



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 035

Monday, October 24, 2022

Chair: The Honourable Marc Garneau



Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs

Monday, October 24, 2022

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.)): Good afternoon, everyone.

Welcome to the 35th meeting of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. We are gathered here today on the unceded territory of the Algonquin/Anishnaabe nation.

[*English*]

I'd like to welcome our witnesses who have joined us for this study on Bill C-29. In person we have Karen Restoule, founder of Bold Realities; Karla Buffalo, CEO of the Athabasca Tribal Council; and Chief Commissioner Clarence Manny Jules, First Nations Tax Commission.

To ensure an orderly meeting, I'd like to outline a few rules to follow. Members or witnesses may speak in the official language of their choice. Interpretation services in English, French and Inuktitut are available for today's meeting. Please be patient with the interpretation. There could be a delay, especially since the Inuktitut has to be translated into English first before it can be translated into French, and vice versa.

For those on video conference, the interpretation button is found at the bottom of your screen—the little globe—and you can listen in English, French or Inuktitut. If interpretation is lost, please inform me immediately. We will ensure that it's restored before we resume.

The “raise hand” feature at the bottom of the screen can also be used at any time if you wish to speak or to alert the chair. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. If you are on video conference, please click on the microphone icon to unmute yourself.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Vanessa Davies): Excuse me, Mr. Chair, but Mrs. Gill has a point of order.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd just like to know if the sound checks were done before the meeting started.

The Chair: Yes, they were.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you.

Is that the case for all the witnesses?

The Chair: The tests were done for the witnesses with us during the first hour of the meeting.

[*English*]

When speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute. This is a reminder that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

Each organization this morning will be invited to make a five-minute opening statement. That will be followed by questions from the members.

I'd now like to get this under way by inviting Ms. Restoule to begin with her statement.

Ms. Restoule, you have five minutes.

Ms. Karen Restoule (Founder, BOLD Realities): *Aaniin. Bonjour.* Hello.

My name is Karen Restoule. I am from Dokis First Nation, with relations in Nipissing and Temagami first nations, and I am honoured to have been invited here today to share insights on Bill C-29.

In addition to recognizing each member of the committee here, I wish to recognize those who led the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: the commissioners, the secretariat and everyone who experienced residential schools, including, most importantly, the survivors who had the courage to live through these experiences as well as share with the TRC and Canadians their truths. I hold my hands up to each of you.

Also, I wish to recognize every Canadian who, whether employed by the state or by the church, was involved in the implementation of the federal residential school policy and mandate. It was a dark moment for all.

Today we all find ourselves at this moment in time where we are learning about the truths and, most importantly, positioning ourselves to ensure that focused and concrete results-based action is taken to correct the legacy of this horrible policy, with the goal of securing a better future for indigenous peoples and a better future for Canada.

Let us stay focused on this great responsibility.

Entities and governments do not need oversight, but good governance requires it. Oversight refers to actions taken to review, monitor and report on the activity of entities to ensure that they are achieving results, ensuring good value for money. Good governance is also supported by the principles of legitimacy, accountability and transparency, which serve to build and maintain trust between citizens and public institutions.

In Canada, the legitimacy of institutions is embodied in law. Advancement on call to action 53 to enact legislation to establish a national council for reconciliation is welcomed.

It is recommended that the bill reflect the purpose and intent set out in call to action 53, which sets out clearly that the council be “an independent, national, oversight body”. Indian residential schools and other policies were implemented throughout the 19th and 20th centuries with defined purpose, great rigour and ample funding. The same or a greater degree of focus, robustness and resources must be used to correct the course.

It is recommended that the words “efforts for” be struck from clause 6. The purpose of the council should be to advance reconciliation with indigenous peoples, full stop.

In carrying out that purpose, it is recommended that the functions listed in clause 7 be revised to ensure that the council is also tasked with reporting on how reconciliation is being advanced in a tangible, measurable way with real results.

In May of this year, we learned through a report requested by this very committee that monies being spent by the two indigenous affairs departments on advancing reconciliation have not resulted in commensurate improvement in their ability to achieve the goals that they had set for themselves, and that their ability to achieve specified targets has declined. It seemed that the departments would benefit from this council and the oversight.

It is recommended that clause 10 include nominations of representatives from each of the following: the National Indigenous Economic Development Board, the First Nations Financial Management Board, the Indigenous Bar Association and the National Association of Friendship Centres. Monitoring and reporting on tangible advancement should be supported by leadership that is experienced in leading for results. There are many established indigenous leaders who have, in the course of their careers in business and finance, both on and off reserve, delivered real results.

Finally, it's recommended that subclause 17(3) of the bill respect call to action 56, which calls for “the prime minister of Canada to formally respond to the report of the National Council for Reconciliation”. Where other entities established through federal legislation would, in normal course, be required to be accountable for their decisions and actions to Parliament through a responsible minister, the unique and unprecedented nature of this legislation necessitates a response from the Prime Minister of Canada.

Thank you.

• (1105)

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

We'll now go to Ms. Buffalo.

Ms. Buffalo, you have five minutes.

Ms. Karla Buffalo (Chief Executive Officer, Athabasca Tribal Council): *Tânisi, etlanite*, good morning, everybody. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Karla Buffalo, and I'm the CEO of the Athabasca Tribal Council in Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo, Alberta. The Athabasca Tribal Council serves five first nations—the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, the Fort McKay First Nation, the Mikisew Cree First Nation, the Fort McMurray 468 First Nation and the Chipewyan Prairie First Nation—by providing relevant and innovative services and supports that enrich the well-being and health and prosperity of its people.

We believe strongly in the need for authentic and action-oriented reconciliation. In our traditional territory in Treaty No. 8, the first nations are leaders in the advancement of economic reconciliation at a remarkable pace. Our focus is not just on fiscal sovereignty, but also on cultural revitalization and fostering strong and thriving communities and indigenous peoples. We are here to encourage a collaborative process with all nations, while respecting their individual sovereignty and self-governance.

The establishment of the national council is an opportunity to help further meaningful reconciliation and to give accountability to progress being made on the TRC's calls to action that have yet to be implemented by Canada. It is important that any new structure established by the federal government be indigenous-led and have indigenous laws and legal systems in its creation.

ATC supports the establishment of a national council for the purpose of advancing reconciliation with indigenous peoples. However, as it stands now, ATC has some serious concerns about the bill, such as under-representation of indigenous people in the committee structure. Additionally, the representation needs to be balanced in gender and ages, including a balance between youth and elder voices.

