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**Tuesday 17 May 2016**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mardi 17 mai 2016**

**Standing Committee on  
Estimates**

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs

**Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses**

Ministère des Affaires autochtones

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 17 May 2016

Mardi 17 mai 2016

*The committee met at 0902 in room 151.*

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie):** Good morning, honourable members. As Clerk of the Committee, it is my duty to call upon you to elect an Acting Chair for this morning's meeting, since neither our Chair or Vice-Chair are present.

I remind members that, pursuant to standing order 117(b), the Chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates shall be a member of a recognized party in opposition to the government.

Are there any nominations for Acting Chair? Madame Gélinas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'd like to nominate the one and only Michael Mantha.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie):** Madame Gélinas has nominated Mr. Mantha. Mr. Mantha, do you accept the nomination?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I accept.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie):** Are there any further nominations? Seeing none, I declare the nominations closed and Mr. Mantha elected Acting Chair of the committee.

Mr. Mantha, could you please come to assume the Chair?

## MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Mantha):** Good morning, everyone. I'm sorry that you don't have a Chair or a Vice-Chair. You're stuck with me this morning.

The committee is about to begin consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs for a total of 15 hours.

As we have some new members, a new ministry and a new minister before the committee, I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that the purpose of the estimates committee is for members of the Legislature to determine if the government is spending money appropriately, wisely and effectively in the delivery of the services intended.

I would also like to remind everyone that the estimates process has always worked well with a give-and-take approach. On one hand, members of the committee take care to keep their questions relevant to the estimates of the ministry, and the ministry, for its part, demonstrates openness in providing information requested by the committee.

As Chair, I tend to allow members to ask a wide range of questions pertaining to the estimates before the committee, to ensure that they are confident the ministry will spend those dollars appropriately.

In the past, members have asked questions about the delivery of similar programs in previous fiscal years, about the policy framework that supports a ministry approach to a problem or to service delivery, or about the competence of a ministry to spend the money wisely and efficiently. However, it must be noted that the onus is on the member asking the question to make the questioning relevant to the estimates under consideration.

The ministry is required to monitor the proceedings for any questions or issues that the ministry undertakes to address. I trust that the deputy minister has made arrangements to have the hearings closely monitored with respect to questions raised, so that the ministry can respond accordingly. If you wish, you may, at the end of your appearance, verify the questions and issues being tracked by the research officer.

Are there any questions before we start? Hearing none, I am now required to call vote 2001 of the estimates, which sets the review process in motion.

We will begin with a statement of not more than 30 minutes by the minister, followed by statements of up to 30 minutes by the official opposition and 30 minutes by the third party. Then, the minister will have 30 minutes for a reply. The remaining time will be apportioned equally amongst the three parties.

Minister, the floor is yours.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you, committee members.

I do want to acknowledge Toronto as the sacred gathering place for many indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. I do want to recognize the very long history and very significant contributions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

I am very happy to be here with Deputy Minister Richardson. Aboriginal and indigenous affairs are top and centre of everyone's mind. I'd like to thank the committee and its members for this opportunity to speak about the estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Joining me today are a number of senior staff from the ministry; together, we all look forward to answering your questions and making sure that the next 15 hours are productive and informative.

But before I go any further, I am going to ask Deputy Minister Richardson to introduce the other people from

the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs who are with me and with you to support your inquiries. Deputy?

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Good morning. With us here today are the three assistant deputy ministers at aboriginal affairs. We have Assistant Deputy Minister Alison Pilla—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Mantha):** For the record, could you please introduce yourself?

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Oh, certainly. Good morning. I'm Deborah Richardson, the deputy minister of aboriginal affairs.

To my left, we have Assistant Deputy Minister Alison Pilla from the strategic policy and planning and direction branch. We have Assistant Deputy Minister Hillary Thatcher to the far left of the table, who is the assistant deputy minister of the relationships and ministry partnerships division. We also have Assistant Deputy Minister David Didluck just behind me. We also have our CAO, Paula Reid, and the director of finance, and the minister has some of his staff here.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** On the public service side and from my office on the political side: Blair Ostrom, legislative assistant; Adrienne Lipsey, senior policy adviser; and Scott Cavan, who is the communications adviser.

What we would like to do today is to share with you the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs' success—and we do look on it as a success—in helping indigenous Ontarians seize new opportunities and to meet the challenges that First Nations, Métis, Inuit and our urban indigenous communities face.

As a government, we have a mandate—I have a mandate letter—to ensure that indigenous people have greater opportunities to fully participate in the workforce and the economy, thereby reaching their full potential. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and our ministry partners have taken many steps to close the gaps in health, education, justice, housing and more.

**0910**

I am very proud of the work that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has done. The public servants at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs are proud of that work, and our political staff are proud of the work that we have done. We have used a very small budget of our ministry to improve the quality of life in all of Ontario's diverse indigenous communities.

