. One thing a statutory holiday would do, at least if it applied to the public sector, is that it would enable public servants to be available to pay attention to this. I say that for two reasons.

One is because the history of it all is very tied to issues of law and public policy, to those things that were put in place, advocated, and spearheaded by public servants. I think that is part of the learning in that profession that is valuable even today.

The other thing is the experience we had with our Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In some parts of the country where we held our national events, jurisdictions—sometimes governments, sometimes major corporations, and sometimes universities and academic centres—allowed their staff a so-called “day off”. It wasn't really. I would call it more of a professional development day. They had the day, but specifically to go and attend and learn what was going on at the event, so it was qualified.

•(1250)

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** Thank you.

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

We will now be going to Mr. Shields, Mr. Blaney, and then Mr. Yurdiga, all in five minutes.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** We'll be quick.

I thank the witnesses. I do remember recently walking with an elder where a residential school had existed, and by the fields that they believed that children were buried in. It was a traumatic experience for those elders to take me there. They didn't want to go back or very close to it. It was very traumatic.

The question I have is for Mr. Clément Chartier from the Métis National Council. Could you give us your definition of Métis? Who qualifies as Métis in your definition?

**Mr. Clément Chartier:** Yes.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I think it's important what you stated.

**Mr. Clément Chartier:** Okay. I'll try to be quick here.

Basically in 2002, after years of consultation, our general assembly, which is the government of the Métis nation, did come up with criteria basically of self-identification, connection to a historic Métis community, and acceptance by the Métis nation. The Métis nation is geographically situated in western Canada. It extends a bit into Ontario, a bit into the Northwest Territories, a bit into B.C., and a bit into Montana and North Dakota.

It's a distinct people with a language known as Michif. I won't go into all of that. We have that. Basically, since last year, our registry has become permanent through federal funding from budget 2017. We have our own registry. We're registering our people.

It has become a big issue, though, because there are almost hundreds of thousands of people now who are cropping up. I should say when the term "Métis" was used historically, to us it meant the Métis nation as a proper noun, as a people, a polity. Since 1982, and particularly since victories in the courts, now people are taking that term "Métis" as an adjective to mean anybody of mixed ancestry.

This would basically include pretty well all indigenous peoples in Canada, except perhaps in the Far North. It's no longer being used as a proper noun, as a people; it's being used as an adjective. You have hundreds of thousands of people cropping up now in the Maritimes, eastern Ontario, Quebec, who are claiming to be Métis because they see some potential benefit. That is a huge issue for us. It's one that Canada is going to have to deal with at some point in time.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Thank you.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** I want to thank you both for coming and for your testimony. It's very humbling.

Madam Wilson, you have spoken well, and I want to ask you this. You've held the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Have you seen a change in Canadian society since then?

Where would you like to keep moving forward in the direction of recognizing, in the same way we do for veterans, what has happened in residential schools?

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** I often say that I feel like we are inching forward. We have a long way to go.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Okay.

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** I do see signs of movement. I do see concerted efforts being made, and I see things being attempted, not all of which will succeed. I know that, but we have to try.

I think that it's important to underscore that a national day for truth and reconciliation...and by the way, I'm not necessarily wedded to that name. The purpose and intent of it is what's really important to me. It may be that a circle of indigenous elders would have a better name or even an indigenous language name that they would like to propose. I'm not wedded, and I don't believe any of us are wedded to the name itself. The purpose and intent is the main thing.

What I want to say is that it would be a misunderstanding to think that the primary target of that would be indigenous people. It is Canada that has still so much yet to learn. It is everyone else, and that's why I'm calling for it as a national day. It makes it everybody's call to attention, call to remembrance, and call to respect, and hopefully the in the ongoing nature of it, as is this case with all of our schoolchildren, there is ongoing education about it. We don't just talk about wars; we talk about peace in the context of talking about wars. In the context of residential schools, we can talk about mistakes of the past and what we are trying to do to address things going forward.

● (1255)

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** That brings you to five minutes.

I'm sorry, Mr. Yurdiga; that didn't quite work out.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nantel, you have the floor.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much to both of you, Ms. Wilson and Mr. Chartier.