Bill C-29 does not include any measurable outcomes or targets, and no formal structure is given regarding metrics set out to the committee. We believe it's crucial that the proposed legislation include processes to measure outcomes.

The current bill does not bind the federal government to provide funding to the national council, which is necessary to ensure that the national council has adequate resources to carry out its mandate.

The legislation, as it's written now regarding the disclosure of information, does not appear adequate to allow the national council to obtain necessary information that it will require in order to carry out its mandate.

Also, Bill C-29 lacks accountability measures by the Prime Minister and Canada to recognize and implement the national council's recommendations. The national council must be given the appropriate tools to hold this government accountable for the progress on reconciliation in all areas.

ATC recommends the following amendments to Bill C-29:

First, there need to be specific metrics outlined in the bill to give the national council structure and to measure its accountability. Measures and targets must encompass all areas from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. This document is not a checklist to complete; it is a guide toward the long-lasting reconciliation to have indigenous people move forward from being an oppressed minority to having equal treaty and inherent rights as indigenous peoples of Canada.

Second is with regard to funding commitments on an ongoing basis. The Government of Canada announced in its 2019 budget that a total of \$126.5 million would be allocated to support the establishment of the national council for reconciliation, including \$1.5 million to support the first year of the council's operations. However, there are no funding commitments in the proposed legislation, and it is unclear how the national council will be funded on an ongoing basis.

Research and reporting requirements of the national council are very extensive. In order to carry out its mandate, the national council will need to hire a large staff, including investigators. A funding commitment in the proposed legislation must be included to ensure adequate funding to support the national council's operations.

Third, how the council will be able to access the necessary information to carry out its mandate should be clearly indicated. Bill C-29 should also be amended to give the national council the power to subpoena, in order to ensure that the national council has the ability to obtain all necessary information.

Fourth, the council would benefit from an independent process in appointing the initial board of directors, allowing a more transparent and less politicized processes. Having an open and transparent process that honours indigenous forms of governance is necessary for the council to have relevance for all communities.

- (1110)

Fifth is to increase the accountability required of the federal government. The federal government must take the steps necessary to ensure the recommendations of the national council are implemented. While ATC supports the passing of Bill C-29 to support reconciliation efforts, it is important that the values in reconciliation be upheld by having an appropriate structure and accountability measures in place.

If the goals of the national council are to monitor, evaluate, conduct research, and report on progress being made in all sectors of Canadian society and by all governments in Canada, it is imperative that the national council have the appropriate tools to carry out this mandate in a meaningful way.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you all today.

Marsi cho. Hay hay.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Buffalo.

We'll now go to Chief Commissioner Manny Jules for five minutes.

Mr. Clarence T. (Manny) Jules (Chief Commissioner, First Nations Tax Commission): Good morning. I am Manny Jules, chief commissioner of the first nations tax commission. I am speaking to you from the former Kamloops Indian Residential School on my reserve in Kamloops. Thank you for the opportunity to appear as a witness before this committee as part of your examination of Bill C-29, the national council for reconciliation act.

With regard to one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, I am pleased to see the government's decision to enact legislation to make the creation of the national council a reality. The establishment of a permanent, non-political, indigenous-led organization to advance reconciliation with indigenous people is something all Canadians can and should support.

There is much work to be done with respect to reconciliation in Canada. I know that in my own community, we are still trying to come to grips with the discovery of graves of children who attended the Kamloops Residential School. That was almost 18 months ago, and the feeling of shock, pain, anger and sadness has not subsided. I attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School as a day scholar. My father attended the school until grade 9. My mother attended the school until grade 3.

Over the last three years, the First Nations Tax Commission undertook a research study about Canada's colonial policies from 1867 until 1927, leading to the prohibition of our power to collect *taksis*. We recently made a 15-minute film about this research. I will provide this to this committee. I believe it will help you understand who is truly to blame. I believe it will help you understand how residential schools were part of the government-led strategy to take away our children and destroy our governments, culture, jurisdictions and fiscal powers. I believe it will help you understand why there can be no real reconciliation without economic reconciliation.

When I say economic reconciliation, I am talking about two fundamental components. One is that first nation governments must have jurisdictions and unassailable revenue authorities that help fund the exercise of those jurisdictions. The second is that first nations need to implement their jurisdiction and fiscal powers in a way that attracts investment from their members, and others, to participate in the economy on equal terms with everyone else.

I have devoted most of my life to achieving economic reconciliation. Over the years, I have appeared many times before parliamentary committees to make proposals for economic reconciliation with first nations. With the support of Parliament, we have changed legislation to accommodate our property, local and sales tax jurisdictions in Canada. We have created a first nations national institutional model that enables interested first nations to implement their jurisdictions. As I said earlier, I believe first nation reconciliation must include economic reconciliation.

The First Nations Fiscal Management Act institutions have been doing this successfully for almost 20 years. For this reason, I recommend that Bill C-29 be amended so that the council's first board of directors also includes a member of the First Nations Fiscal Management Act institutions to ensure economic reconciliation is addressed as a foundation for reconciliation. This is a significant gap, and I believe it must be addressed now, not five years from now.

I look forward to working with this committee in the future on many more first nation-led innovations that will provide Canada with what it needs right now: hope and inspiration for a brighter future for all.

Thank you very much.

● (1115)

The Chair: Thank you, Chief Commissioner.

We'll now go to the first round of questions, beginning with Mr. Vidal.

Mr. Vidal, you have six minutes.

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all of our witnesses today. Your testimony has been absolutely tremendous. I really appreciate your taking the time and investing in this important piece of legislation.

For my first question, I'm going to start with Ms. Restoule, but I want the other witnesses to please listen to my question, because I want to follow up with each of you on the same question, so just be aware.

Ms. Restoule, in June of 2021, you wrote an article entitled "Empowering Indigenous entrepreneurs offers [a] new way forward". In that article, you talked about a few things. You talked about the size and expected growth of the indigenous economy. You talked about indigenous entrepreneurship and how your own family's personal history of resilience and perseverance allowed you to push through and work around the Indian Act to prioritize your own economy.

I want to be clear: This was framed in the context of the very fresh and recent discovery at the site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School. There are a couple of quotes you offered in that article that I want to set this up with:

And while Indigenous peoples continue the work to heal, we continue to trust that the path forward is one that moves us towards prosperity through full economic participation and self-determination.

In the discussion or concept of economic reconciliation, if it is integral to success as we move forward to true self-determination

and away from the Indian Act...a couple of you have already referred to this, but I want you to speak again about the importance of having representation on the national council from organizations or individuals that would focus on the interest of economic reconciliation.