In the past year, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has continued to make strides in building stronger relationships with our indigenous partners, supporting indigenous economic development, ending violence against indigenous women and promoting greater understanding of our shared history and moving forward on land claims here in Ontario.

Our successes would not have been possible without the strong relationships we have built and continue to build between Ontario and its indigenous partners. These relationships are critical. They provide us an opportunity to incorporate indigenous voices and indigenous perspectives into the development of our policy and into the resolution of various outstanding issues, not only because

it is the right thing to do, but because policies and programs that are developed in concert with indigenous partners always prove to be more effective and long-lasting. These new policies and programs, created in partnership, are an effective way to spend all of our dollars.

I am proud of the relationships that the ministry has fostered, and I believe they provide us a strong foundation on which we can move forward. Our strong relationships help us to have difficult and frank conversations, they help us to turn challenges into opportunities and they help us down the path of healing and reconciliation. It's an honest relationship, and it has to be that, in order to progress.

I believe my ministry has done much to advance reconciliation, and I am excited to share with you today a few specifics about what we do and what we have achieved.

Let me say a few words about truth and reconciliation.

As you may be aware, the one-year anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's release of its 94 calls to action is at the end of this month. The commission focused on reconciliation, and over the course of the closing ceremonies, Canadians bore witness to a dark period in our history—a history that went unacknowledged for more than a century. Many of us, if not most of us, in the non-aboriginal community are now finally coming to grips with it.

The commissioners, the Premier, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and so many others exposed this dark chapter to generations of Canadians who were unaware of our colonial past and the legacy of state-sanctioned abuse and assimilation. Those closing ceremonies, together with the commission's concluding statements and reading of the calls to action, were painful. They were moving.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, and the spotlight it continues to shine on our painful shared history, also gives us an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of people. The final report's call to action presents a plan for reconciliation that includes remembrance, actions to close gaps in outcomes, building culturally sensitive and community-based services, and working in partnership with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples. Ontario has made it a priority to act on these calls to action and to walk the path to reconciliation, not merely the talk to reconciliation.

My ministry has reviewed the final report and has begun work with our partners to respond to the commission's recommendations. In some cases, we have already begun to implement some of the TRC's calls to action—for example, by introducing mandatory indigenous cultural competency and anti-racism training for every employee in the Ontario public service. By "every employee," I mean from the receptionist to the back-office worker, all the way up to the deputy minister and including the political staffs of our office.

Premier Wynne announced this mandatory training at an indigenous cultural competency event for OPS employees and others this past February. The new training

will help provide public servants with the context they need for understanding social disparities and inequities, and introduce tools that will help them enhance services to indigenous peoples and promote stronger relationships with our indigenous partners. Once trained, public servants will be in a better position to work with indigenous partners, advance the process of reconciliation with indigenous communities, and make a real difference in the lives of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

We will work with indigenous partners to ensure the cultural competency training is relevant and appropriate. We are in the process of seeking their advice on this issue.

This is just the beginning. In the coming weeks and months ahead, we look forward to informing the public about how Ontario will take further action and respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations.

Let me say a few words about economic development. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada stated that the legacy of residential schools has resulted in significant educational and income disparities between indigenous peoples and other Canadians. We know that more can be done for indigenous people in Ontario, who experience poverty at a disproportionate rate compared to non-indigenous people. As you may be aware, the unemployment rate for indigenous people in Ontario is about twice that of non-indigenous Ontarians and can be much, much higher in our remote First Nation communities in the Far North.

The average annual income of an on-reserve First Nation population is about \$20,000 and the annual off-reserve income is about \$33,000. Both of these figures are significantly lower than the average annual income of the non-indigenous population, which is about \$45,000.

To increase indigenous economic development, we are supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate that will help indigenous communities succeed. An early initiative was the launch of the New Relationship Fund in 2008. This funding allows indigenous communities and organizations to engage in consultation with governments and industry on a host of resource-based economic development activities. It will provide increased economic development and skills-training opportunities.

In March of this year I was pleased to announce the Green Investment Fund, which will help communities plan and source out new economic opportunities, like those provide by Ontario's future cap-and-trade program. I believe this investment will have a profound effect on the future of the economic development of indigenous communities. The Green Investment Fund will also help indigenous communities prepare for climate change by assisting First Nation communities in developing adaptation plans and by supporting a northern Ontario climate change impact study.

We've also committed \$25 million over three years to the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund. This fund supports indigenous communities in the development and implementation of a long-term economic strategy that

will contribute to the diversification of indigenous economies.

This fund will also address key barriers faced by indigenous business and indigenous entrepreneurs by providing grants and loans for indigenous businesses and improved access to financing and skills training.