Clearly, studying this bill keeps taking us deeper, it's amazing. I expect that we will have a lot of work to do when the time comes to review the recommendations and then take a position that is somewhat unifying. Clearly, this bill hits a very sensitive nerve, and the recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission gives rise to very strong reactions from parliamentarians.

I am very sensitive to the idea of naming people. Romeo Saganash has repeatedly mentioned to me the disappearance of his older brother, which is still an open wound for him and for all the members of his family, especially his mother.

Ms. Wilson, you drew a parallel with Remembrance Day, and I can't help but tell you that if, by any chance, you have an ancestor who fought in the First World War and his first name begins with the letter "C", I found the name of a C. Wilson on a war memorial in Longueuil. You can go to my Facebook page if you want to see it. I had the chance to go to Normandy, in fact to Belgium, to Ypres, and I was able to find his name engraved on a monument in Ypres. It takes on a whole new meaning when you can trace the missing. To this end, many people have stressed the importance of having a day of remembrance, and the dates of September 30 and June 21 have been mentioned.

Our committee has to make a recommendation, but I don't think any of its members would know which date to choose. On a number of occasions, we have even heard that our report should include the need for two days, a Remembrance Day, combined with Orange Shirt Day on September 30, and a solstice celebration day, as a positive celebration. The difference in tone you mentioned between July 1 and Remembrance Day sort of reflects the same dichotomy we are facing.

In your opinion, should we absolutely consider this possibility? Because if we do things by half, the day chosen may turn out to be neither fish nor fowl, a bittersweet day. Personally, I wonder about how these days would be funded. Shouldn't we ensure that we have the necessary funding, which would at least be related to the proposed activities designed to raise awareness about the issues?

Mr. Chartier, you can add comments, of course, if you wish.

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** I think it is important to have two separate days, because they do not have the same purpose and they are not designed in the same spirit at all.

You mentioned a lot of things, but I think it ultimately takes two separate days, and each day has to have a completely different goal. I have always considered National Indigenous Peoples Day to be a day of recognition, as set out in the Constitution of Canada, the recognition that Canada's indigenous peoples have a special place in this country. Indigenous people are specifically mentioned, just like English and French.

National Indigenous Peoples Day has always reflected this recognition, but what we are proposing is to recognize, first, a big secret, as our society experienced it until very recently.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** The comments we have heard most often through our commission's activities are: "I had no idea", "I knew nothing about any of this" and "no one has ever talked about it".

So there is a lot of catching up to do in terms of what we know about each other and, above all, the damage we have done to each other. That is why I am talking about a second day specifically devoted to this, which provides

[*English*]

remedial learning they need.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Of course. Does it need to have a specific budget as well?

● (1300)

[*English*]

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** A budget?

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Should it be provided with a specific budget?

**Ms. Marie Wilson:** No, I haven't thought about a budget, nor did we, with the time we had, do a blue ribbon analysis of the costs of any of our calls to action, but we do know—and I heard the previous speakers say so as well—that there's a huge cost in doing nothing. I know that the status quo without this day has allowed us to be in significant ignorance of each other and of some of our own history.

I think creating space and opportunity for people to know each other better, to build relationships, to create a wider community opens doors to other possibilities that have the potential of a net financial benefit, rather than the perpetual deficit we see.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Agreed. Thank you.

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

I see Mr. Chartier. Quickly, you have one minute.

**Mr. Clément Chartier:** I think June 21 should stay as is. If there is to be a second day, I think it should be in September. It should be a day of reflection, dialogue and commemorative ceremonies. I think there should be a modest budget for local communities and particularly schools to apply for, so they can have events that mark that day. It shouldn't be just a holiday when nobody does anything. There should be an opportunity for people who want to do something to be able to do something.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** That brings us to the end of this meeting. I want to thank this panel again for sharing all your experiences with us.

We are going to adjourn, and then we will be going in camera to a scheduling committee. I'm going to ask people to move out of the room quickly.

The meeting is adjourned.









Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <http://www.ourcommons.ca>

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

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.noscommunes.ca>