If each of you could take about a minute and a half to speak to that, that's going to pretty much kill my six minutes.

● (1120)

Ms. Karen Restoule: All right. I'm keen to hear from the others, so I'll stick to my 90 seconds.

Thank you for recognizing that piece. I wrote it from the heart. It was my first piece for The Hub Canada, and I'm encouraging everyone to check it out.

At the core of who we are as a people—and I speak on behalf of myself and those who have come before me in Dokis and Nipissing areas—is that we are by nature hustlers, entrepreneurial people. This idea that Disney has created that we are all just frolicking on the pine trails of the forests is bizarre to me.

I come from, as the kids say, a super hard-core family, where we set goals for ourselves and we deliver on them. Whether that's in the context of business, in law or in governance, we're always striving towards higher standards and higher goals and a vision setting out how to accomplish that.

If I can, I'll note that in the TRC calls to action there are some qualifiers there as to what we should be measuring in terms of pursuing real results. I think that hits to the core of not just indigenous people but Canadians. Adequate funding and support for education, child welfare programs and health investments is at the core of how we are going to be able to succeed to achieve what I've just referenced here in terms of robust challenges and objectives for ourselves.

I think it might be worth the committee's and the drafters' while to strengthen the language in the bill to focus on one that achieves real results to ensure we're constantly moving towards larger and bigger goals and repositioning ourselves here for the betterment of indigenous nations peoples but more importantly for Canada.

Mr. Gary Vidal: Thank you.

If I could move right on to Ms. Buffalo, you may want to respond to that same question as well.

Ms. Karla Buffalo: Thank you for the question.

I think it's really thought-provoking and relevant to our area in the Fort McMurray, Wood Buffalo and Treaty 8 territory.

I think about the first nations that we serve in the Athabasca Tribal Council, which are situated in the heart of oil sands. Our first nation communities have worked hard on building partnerships and establishing long-term agreements for the purpose of highly engaging in economic reconciliation, but the actual act of economic reconciliation really allows first nations to generate funds that put them in the position of creating their own indigenous law practice, legislation and policies to govern their communities. That is really at the heart of economic reconciliation. Some of the chiefs I have worked for over the last number of years have said that it's this ability to have the funding to drive the direction that a community wants to go to serve its people, under its own policy and legislation, as opposed to being dictated to about how funding needs to be spent on their people based on other people's priorities and direction. That shift is what I'm really seeing in our territory today.

We have Fort McKay First Nation, which is currently working on changing its land code. They have been investing their profits back into their communities in a way that makes sense in terms of developing policy and legislation around how they want to govern their communities, as I've seen in all of our first nations.

Economic reconciliation cannot be done alone, without cultural revitalization. Our first nations have really been focusing on that priority. As funds are being generated and their partnerships are being established with industry and government, they are also focusing on the economic reconciliation. It is those two pieces that need to come together—under the direction and guidance of our leadership—that really makes reconciliation—

• (1125)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Buffalo. That's the time.

Now we go to Mrs. Atwin for six minutes.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses for your testimony today.

I'm going to come back to some of the things that Ms. Karla Buffalo mentioned, in particular, around the need for accountability and transparency—I'm very much supportive of that key piece—and the tools and resources.

I just want to mention that there was a commitment of \$126.5 million allocated for this work in the 2019 budget, so I want to reassure you that it's critical that those resources are there. That's certainly the position of government as well.

You did mention a piece about specific metrics for outcomes or the structure. My understanding of this legislation is that it's really setting the stage for the independence and the arms-length nature of the council.

I'm wondering if you could comment a little bit on just how important it is that the council be independent and can determine those processes for themselves.

Ms. Karla Buffalo: Was that question meant for me?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Yes.

Ms. Karla Buffalo: I really do think that part of what's critical is measurement of outcomes, but it's the measurement of outcomes that are important to establishing the quality of life of indigenous

people, not just metrics that have been established by the Government of Canada or other institutions.

I think about some of those metrics we've heard over time where it talked about the measurement of the number of children in care compared to non-indigenous people; comparative funding for education both on and off reserve; educational and income attainments of indigenous people compared to non-indigenous people; progress in closing gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous communities; health indicators such as infant mortality, suicide, mental health, addictions and life expectancy; and progress on reducing the overrepresentation of people in justice and correctional systems.

I also think about what it really means to indigenous people who are in our communities in terms of what reconciliation means. I think it's about having a high quality of life so that they feel confident, happy and proud of being indigenous. It's where our youth and community members know and practise their culture and they're able to speak their indigenous languages that had been taken away from them.

All of those metrics really transfer into what it means to be a proud and confident indigenous person, and what supports and pieces are in play to ensure that those changes are happening over the generations to reconcile the impacts of residential school and colonization.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Thank you.

I'll go to Ms. Restoule.

You brought up some very important amendments. The great testimony today is very helpful for our work on committee.

As a woman, I'm wondering in general how critical it is to centre women's voices in this process of reconciliation and have their guidance and leadership. I'm wondering if you could comment.

Ms. Karen Restoule: Again, writ large—and speaking on behalf of myself, my experience and where I come from—what we're seeing across the country is the shift in responsibility being re-established with indigenous women. We are really leading the way on that front.

It's not so much a power dynamic as it is a responsibility to honour the roles we play at home in raising those next generations. Federal policy has impacted and impeded our ability to do that over the course of time, but these were practices exercised day to day in our daily lives, family units and communities. Achieving real results is something that has come naturally to indigenous women across the country, if I can generalize. Certainly I see indigenous women and girls honouring that responsibility in the present and in the time to come.

• (1130)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Thank you very much.

Finally, Mr. Jules, I have a comment on economic reconciliation specifically.

There are a lot of references being made, often, to oil and gas extraction in particular. I'm wondering if you could comment on the idea that economic reconciliation should be built on sovereignty and choice. I'm wondering if you can expand on that a bit.

Mr. Clarence T. (Manny) Jules: You come from a province where the premier arbitrarily cancelled a tax-sharing agreement. What I'm proposing is a first nations resource charge so that these dollars cannot be arbitrarily taken away. There has to be a legislative basis to do that. What I propose is that first nations be able to benefit from all of the resources taken within our traditional and treaty territories.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Thank you very much.

That's all from me, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now go to Madame Gill for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses.

My question is about women and is for Ms. Restoule. You mentioned them at the beginning of the meeting, and you mentioned them again. In fact, you said that economic organizations should be part of the council.

Do you also think an organization like the Native Women's Association of Canada should be on the council?