As we all know, support for skills training is critical to economic development. Skills training will help us ensure that indigenous youth and adults have the opportunity to succeed and fully participate in the workforce and the economy. Investing in our indigenous peoples and supporting economic development is one of the many steps on Ontario's journey of healing and reconciliation with indigenous people.

#### **0920**

Let me say a few words about a very difficult issue: violence against aboriginal women and girls. One of the things that the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission teaches us is that, while the abuse suffered by indigenous children at residential schools may have ended, indigenous women and girls in particular continue to be at risk of higher rates of violence and abuse.

Wherever indigenous women live, they experience greater rates of domestic violence, assault, homicide and sexual exploitation. This violence echoes through generations, leading to poverty, social isolation, insecurity and a host of other social problems.

The circumstances may be different, the perpetrators may be different, but we must apply the lessons learned from residential schools and embrace the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This will guide the efforts we take to eliminate violence against indigenous women and girls.

We are truly pleased that the new federal government has called for a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women to understand the roots of, and find the solutions to, this ongoing tragedy.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has made formal recommendations to the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, the federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, on this issue. We want a trilateral table with Canada, Ontario and indigenous leadership to be convened as soon as possible to identify and implement solutions. We also want federal support for a pan-Canadian public awareness program to show the value of and respect due to indigenous women.

Federal leadership on this issue is critical to address this tragedy, but Ontario is not going to wait to take action. In February 2016, the Ontario government released *Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women*, and we committed \$100 million over three years in funding to support its implementation.

If any of you don't have a copy of the program, I urge you—this is the program. It's widely available. You should read it and think about the issues discussed and raised in it.

The strategy outlines actions to prevent violence against indigenous women and reduce its impact on

youth, families and communities. It builds on the work of existing indigenous partners, community organizations and government to:

- (1) Raise awareness of and prevent violence.
- (2) Provide more effective programs and community services that reflect the priorities of indigenous leaders and communities.
- (3) Improve socioeconomic conditions that support healing within indigenous communities.

This strategy also incorporates a number of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. It is one of many steps on Ontario's journey of healing and reconciliation with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Let me say a few words about relationship building. It is critical to all that we do. Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women would not have been possible without indigenous partners and the progress we made together through the joint working group. The joint working group is proof in action of the value of our relationship with indigenous peoples and the value of relationship building.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs values the advice and guidance of our partners when it comes to addressing challenging issues like violence against indigenous women. We rely on our partners to infuse the policies and programs we create with indigenous voices and perspectives.

My ministry knows that in order to have strong relationships, we must meet with indigenous partners and deal with the issues head on in a frank, truthful and honest way. For example, my ministry signed a memorandum of understanding with the Mushkegowuk tribal council in November 2015. Through this MOU, we have been able to discuss mutual priorities, including governance, consultation, resource benefits sharing and economic development. The MOU and the discussions following the MOU are an example of our commitment to building and maintaining strong relationships with our indigenous partners.

My ministry has also worked closely with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, as well as First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban indigenous partners to develop an Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy. This strategy seeks to improve outcomes and opportunities for indigenous children and youth by transforming the way services are designed and delivered. I want to emphasize the word "transforming."

To support the development and implementation of the strategy, three leadership round tables were convened to facilitate engagement with indigenous partners. I've had the pleasure of attending many, if not all, of these round table sessions, including the Inuit Leadership Roundtable that took place just yesterday here in Toronto. It is through our relationships and face-to-face meetings that we hear the diverse perspectives and we are able to take synchronized steps to build prosperous and healthy communities.

Let me say now a few words about the First Nations-Ontario political accord, a significant document. These

formalized relationships do not just exist on a community-to-community basis. As you may recall, in August 2015 we signed a historic political accord—the first in decades. It was signed with our First Nation partners, including Ontario Regional Chief Day and the First Nations Political Confederacy.

All of the signatories to that accord agreed that this new political accord presents a renewal of the relationship between First Nations and Ontario and is an important step in the ongoing revitalization of First Nation communities. It is an opportunity to move forward together in a spirit of respectful coexistence and make a real difference in the lives of indigenous people across this province.

The accord is also important because it does recognize First Nations' inherent right to self-government and commits the parties to joint discussions on common priorities. These common priorities include the treaty relationship itself, resource benefits and revenue sharing, and jurisdictional matters involving First Nations and Ontario.

Discussions on jurisdiction and self-government are aimed at building a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all parties, and finding practical ways to create real opportunities for First Nations through the strength of our partnership. Ontario's growth depends on renewing the historic partnerships that we have with indigenous communities.

Let me now say a few words about treaty strategy. To renew our historic partnerships, we also have to have an understanding of our shared history. Treaties are an important part of this history. They are the foundation of the development of this country and they created rights and responsibilities for Canada, for Ontario and for First Nations.