Ms. Karen Restoule: I understood your question in French, but I'm going to answer in English because the words escape me in French. My mother is francophone, so I know the French language very well.

[*English*]

I appreciate your recommendation. It's definitely difficult to start nailing down a list, because it forever grows. That's not to say that if someone isn't representative at the council, they aren't going to be contributing to moving forward on a solution. An oversight from the national organization, led by indigenous women, should absolutely be included.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Excuse me, Mr. Chair, but the interpretation isn't working in French. Maybe it's because we spoke a little bit in French with Ms. Restoule, but I still understood the meaning of her answer. I'll keep you posted, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Idlout tells me it's the same thing for her. Perhaps the answer should be repeated, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Restoule, could you repeat your answer to the last question? They didn't get the French translation.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): I'm so sorry, but it wasn't being translated into English.

The Chair: Oh, I'm sorry.

All right, let's start over. Let's ask the question.

[*Translation*]

Please repeat your question, Mrs. Gill. I'll start the clock again.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Restoule, could you give me your opinion on including the Native Women's Association of Canada on the council, given that you'd like women to be represented?

[*English*]

Ms. Karen Restoule: My apologies. I think I threw off the room by speaking in French. It certainly wasn't my intent.

I agree. I recognize the role that the national organization has played with respect to indigenous women taking leadership and addressing issues that impact them. I put to you that the list that I provided is not exhaustive, that all organizations and indigenous peoples—including women—are working to be part of the solution moving forward and that absolutely NWAC should be involved in a more formal capacity, and I would recommend that they be invited to nominate a representative on the council.

Thank you for that.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you, Ms. Restoule.

I have a question for all the witnesses.

Mr. Clarence will be able to answer it first, since he hasn't had a chance to speak yet, but the question is also for Ms. Buffalo and Ms. Restoule.

We've talked a lot about the economy, and everyone talked about "economic reconciliation". I'd like each of you to define that concept.

As you said, we want there to be sectoral representation on the council.

• (1135)

[*English*]

Mr. Clarence T. (Manny) Jules: Thank you very much for that question.

I spent a lot of time during COVID reflecting on what my elder leaders talked about. They talked about these very issues in the 1910s of the last century, and what they talked about was having a proper land base and access to all of the resources so we could share in the bounty of this land.

I also started to do research, as I mentioned in my presentation, particularly around an individual by the name of Duncan Campbell Scott. He's the individual who amended the Indian Act to take away our power and ability to have tax jurisdiction, and that fundamentally affected us to the extent that we're still dependent on the federal government for transfers for programs. Up until that point, we were independent; we had tax jurisdictions within our traditional territories here in British Columbia, and that fundamentally changed us from an independent nation to a dependent nation.

Thank you very much for that question.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Clarence.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Buffalo, it's over to you.

It's been about ten or eleven years since they first took on that initiative, and I understand that they've continued on with their mission to revitalize laws, which, as you say, rest at the foundation of our governance systems and of our ways of life prior to contact. I and many others with a legal background who are indigenous find that this work is a necessity to support, if not be at the core of, the reconciliation process in this country.

If there were a way for the bill to support that in a specific way, we would be doing ourselves a lot of service as a country to continue to invest and take that work on in a serious way.

The Chair: Ms. Idlout, did you want somebody else to respond as well?

Ms. Lori Idlout: [*Member spoke in Inuktitut as follows:*]

ᐃ, CL ᑦᐅᑦ ᐅᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ.

[*Inuktitut text interpreted as follows:*]

Yes. I would like to hear from the other witnesses as well.

[*English*]

The Chair: All right.

Ms. Buffalo, do you have any comments?

Ms. Karla Buffalo: Yes.

That's a great question about indigenous law-making. I asked our elders before if we had systems of law-making, and they said, "absolutely". It's work that needs to be done to help our indigenous communities learn how to do indigenous law-making from the stories that have guided our communities for many generations.

I offer the example of child and family services legislation. At ATC, we run under provincial jurisdiction for child and family services and the current delivery of those services, but we are starting the process of indigenous law-making. Part of that process is going out and working with our communities, and listening to the stories of how we have traditionally cared for our children. We help our communities take those stories, translate them and change them into indigenous law, so that we have legislation and processes based on traditional practices. We then ensure that our funding is based on how we have traditionally supported and cared for our families, so that when our families are in crisis, we have ways of being that direct in how we support those families in a way that makes traditional sense to us.

Part of that process that we need to support is helping families, communities and leaders to understand how those stories translate into indigenous law, and then provide appropriate funding to ensure it is practised and supported in our communities.

• (1145)

The Chair: Thank you.

Chief Commissioner Jules, you have about 40 seconds, if you wish to comment.

Mr. Clarence T. (Manny) Jules: Of course, we traditionally had laws. That's one of the areas that I'm working on right now. It's the implementation of our law over *taksis*. We look after each other.

We help each other. We are not stingy with each other. We are not jealous of each other.

That's a fundamental premise of our law-making authority. That's what I want to be able to modernize today.

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

Colleagues, we have time for a compressed second round. It would be three minutes for the Conservatives and Liberals, and one and a half minutes for the other two parties.

Is it still Mr. Vidal for three minutes?

The Clerk: It will be Mr. Schmale, sir.

The Chair: Mr. Schmale, go ahead for three minutes.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses.

For the first question, I'll go to you, Ms. Restoule. You had great comments, and I appreciate the testimony.

Let's talk about the oversight committee. Do you feel it's very independent right now in the way that it's set up by the way the bill is currently written and how the first group gets appointed, which sets the stage for future groups?

Ms. Karen Restoule: That's a critical question. Transparency, accountability and independence become critical in this instance.

In the selection of members, I'd recommend that the committee examine other means to appoint the members, the board of directors and the length of terms.

In my experience, having come as an order in council appointee to Ontario's administrative justice system, I've dealt a lot with terms of service. It's very rare to have such a lengthy term on the first bounce. It might be worth the committee's while to examine a shorter initial term that leads to lengthier terms thereafter.

Independence absolutely is key, as well as being the vehicle to trust and confidence in public institutions.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Do you see the line here? We've heard many times in testimony that we're talking about reconciliation, and specifically economic reconciliation, in setting the stage for a different conversation in the future, recognizing that the status quo isn't working right now and that we have to develop that conversation into something different or we'll have 150-plus years or more of failure by governments of all stripes.

Ms. Karen Restoule: Absolutely. Economic reconciliation is the vehicle forward in terms of setting our peoples or communities back on a path to prosperity—not only our nation, but the country as a whole. It really does lead to a strong social fabric.