Ontario is unique in Canada for the number and the variety of treaties, with 46 treaties and land purchases covering most of this province. They are relevant today. This is very important: They are not just agreements that exist in the past without any effect or importance today. They are just as relevant today as they were when they were signed.

While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was able to shed light on the history of residential schools, most Ontarians remain in the dark about the history and the meaning of treaties. A better understanding of treaties is critical to unlock the potential of this land and its people. That's why, in 2014, the government committed to a treaty strategy to generate conversations on our treaty relationships and to build greater awareness and understanding of our different perspectives and histories.

#### **0930**

To increase awareness and understanding of treaties, we have launched the social media campaign #TreatyON, which has created widespread interest on Twitter and Facebook. My ministry also worked with First Nations to revise the Ontario public school curriculum to include information about residential schools and survivors.

We distributed a First Nations and treaties map to every school in Ontario. That's about 5,200 or 5,300

elementary and high schools. Approximately 11,000 copies of the treaties map have been distributed to the schools and to other institutions and persons. The idea here is to increase awareness of the important role that treaties continue to play in our lives.

What happens is that people receive a copy of this map. It's the size of that flat-screen—larger than that—with the 133 First Nations listed, the reserves colour-coded, and the 46 treaties colour-coded. What it does is it generates a conversation: "What does that map mean?" From there, it leads into a fuller discussion of the various issues that I've been speaking about so far.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Mantha):** Minister, you have five minutes remaining.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Thank you.

This is the first treaties map of Ontario that has been published since the 1940s. As we speak, my ministry is discussing a potential provincial treaties recognition week that would build public awareness about agreements made by our ancestors to live together on this land.

A word about land claims: My ministry has also made significant progress on strengthening our relationships by resolving land claims. In the spirit of reconciliation, we are working to resolve land claims in a timely manner. The ministry has met its public commitment to reach a decision on new land claims within three years of receipt of a completed land claim submission. We have also met our commitment to settle six land claims in four years.

Ontario's total number of claims is 64: Eight are in research and assessment, 47 are in negotiations, and nine settlement agreements have been implemented.

Since 2003, Ontario has settled 18 land claims and land-related matters involving the transfer of 58,000 acres of land to Canada, to be added to First Nation reserves, and compensation packages totalling \$121 million. Since 2003, we have settled land claims at twice the rate as before.

In January of this year, Ontario and the Chaleur Ojibwe First Nation initialled the final agreement for the First Nation's treaty land entitlement claim under the terms of Treaty 9.

In March of this year, I signed the settlement agreement for the Chaleur Cree land entitlement claim with the Minister of Natural Resources. This claim involves the transfer of 4,000 hectares of crown land near Chaleur, to be set aside as reserve lands. This settlement agreement is now with Canada, awaiting their signature and the execution of the agreement by the federal minister.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was also pleased that the federal government and the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point signed an agreement this month to return Camp Ipperwash, a former military base built on land appropriated in 1942. It was returned to the First Nation.

It should also be noted that an agreement was signed in 2009 to return the land of Ipperwash Provincial Park to the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point. Ontario has completed a land use, infrastructure and risk report in support of this transfer process. The final trilateral land

transfer agreement is undergoing review before it is signed off by all parties.

In conclusion, I hope that my opening statement has provided the members of the committee some insight into the challenges that we're facing and the steps that we are taking to meet those challenges.

The progress of the ministry and First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners has been made in supporting this changing relationship. We could not have made these strides without the foundation of strong relationships; I continue to stress that. I hope I have shown that these achievements and relationships have set us up to take the next necessary steps on our journey towards healing and reconciliation.

As I mentioned earlier, I am looking forward to sharing with you in the coming days our plans for the future. I thank you for the opportunity. I welcome your questions, which I'm sure will be interesting and informative, over the next 15 hours.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Mantha):** Thank you, Minister, for pointing out the amount of time you're going to be sitting in that hot seat.

I'll turn it over to Mr. Norm Miller from the official opposition.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Good morning, Minister and staff. It wasn't too long ago that we were here doing the same thing in the estimates committee, although I believe you weren't here. Your deputy reminded me that it was last fall, last November, that we were going through the same process.

I guess my first question is—this was a government choice. The opposition parties get to pick some ministries and the third party. This was the government's choice. Why did you want to come back for 15 hours at the estimates committee?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I hope it was more than apparent in my remarks that our Premier, our cabinet, our caucus, our government and I expect all of our legislators—members from both official parties—to see the need to move in a positive way on our relationship with our indigenous peoples. You only have to open print media, turn on any electronic media that you desire, have any conversation around the workplace or in the grocery store or whatever; I would argue that indigenous issues are at the top of the public mind now.

There is a broad recognition that the relationship has to be changed in a better way. You see that in federal conversations, you see that in provincial conversations among all the provinces and territories, you see that in discussions in the op-ed pages and the business papers and you hear about it in an even stronger way from the indigenous communities themselves. We are all anxious for change in a good way, and we all recognize that change not only will happen but has to happen.

Hence, I'm happy to be here with the team for 15 hours.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I don't know. The way you've talked about the 15 hours in your opening, I'm not sure how sincere you are. But I do agree—

**Hon. David Zimmer:** We are sincere.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Okay. I do agree that positive change is absolutely necessary, so we'll get into some specifics, starting with: Your ministry had a press release back in October 2014 with regard to the Remote Electrification Readiness Program, preparing remote First Nation communities for grid connection. It was October 27, 2014, from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. It talks about how "Ontario is helping to prepare remote First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario for future connection to the province's electricity grid.

"The Remote Electrification Readiness Program will support the development of community readiness plans. These plans will help eligible communities identify opportunities for job-specific training, relevant health programs, business innovation mentoring and economic development supports.

"Connecting remote First Nations to the province's electricity grid was identified as a priority under Ontario's Long-Term Energy Plan. This initiative supports strong and healthy communities by:

"—Reducing barriers to growth.

"—Increasing economic development opportunities, including participation in the work to join the grid, new business initiatives made possible by greater access to grid-connected power and the potential to invest in future feed-in tariff projects.

"—Improving social and living conditions for residents.

"—Providing cleaner air and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

"—Reducing the likelihood of diesel fuel leaks and spills."

It goes on:

"This initiative will help to fight climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, connecting up to 21 diesel-reliant First Nations could result in savings of about \$1 billion over the next 40 years compared to continuing"—and there's a quote from you in that press release as well.

My question: Under the long-term energy plan, this government claimed that connecting remote First Nation communities to Ontario's electricity grid was a priority. Since the plan was released in December 2013, how many remote First Nation communities have been connected to the provincial grid?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Thank you. This is a very important issue, the remote First Nations and the fact that they're not on the grid and rely on diesel. Just by way of background, there are 25 First Nation communities that are forced to rely on diesel power for energy generation. It's not fair that those First Nations rely on dirty diesel, if you will. It's not economic that diesel fuel has to be transferred up there. It's then put into generators, it's burned in generators and it gives off all of the bad things that we don't need in an environment.

0940

Ontario's long-term energy plan has noted a strong economic case for connecting 21 of those 25 First Nation

communities with transmission and distribution lines, but there are a couple that are so removed—for instance, Fort Severn, which is way at the top end of James Bay, is just too far to connect to the grid.

Connecting remote First Nation communities to Ontario's transmission system is a priority for Ontario. This will support continued investments in clean and reliable energy for remote First Nations that are now dependent on diesel to manage their electricity needs.

Our government has launched the Remote Electrification Readiness Program. We launched that through the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs formally on October 27, 2014, so that's about five or six months ago now. Over the three-year life of the Remote Electrification Readiness Program, the plan is to invest \$3 million to help prepare remote First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario for future connection to the province's electricity grid. Specifically, this will include four projects in 2015-17 that will help do the groundwork for preparing the 21 diesel-dependent First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario for connection to the province's power grid.

There's one additional community that is not considered economically feasible to connect to the grid by the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, but is eligible under the Remote Electrification Readiness Program. So we have a total of 22 communities receiving funding.

I'm going to ask the deputy, Deputy Richardson, if she would like to provide some further detail on this. Deputy?

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Sure. Watay Power, which is a power corporation and transmission company that is owned by the Windigo, Shibogama and IFNA First Nations—those are the three tribal councils—currently have an EA under way that's proposing to connect a number of the communities. They also have recently involved Pikangikum First Nation as well, so they're starting to build some momentum.

They're looking at bringing forward an EA, but of course it's also going to be very important that the federal government is also a partner in this. That is a top priority for the Ministry of Energy. We can't speak specifically to the Ministry of Energy's perspective on this, but I know that they are working with the federal government and the First Nations to try to make this happen.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I think the minister did mention some times there. When's the likelihood of the first connection? Is there any target date to have a community connected?

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Well, I think until an EA starts—

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Obviously you know there's going to be an EA, and that may be a few years, I assume, but in five years or 10 years? Surely there's got to be some target date?

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** I can't specifically speak to that because I'm not an expert in transmission or the terms of what that is. We would have to defer that



probably to Minister Chiarelli or to the Ministry of Energy to give specifics.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Okay. It sounds like in 22 of the remote First Nations, there's the plan to eventually connect directly to the grid. Then there are some—you mentioned, Minister, Fort Severn, which I have visited; it's the most northerly First Nation on Hudson Bay—is just too far away, at this time, anyway, to connect.

I note that for those communities you had plans to have renewable infrastructure. I guess my question is: What are the plans and how much has the government spent on the renewable generation infrastructure for those three remote First Nations? Because I believe that was part of the plan.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** I'll defer this over to Assistant Deputy Minister Hillary Thatcher.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Mantha):** For the record, could you please introduce yourself?