With the emphasis on ensuring that we are well positioned on that front, at that point I see us achieving some tangible outcomes and the dial shifting in the right direction, as it should.

• (1150)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Jules, do you want to comment on any of that, even the part about the minister responding to the report—not the Prime Minister, as recommended in the TRC report?

Mr. Clarence T. (Manny) Jules: I too have been involved in the First Nations Tax Commission, which is a government council appointee process. It is lengthy and cumbersome, but having an adequate term is critically important, particularly at the outset. This is so you can begin to delve into the complex matters we will be facing, in terms of economic reconciliation and where we fit into the fiscal makeup of the country.

However, and as was stated in the past, if we don't have a fiscal relationship that includes first nations, Canada will not achieve its global standing of former days.

The Chair: Thank you, Chief.

We'll now go to Mr. Battiste for three minutes.

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Thank you very much.

I thank the witnesses for their testimony.

I'm interested to know more about this concept of economic reconciliation. I've looked through the calls to action, and two things stand out. When they talk about economic reconciliation, which doesn't really appear in the calls to action, they talk about closing the gaps, specifically in education and around health.

If we frame things from an economic reconciliation standpoint, would you not agree that it is also important that we look at the cultural component of reclaiming languages and positive mental health among our communities? Could you talk a bit about the importance of culture, language and indigenous laws as part of reconciliation, and whether you can balance that?

Manny Jules, if you want to start, that would be great.

Mr. Clarence T. (Manny) Jules: I work with the Ngāi Tahu on the South Island of New Zealand. One thing they have accomplished since settling their outstanding treaty obligations is investing a considerable amount of money—their own money—in culture and language. It has helped revitalize the language to the extent that it's a fundamental part of New Zealand language. The language itself has changed over the last couple of decades, since the implementation of their treaty rights.

Economic reconciliation means we will be able to develop our own programs and unique ways of dealing with language and culture. Who are the best preservers of that, other than ourselves?

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Thank you.

Karen, did you want to weigh in?

Ms. Karen Restoule: Yes.

I'm thinking about responsibility here to the self and the collective. To me, that is at the core of economic reconciliation. The Honourable Murray Sinclair, the former justice, has been heard saying

time and time again that we have to know who we are and where we come from, that at the core, when we understand those two questions, we understand the responsibilities we carry in terms of advancing a better quality of life and ways of life for ourselves and the generations to come.

If you want to cut the language a little closer to the culture, I think that could be an alternate definition of “economic reconciliation”.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Do I have any more time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have 20 seconds.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: I'll defer those 20 seconds.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Madame Gill for 90 seconds.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question is for the three witnesses.

You talked about transparency, independence and accountability from the council. What would you recommend to improve these areas, if you think improvements are needed?

Please suggest one item each, quickly.

I'd like Ms. Restoule to answer first, followed by Ms. Buffalo and Mr. Jules.

[*English*]

Ms. Karen Restoule: What comes to mind quickly is transparency in and around the development of the bill. It was recommended by the interim committee that the bill be developed in collaboration—

• (1155)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Chair, the interpretation isn't working.

The Chair: Okay.

[*English*]

Let's check the interpretation before you resume. I'll pause the clock.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: It's working now. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Let's proceed. Ms. Restoule, please provide your answer.

Ms. Karen Restoule: I was referring to transparency and accountability in terms of the development of the bill. They were to occur hand in hand with the interim committee. I know there have been questions in and around whether that has been upheld. By way of process, if we're not getting that right, are we really setting ourselves up well for what's to come?

Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey and the Office of L'nu Affairs have had a unique working relationship in this amazing effort from the time when the first MOU was signed in 2015. Since then, the initiative continues to grow and develop, so much so that in 2020 a new MOU was signed with no end date. We work in partnership with the Office of L'nu Affairs as well as with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage; the Public Service Commission; and community and provincial schools.

I work collaboratively with OLA in its work with public servants and the general public, although my work is mainly focused on education. I work closely with EECD, Mi'kmaq service branch, elders, knowledge-keepers, teachers and parents on this education initiative of incorporating treaty education into the provincial school curriculum.

Due to the success of the first five years, Treaty Education Nova Scotia has developed a strategic plan to guide the organization's activities over the next five years. In the spirit of reconciliation, the purpose of our project charter is to codify how this project will be governed and managed, while providing clarification on roles and responsibilities of key partners and collaborators related to achieving the objectives outlined in the new strategic plan. This deepens our understanding of the shared responsibility between the Mi'kmaq and the non-indigenous people of Nova Scotia to build a better future, foster ongoing conversations and cultivate allies through lifelong learning about our treaty relationship.

We know our partner organizations are all working towards reconciliation and include treaty education in their portfolios. A strategic plan will help support richer communication on the work, support us in working together more collaboratively in reaching all Nova Scotians and build stronger relationships.

With all of the accomplishments, there is still much work to be done. The commitment is strong in working together. We welcome collaborating across the province and country and the prospects of sharing best practices. Celeste and I are dedicated to continuing the necessary work to continue to answer the calls to action of reconciliation.

Again, *wela'lioiq* for allowing me to appear before you today.

• (1205)

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

We'll now go to Mr. Garry Bailey. Mr. Bailey, you will have five minutes.

Mr. Garry Bailey (President, Northwest Territory Métis Nation): Good morning. Thank you for allowing me the time to appear before the standing committee.

My name is Garry Bailey. I'm president of the Northwest Territory Métis Nation.

The Métis Nation is composed of indigenous Métis members from Fort Smith Métis Council, Hay River Métis Government Council and Fort Resolution Métis government. We estimate our membership throughout Canada to be over 3,000 members.

The Northwest Territory Métis Nation is in the final stages of negotiating a land claim and self-government agreement with the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The Northwest Territory Métis Nation has a government-to-government relationship with the Government of Canada and the Northwest Territories. As part of the commitments of the NWT Devolution Agreement, the NWT Métis Nation is a member of the NWT Intergovernmental Council, with the Government of Northwest Territories and other indigenous governments, which addresses all aspects of government relations in the NWT.

The Northwest Territory Métis Nation is a member of the Arctic and northern policy framework with Canada and the GNWT. The Northwest Territory Métis Nation is not and cannot be represented by the five national aboriginal organizations, as the mandate of those aboriginal organizations preclude the representation of the Northwest Territory Métis Nation. The Northwest Territory Métis Nation has a right to be involved at a national level.

A truth and reconciliation report defined reconciliation as follows:

Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.

Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians.