**Ms. Hillary Thatcher:** Yes. I'm Hillary Thatcher, assistant deputy minister for aboriginal relations and ministry partnerships.

There are actually four communities that are uneconomic to connect with transmission lines. They include Fort Severn First Nation, Peawanuck First Nation, Whitesand First Nation, around Lake Nipigon, as well as Gull Bay First Nation, also on Lake Nipigon. The reason they're uneconomic to connect is because the size of the community doesn't require enough load for a transmission line; they're such small communities.

The Ministry of Energy is working with those communities directly on renewable investments. I can't speak to how much money is being invested. They're also working at including the federal government in those types of investments, and private partners. They're looking at solar options and micro-grids in Whitesand First Nation, around Gull Bay, and at Gull Bay they're looking at some bio-generation. Those communities are working directly. They're leading the initiatives, and the Ministry of Energy and IESO, the independent electricity office, are partnering with them to look at opportunities to reduce their diesel consumption.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Specifically for your program, the Remote Electrification Readiness Program, how many of the 25 First Nations received funding from that program and what's the money being used for?

**Ms. Hillary Thatcher:** The funding for that program was over three years, \$1 million a year. We're just entering our last fiscal year for funding. There are four projects that are being funded, which include 22 of the First Nations that are part of those projects.

The projects are being led by the tribal councils in their regions. The projects are investing money in research to better understand the communities' needs so that they can be employee-ready. They're looking at the health and wellness of the communities right now and studying some baseline data to understand what kind of gaps are in the community so that the communities can then make the right investments in terms of health and

wellness so that people will be job-ready, once there's an approved line, to start building.

The communities are driving the build-out of the line. The deputy minister mentioned Wataynikaneyap Power, which is the transmission company that's owned by these communities.

Our program is investing in research so that we can start making the right investments in wellness for the community. For example, where community members don't have high school, why don't they have high school diplomas? Why haven't they got apprenticeships and trade programs? Often what happens is—and we know anecdotally but we don't have hard data—that in the communities there are young rates for childbirth, so young women often don't get to finish school; so young pregnancies. We also know that there are larger mental health issues and addictions happening in the community.

We need to figure out the baseline situation so that we can start making the right investments and the communities can start focusing on investment so that that they can get their kids and young adults trained into the right apprenticeship program so that when the line begins development and is approved, they can actually be employee-ready.

Those are the types of investments. It's really getting some real baseline data so that the right investments are being made in the right communities.

As a province, we didn't want to brush each community with the same stroke because each community is quite unique in terms of their own gaps and their situations. Some don't have as high issues with mental health and addictions, and others have other situations. We're really trying to make sure that the right investments are made in the right communities and that the communities are knowledgeable about the project at the same time so that they can also see a future from an employment perspective.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** With pretty much all the remote First Nations there are huge challenges and they are varied, which I guess is part of the reason I was asking about electrification. I would agree it's a positive step. That's why I was trying to get an idea of a timeline, which I haven't really narrowed down even within 10 years at this stage.

**Ms. Hillary Thatcher:** What I can tell you is that the First Nation that owns the transmission company is partnered with Fortis, which is a large transmitter. The First Nations project had initially set some target dates to start building out the transmission line, which is in two phases. The first phase is a reinforcement to Pickle Lake, and then it would go north.

**0950**

They hoped to have all of their approvals in place by 2018, but I can tell you that I believe that that's fairly ambitious in terms of the types of approvals that are going to be required for this type of a transmission line. I can't confirm but, really, the timelines will be driven by the transmitter, which is Wataynikaneyap Power, in partnership with Fortis.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Do you have an estimate on the actual cost of connecting 21 communities?

**Ms. Hillary Thatcher:** I know that there is a website that Wataynikaneyap Power has. Our understanding was, at an earlier time, that the estimation was around \$1.2 billion, but that may have changed, because as time progresses, the costs change, and their estimates may have changed as well. They're also looking now at connecting Pikangikum First Nation, so I imagine their estimations will be different, along with their timelines. Their timelines were acknowledged, at a recent meeting with us, that they're ambitious for 2018, so they're likely going to be pushed into 2020 sometime.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** You said the start-off point was Pickle Lake, which is, I assume, heading in the general direction of the Ring of Fire. It's one of the closer points to the Ring of Fire in terms of the proposed northeast road to the Ring of Fire. Is there planning to take that into account with this electrification? If you're going to look at the communities in that general area, is the demand and the potential and the need for power at the Ring of Fire part of this?

**Ms. Hillary Thatcher:** The demand right now—there is a Musselwhite mine that is needing additional power. The load, and the way that the IESO is planning the transmission line, would include future growth that would be projected. It's not dependent on the Ring of Fire moving forward, though, from my understanding.