The UN declaration provided a promise to protect and enhance our rights as part of the fulfillment of reconciliation. These include the right to self-determination and self-government; the right to equality and non-discrimination; the right to promote and enhance our culture and language; the rights to our lands, territories and resources; the right to provide our free, prior and informed consent for any development on our lands; the right to receive adequate health care and education; and the right to develop indigenous institutions and legal systems. Transformation, action and measures are required to successfully implement the UN declaration.

For reconciliation to be implemented some actions are required, including appropriate shared decision-making, co-management arrangements between indigenous nations and government, evolution of federal programs from services to indigenous nations, adequate funding to implement true self-government, expedited resolution of outstanding land and resource matters, the timely conclusion of land claim negotiations, and the honourable implementation of treaties and land claim agreements.

The Métis Nation strongly supports the establishment of a national council for reconciliation. It is important that the national council for reconciliation be permanent, independent, indigenous-led and well resourced.

Some of the functions of an independent national council for reconciliation would be to develop and implement a multi-year national action plan to advance efforts in reconciliation, conduct research on promising practices that advance efforts for reconciliation, educate the public about indigenous peoples' realities and histories, stimulate dialogue, and address all matters that the independent council determines are necessary to advance reconciliation.

The national council for reconciliation must be well financed in order to be meaningful and must engage with indigenous governments.

- (1210)

Given this important work that will be undertaken by the national council for reconciliation, it is important that the national council include one representative from the Northwest Territory Métis Nation on the council's board of directors. Upon establishment of a national council for reconciliation, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation requests that a director's seat on the national council be set aside for the Northwest Territory Métis Nation. It is important that the indigenous Métis of the Northwest Territories have a voice on a national council for reconciliation.

Thank you.

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

We'll now go to Ms. Stanovich. Ms. Stanovich, you have five minutes.

Ms. Brandy Stanovich (President, Indigenous Women of the Wabanaki Territories): Good afternoon, honourable committee members. Thank you for inviting the Indigenous Women of the Wabanaki Territories to speak on this important bill.

First I would like to graciously acknowledge that we are gathering on unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin nation.

Bill C-29, an act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation, is an important bill. However, we were devastated to read that indigenous women have not been included in the bill.

This bill establishes a national council for reconciliation as an independent, non-political, permanent and indigenous-led organization whose purpose is to advance the efforts for reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

Clause 10 indicates that the national council for reconciliation includes three national indigenous organizations, as opposed to five. IWWT is disappointed that the Native Women's Association of Canada has been excluded. NWAC is a unique, inclusive, representative voice that ensures a MMIWG lens is applied, especially as it relates to human safety and security.

NWAC is made up of provincial and territorial member associations, PTMAs, from each province or territory. These are grassroots, not-for-profit organizations. IWWT is one of these organizations. It is our duty to listen and elevate the voice of grassroots women to the national level. Through NWAC, we do just that. By not including NWAC, you are excluding the voice of the women. An indigenous woman is the centre wheel of life. She's the heart-

beat of the people. She's not just in the home; she's in the community. She is the nation.

The bill responds to truth and reconciliation calls to action numbers 53 to 55. This call to action is essential, since it will legislate implementation of all 94 calls to action.

As you know, implementation is the most important part of any measure intended to redress harms. Call to action 53 requires that all levels of government provide annual reports or any current data requested by the national council for reconciliation, so that it can report the progress towards reconciliation.

The reports or data would include, but not be limited to, the number of aboriginal children in care, comparative funding for the education of first nations children on and off reserve, progress on closing gaps, progress on eliminating an overrepresentation of aboriginal children in custody, progress on reducing the rate of criminal victimization of aboriginal people and progress on reducing the overrepresentation of incarcerated aboriginal people. The key areas for reporting under calls to action 53 to 55 are in areas where residential school abuses and colonialism are reflected in intergenerational trauma.

On December 21, 2021, Bill C-15, an act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, received royal assent. As a reminder, article 7(2) of the declaration states the following:

Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.

Though Canada recognizes five national indigenous organizations, including the Native Women's Association of Canada, only three NIOs will be mandated to the board of directors for the national council for reconciliation. Excluding NWAC from the national discussions on implementation of truth and reconciliation is a significant rejection to the organization that is a recognized expert on matters related to indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The people represented by NWAC face high rates of institutional betrayal, incarceration, violence and abuse, all issues that should be central to any discussions to reconciliation.

- (1215)

Having an NWAC representative on the board of directors of the national council for reconciliation will ensure that the process is inclusive and that the voices of indigenous women and gender-diverse people are considered.

We are valued leaders, decision-makers and knowledge-keepers in our families, communities and governments. Without our perspectives, discussions are unlikely to consider gender-based solutions to undoing systematic discrimination caused by colonialism and patriarchy. This is about equity and about reclaiming matriarchal leadership.

I signed the NWAC-Canada accord under the impression that Canada committed to considering the distinct perspectives of indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people. Not including NWAC in this very important bill is not upholding Canada's commitment to indigenous women. Not doing so in this instance will set a—

The Chair: Ms. Stanovich, could I ask you to wrap up, please?

Ms. Brandy Stanovich: Okay.

Not doing so in this instance will set a devastating precedent for this country and globally against the current backdrop of proven genocide against indigenous women and girls.

Honourable members, IWWT is therefore requesting that the bill be amended in clause 10 to include one director on the board of the national council for reconciliation.

I can stop there.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Stanovich. Perhaps you'll have a chance to expand in the question period as well.

We'll now go to that question period, beginning with, I believe, Mr. Melillo for six minutes.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Thank you.

We're going to give it to Mr. Zimmer to start.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Melillo.

Thank you, Chair.

My question will be for Garry Bailey, the president of the Northwest Territory Métis Nation.

It's an honour to have you here today, Garry.

Since our conversation is obviously about reconciliation, I have an article from Cabin Radio that was written just after the 2021 election. It quotes you as saying:

It's getting our position moving forward so that we can move on with our own economic opportunities and have management over our land recognized and our rights affirmed.

Could you please explain?

Mr. Garry Bailey: Okay. Thank you.

As you know, we've been left out of the treaties since they started to be signed in our territory in 1899, with another one in 1921. Up until then, the first nations had been fully funded. The Métis Nation has never received funding of any sort, and we've been left out of the treaties. We've been negotiating our land claim ever since 1996. We were part of the Dene Métis before that, before it failed in 1990. Due to that, we haven't had any opportunities economically or anything like that so we could get on with business and take our place in our country. We have no land and we have no funding coming in for the resources that have been taken out of our territory, so it is important for reconciliation to finalize our land claims so that we can get our land and cash transfer, be recognized as a government with authority over our land and get into economic development, which includes joint ventures and so on.