The Ministry of Energy and the IESO could do a better job of explaining a lot more of the mechanics and the details of how they plan for load growth in north-western Ontario. They would certainly be taking into consideration Ring of Fire potential, but the focus for this particular project is the remote connection of First Nation communities.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** An energy corridor could also be a road corridor, of course. It would probably be logical that it is the same corridor. Is that taken into consideration in this process?

**Ms. Hillary Thatcher:** You're right: The First Nations are looking at all-season roads, and they've started doing some of their own work on whether or not the corridors would enable that. The terrain up in north-western Ontario tends to be high muskeg, so I think that they'll have to make determinations on whether or not there's going to be an opportunity to line up roads in these particular corridors, because there are a lot of lakes, rivers, and muskeg, so they'd have to do their own studies. But I know the First Nations are certainly looking at this as a possible option.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Yes, it seems to me, as long as the communities are in favour of it, that linking all-season roads would be a strategy that would make sense in terms of trying to create economic opportunities.

Interestingly, as I was driving up to Timmins last week to attend the FONOM conference—with nine hours to spare—I happened to be listening to CBC, and there was a gentleman—Brian Davey, I believe was his name—who was on the radio for an hour on the CBC

noon show. It seemed to me that the biggest ask he had was that there should be a strategy for all-season roads, to create opportunity for the remote First Nation communities.

Has your ministry looked at or done any consulting on that, or planning on that, or discussions about connecting the communities? Obviously, the Ring of Fire is an opportunity to connect some communities too. A link is needed to that mining site, and there are a number of communities in the area that it would make sense to be a part of that connection.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Mr. Miller, this is where the importance of the relationship building that we've done with the First Nations really comes into play, because we are now at the stage where we can sit down with the First Nations who have the most interest in this issue that you just raised.

We both recognize, First Nations and the province, that we have to do something to help remote First Nations develop socially and economically. It's because of all of the attention we've paid to the relationship building that we can have very frank and candid conversations about how to make improvements, how to address this issue. There are a variety of points of view, but the point is that we sit down with the leadership of the First Nations and we figure out the best solutions to meet the problem.

Deputy?

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** There has been some work under way with First Nations around all-season roads. For example, within the Ring of Fire, Canada, Ontario and the First Nations are working at exploring options around all-season roads. I know that those communities currently have work under way where they're looking at potential routing and speaking to communities about the options of having all-weather roads—because you can imagine there are probably some that are for and some that are against. That work is happening right now on the ground within communities.

Also, I spoke about Watay Power in the Windigo group of communities. We had a meeting this week with Nishnawbe Aski Nation and the Premier. Windigo spoke to the fact that they would like the province to engage more with them on exploring all-season roads. We look forward to trying to loop in the federal government, because it's complex. We'll have to bring all players together to explore options about how that would happen.

They have done a significant amount of planning themselves as well. I think through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, they've been able to get some planning and capacity dollars.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you. I guess I'll switch to land claims. The minister, in his opening comments, made reference to land claims. I think he said that you have a strategy or a policy now to try to settle a land claim within three years. You talked a bit about what you've accomplished.

I guess I'll start specifically with the Algonquin land claim. The Algonquins of Ontario submitted their pro-

posed agreement in principle in June 2015. How much longer does the government anticipate it will take to fully negotiate this land claim settlement?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I'm sorry; I was flipping pages.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** How much longer does the government anticipate it will take to fully negotiate the Algonquin land claim settlement? You've got the agreement in principle, so when do you expect to finalize the timeline etc.?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Let me give you a bit of background, and then I'm going to ask Assistant Deputy Minister David Didluck to give you some further detail. He's the ADM who is deeply involved, and has been for years, on the Algonquin claim.

These are tripartite negotiations. They involve Canada, Ontario and the Algonquins, so we all have to work together to sort this out and negotiate this settlement. It will produce Ontario's first modern-day, constitutionally-protected treaty.

On May 29, 2015, negotiators for Canada, Ontario and the Algonquins initialed a proposed agreement in principle. That's publicly available, and I'm sure you all had a look at it. The Algonquin ratification vote on the proposed agreement in principle was concluded two months ago, in March 2016. We are very encouraged by the results of the Algonquins of Ontario ratification vote. We continue to hope for a common agreement to move forward with these negotiations.

There was a separate, parallel referendum that was conducted by the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation. They raised some issues within their on-reserve community about the agreement in principle, but—

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Sorry, can you explain that? As I understand it, there was a vote, and some parties agreed to it; some did not.

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**Hon. David Zimmer:** Yes, there was a vote: 94% of off-reserve Algonquins voted in favour of the agreement, in principle. Six per cent, largely from the Pikwakanagan First Nation, voted in such a way that demonstrated that they had some concerns or reservations about it.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Mantha):** Mr. Miller, you have five minutes remaining.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** We are now sitting down with the Algonquin leadership with a view to resolving, settling or coming to some understanding because, at the end of the day, we do want to have the Pikwakanagan reserve, representing the 6% of the vote. We want to address the issues and concerns that they've raised with the agreement of principle.