• (1220)

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Thank you, Garry.

I have one more quick question and then I'll pass it over to my colleague.

Economic reconciliation has been brought up several times today just by the witnesses, but it isn't in Bill C-29. Do you think Bill C-29 should include economic reconciliation specifically?

Mr. Garry Bailey: I do think so. I think it definitely is part of the reconciliation aspect of it due to the fact that we've been left out, as I've mentioned. We have to catch up. We definitely need something to move forward with as soon as possible.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Thank you, Garry.

I'll pass it over to my colleague Mr. Melillo.

Mr. Eric Melillo: Thank you, Mr. Zimmer.

Thank you to all of our witnesses for joining us today and for your testimony so far. You've already given us a lot to think about.

For my question, I want to go first to Ms. Stanovich.

Obviously, as you said quite clearly in your opening remarks, you believe the Native Women's Association should have a seat at the table. That's something we've heard from other witnesses. From my time serving on the committee, I know that the Native Women's Association has been overlooked in past legislation as well. I'm thinking of the government's UNDRIP legislation in the last Parliament as well, on which the Native Women's Association was also not consulted.

I'm wondering if you could expand on why you view it as being important that there be a dedicated seat on the council for a women's advocate, in terms of matriarchal importance in first nation culture, which I think you were getting into before you ran out of time.

Ms. Brandy Stanovich: Prior to colonialization, we were the matriarchs in our society, the women. The women led the society. The men would go hunting. They'd bring the food home to the women, and they would divvy it up. We're the nurturers and the caretakers of our families, so a bill like this is something we definitely should have a voice on.

The Native Women's Association of Canada is a collective voice from coast to coast of all the PTMAs and all the women in each province and territory—the mothers, the grandmothers, the aunts, even the little girls. In my territory, we listen to our children because they're the future. Their voice gets elevated through me to NWAC to you, if they're on the committee.

Mr. Eric Melillo: I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

I'll ask you my second question as well, now that I have you in the hot seat, and perhaps we only have time for one or two here.

We've heard a lot of concerns as well about the fact that there's no direct funding available for this council and that there really aren't any specified, measurable goals for the council set out in the bill. Do you have any concerns around that? Do you have suggestions for this committee on how we can better incorporate some more measurable goals for the council to work on?

Ms. Brandy Stanovich: One would definitely be working with NWAC. I don't know if you've seen their action plan. They had an action plan before the Government of Canada, so by including the Native Women's Association of Canada, you can get those deliverables.

We need reconcili-action—not reconciliation, but reconcili-action.

• (1225)

Mr. Eric Melillo: I appreciate that.

Mr. Chair, I think that's pretty much all the time.

The Chair: Yes, it is. Thank you.

Mr. Eric Melillo: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: We'll now go to Mr. Battiste for six minutes.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Thank you very much.

I'm going to direct some questions at Treaty Education Nova Scotia.

One of the functions of Bill C-29 is to conduct research on promising practices that advance efforts for reconciliation in all sectors of Canadian society by all governments in Canada and at the international level. I know there are a lot of calls to action that speak to education: call to action 10, call to action 62 and call to action 63. I'm wondering if Treaty Education could give us a little bit of a glimpse into why there is an important element of education in reconciliation. Do you feel it's important for provincial governments to be a part of reconciliation moving forward?

I know Ms. Sulliman didn't get a chance to speak, so maybe we can start with her, and then we can go to Jacqueline after that.

Ms. Celeste Sulliman (Director, Treaty Education, Nova Scotia Office of L'nu Affairs): Yes, the treaty education initiative in Nova Scotia is unique because it is an equal partnership between the province and L'nu through Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey.

The really interesting piece of this collaboration is that it is co-led between the Office of L'nu Affairs and Jacqueline at MK, but all Nova Scotians have the opportunity to learn about our treaty relationship through the lens of four foundational questions.

Who are the Mi'kmaw historically and today? What are the treaties and why are they important? What has happened to the treaty relationship? What are we doing to reconcile our shared history and ensure justice and equity?

We direct our education to three audiences. Jacqueline spoke about her focus through MK and the public school system as public education, and that's one of the three Ps that we focus on. The other two Ps are public service employees and the general public or the public writ large.

Essentially, we focus reconciliation through treaty education. We focus on all Nova Scotians and not just on what's happening in the schools, and it's not just what's happening in L'nu schools, but what's happening in public schools as well.

Really, through all the collaborative work we are doing, we are trying to educate, to essentially respond to calls to action that call, for example, for the education of public service employees. At the Office of L'nu Affairs, we have engaged thousands of public service employees, in person and online, in the delivery of workshops and presentations. We've created learning materials.

We've hosted events throughout the province, and we have a really strong social media presence as well. The Treaty Education Nova Scotia Facebook page now has over 10,000 followers, which, for a small initiative in a small province, is a lot of people following our work, engaging with us regularly and asking us questions.

The collaborative work that we do together is really important, and we feel that it's the responsibility of municipalities, education systems, provincial governments, the federal government and all organizations of all types and stripes to work together to advance reconciliation. We welcome people to participate in our work and in the initiatives that we're doing.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Thank you, Celeste.

I want to ask a question. Maybe Jacqueline can guide a discussion.

Call to action 57 calls for indigenous professional development for public servants. Do you think this is an important thing that should be reflected within Bill C-29, maybe in the preamble? Do you think this is an important new dimension in this legislation?

Ms. Jacqueline Prosper: I believe so. I think that the more people who work on the initiative, the more work gets done. As a small group of people who support the direct initiative here, being able to have somewhere to go for support in those things, absolutely.... The more people who are hands on, the easier the work gets. It's a big project. As I mentioned before, we're learning that we have no shortage of work.

• (1230)

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Part of Bill C-29 is that there's a budget. In the 2019 budget, there was an amount of \$126.5 million over the next few years to help the committee with oversight.

From the perspective of a provincial role and from a Mi'kmaw perspective, where do you think some of the money should be going in terms of moving forward on reconciliation within education?

Ms. Jacqueline Prosper: I would say definitely in producing resources to support teachers and administrators in teaching about reconciliation and including the stories that have not been included in teachers' professional development. We know that teachers are anxious and excited to do the work. They're nervous about getting it wrong, so the more support we can give them in providing all of those resources, the better.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Thank you.

The Chair: I'm sorry; we've reached our time. We'll go to Madame Gill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gill, you have six minutes.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd also like to thank each of the witnesses for their opening remarks.

I have a few questions for Ms. Stanovich about the representation of women on the National Council for Reconciliation. It was touched on briefly earlier in this meeting, but in fact we haven't heard much about the lack of women, particularly from a national organization like the Native Women's Association of Canada. I took note of it, especially since we know, Mr. Chair, that women make up half the population. It's all the more surprising since, as Ms. Stanovich said, these are predominantly matriarchal societies. I understood that Ms. Stanovich was saying that there had to be a place for women.

I would like to know if she thinks an organization representing women would consider that there could be a gender-based analysis in the actions that will be taken by the council.

[*English*]

Ms. Brandy Stanovich: I didn't catch the last part.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Chair, I think it's because I said it in French, and the expression isn't exactly the same in English.

Would having an organization such as the Native Women's Association of Canada on the council ensure that a gender-based analysis is done in the decisions and actions that are taken?

I'm not sure if that's clearer.

[*English*]

Ms. Brandy Stanovich: Yes.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Great.

Can you expand on that and tell us what this would bring to the analysis?

[*English*]

Ms. Brandy Stanovich: I do think it would have good results to use the GBA.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: So you think that the Native Women's Association of Canada could contribute in that way. I also think it could ensure that it's part of the analytical tools for decisions.

I have another question for you.

Aside from having the Native Women's Association of Canada represented on the council, would you also like to see gender parity on the council?

[*English*]

Ms. Brandy Stanovich: Yes.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: My questions are very simple, Mr. Chair, but it's easier for the committee when it's very clear.

That concludes my questions about representativeness.

For the benefit of the committee, I would like to invite Ms. Stanovich to talk to us about "reconciliation". Of course, we've heard all kinds of variations on the word "reconciliation". I'd like her to tell us what she means by that term and perhaps give us some examples. I think it's about expectations. It may not be worded that way in Bill C-29, but perhaps defining this term will allow the committee to ask other questions to find ways to implement this "reconciliation".

[*English*]

Ms. Brandy Stanovich: "Reconcili-action" is taking action on the wrongs of the past.

In my opinion, when it comes to things like child and family, you don't take children from families. You keep them and the family together at all costs.

More dollars need to go towards prevention, because we carry intergenerational wounds. It's in our DNA, so there needs to be more focus on healing and getting back to our roots. That's taking action: giving back what was stolen, giving back our language, giving back our culture and our way of life—hunting, gathering, living off the land.

The way of society today is not what's in our hearts and our DNA, so it takes us off balance. Even when you think of time, there are 13 moons, not 12 months. The moon doesn't lie, nor does the turtle's back, where there are 28 days and 13 moons. That takes us off the heartbeat of the earth. That's reconcili-action: getting back to the land and getting back that relationship.

When we were colonized, the laws of the land and the people were ignored, and that's why society is so off balance. "Reconcili-action" is getting back to what we once had.

● (1235)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: If I understand correctly, Ms. Stanovich, you want the council to be more than symbolic. You want concrete action that leads to change, rather than just words and good faith.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Melillo.

We'll have to go to Mr. McLeod now for three minutes.

• (1250)

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the presenters today.

My question is for Garry Bailey from NWT Métis.

The process of reconciliation is right across our country, and the national council for reconciliation is the oversight body that will monitor what is going on. There seem to be challenges historically, and even to this day, of who represents whom.

You were pretty clear in your comments that you're not represented by any of the national indigenous organizations. Does that mean that there is no body out there that represents you at the national level? Do you participate in some of the other organizations, such as the self-governing indigenous governments, SGIGs or Land Claims Agreements Coalition?

Mr. Garry Bailey: We are not part of anything. I'd say pretty freely that we aren't part of the Land Claims Agreements Coalition either, because we don't have a settled claim. We're not part of the Métis National Council. We don't qualify to be part of them, nor did we ever really want to be part of that, because we are stand-alone and we are unique and on our own here in the Northwest Territories as Métis, so we represent ourselves.

We are part of the devolution agreement, as I mentioned, with GNWT. We have always acted as our own government. That's why it's very important for us to get our own seat. I believe we have our own issues here north of 60 that we need to bring forward when it comes to dealing with reconciliation. I know that we have our own vision, and without talking to anybody nationally about these things, I think this is the place that we need to be in order to be able to bring those issues forward, and who knows? It might benefit nationally, because I'm sure other people would be able to relate to the issues we have.

Thank you.

Mr. Michael McLeod: My next question is around.... This board is going to provide oversight over many different things: truth and reconciliation recommendations, UNDRIP, land claims, everything that falls under the title "reconciliation".

How important do you think it is that there are survivors of the residential school system included as part of the board? We have a high number of people in the Northwest Territories who attended residential schools, so I want to hear your opinion.

The Chair: We'll need a pretty quick answer, Mr. Bailey.

Mr. Garry Bailey: I would definitely not oppose that when we're talking about reconciliation. They were the ones who were the true founders of the land, and they actually had a lot of things happen to them in the past, so I would definitely support it. It's very important to have them there when they have that knowledge.

We hear from them, but it's always best to get them there. We've lost a lot of them already. To get them in there so that the proper history is documented, I think, is very important.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McLeod.

We'll go to Madame Gill for 90 seconds.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question is for all the witnesses, particularly Ms. Stanovich, Mr. Bailey and Ms. Prosper.

I know it's impossible to be completely satisfied, but do you think it's possible to have representation that would satisfy all first nations stakeholders?

[*English*]

The Chair: Each of the witnesses, you have about 20 seconds for your answer.

Mr. Garry Bailey: I didn't quite understand the question.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Is it because of the interpretation that Mr. Bailey didn't understand?

The Chair: It's possible, but I'm not sure that's the case.

Please repeat your question.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: I want to know if, for all the witnesses, it's possible for all first nations, Métis and Inuit interests to be represented on the council.

• (1255)

[*English*]

The Chair: Interpreting the question a little bit for our witnesses, do any of you think that it is possible to have, within this proposed national council, proper representation that covers all indigenous interests?

It's really time to say yes or no. There's not much more time, I'm afraid.

We'll start with Ms. Stanovich.

Ms. Brandy Stanovich: Yes, it is absolutely possible.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Ms. Prosper.

Ms. Jacqueline Prosper: I would agree. Yes, it is possible.

The Chair: Okay. Very good.

We'll go to Mr. Bailey.

Mr. Garry Bailey: Yes, it is possible.

The Chair: Thank you all.

We'll go to Ms. Idlout now for the last 90 seconds.

Ms. Lori Idlout: [*Member spoke in Inuktitut as follows:*]

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: <https://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 des communes.

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 :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>