The idea here is that at each stage of these negotiations, we've got to take the time required to address the considerations raised by Pikwakanagan. But I'm going to stop there and I'm going to ask Assistant Deputy Minister Didluck to provide you with some detail, because he's at that table.

**Mr. David Didluck:** Thank you, Mr. Miller.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Mantha):** Mr. Didluck, can you introduce yourself for the record?

**Mr. David Didluck:** Sure; no problem. It's David Didluck. I'm the ADM of negotiations and reconciliation with the ministry.

The broader context here, Mr. Miller, as you know, is that this is arguably Ontario's most sizable and historically significant claim because of the approximately 10,000 Ontarians who are of Algonquin ancestry. These are individuals who never signed a treaty with either the federal or provincial crown so, technically, we call this a title claim but that's very significant because a title claim means that we are very much, as crown governments, along with our First Nations partners, designing the modern-day treaty from scratch. We get to fundamentally, as the minister said in his opening remarks, design that new treaty relationship.

The territory of the claim area, as you know, is about 36,000 square kilometres. There are 85 municipalities within the claim. By my calculation, I think that's about 17 provincial ridings. About 1.2 million Ontarians live within the claim area so, again, it's very sizable. I provide that additional context because, as you know, size and complexity often mean a longer negotiation process.

Certainly, the 20-odd years that Ontario has invested now in the negotiations can't be overlooked. That is a sizable time period, but if we put that in a national context and look at where there are significant, complex, title-based negotiations of this size, the nearest comparable would be out west in British Columbia. Most of that province, as we know, is not covered by historic treaties; they all have title claims. There's not a lot of success coming out of British Columbia, if I may dare say, and of those claims, the average negotiation time frame is well over the 30-year mark. In the Nisga'a negotiations, the hallmark was 38 years.

I'm not trying to suggest that that is our benchmark here in Ontario. But to give a broader context in a comprehensive claim situation where title is being asserted, it's not uncommon for the parties to take that amount of time.

I should also add, of course, that this is a tripartite process. We in Ontario are not the only player. There are the Algonquins, but also there is the government of Canada, and the government of Canada has its own mandating process and interests to also bring to the table. Again, all parties must be moving forward, and that's sometimes why it takes as long as it does.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** So what's the next step in the negotiations?

**Mr. David Didluck:** A fair question. As the minister noted, the Algonquins of Ontario have recently gone through a ratification process, so they voted on the draft agreement in principle—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Mantha):** You have one minute left, Mr. Miller.

**Mr. David Didluck:** —to get a mandate from their communities to continue negotiations with both Ontario and Canada. While we're very encouraged by the vote results, as the minister noted—94% overall voted in favour of the agreement in principle—the one reserve-

based community, Pikwakanagan, had less positive results. In fact, there was a slight majority of “no” voters.

We respect the fact that there is a process to ratify and sometimes communities internally don’t always agree, so we’re giving space right now for our negotiating partners, both Pikwakanagan and the broader Algonquins, to continue their internal dialogue. I don’t think it would be very fair for me to comment in terms of what we could speculate, I guess, on what the outcomes may be, but we remain positive. Our federal counterparts remain positive. We’ve invested a lot of time in the negotiations. We just want to create some space at the moment for the internal conversation to occur as to what the next steps are. But we’re ready to negotiate—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Mantha):** Thank you very much.

On va maintenant procéder au troisième parti : M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Veux-tu me dire, est-ce que j’ai—

**Le Président suppléant (M. Michael Mantha):** Il reste approximativement 10 minutes, madame Gélinas.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** C’est tout, hein? OK, merci.

Thank you for coming. I just wanted to give you an idea: When I sit in for long estimates, like 15 hours, my questions tend to be first what I call at the 10,000-foot level, just to see in broad strokes how your ministry has spent its money, because this is about estimates. Then, I will drill down to some specifics.

Just so that you know what I intend to cover—and that’s for First Nations, Métis and Inuit, some that has already started—we will be talking about land claims. Then, I have quite a bit of questions specific to truth and reconciliation and how money has been, is and will be spent to support this process. Then, some of your economic development initiatives: I know that there’s a bit of money in your budget to do this, so some general questions, but also some specifics on the ground as to how this has rolled out. The entire electrification and readiness program is something that I find fascinating, and I have questions about that.

Of course, when we talk about First Nations, Métis and Inuit access to justice and the justice system and your ministry’s linkages and responsibilities toward that and toward some of the changes in that direction—coming from Nickel Belt, I’m interested in the Ring of Fire, as well as what your ministry’s resources are to help with this development. Certainly, some of it will have to do with building a relationship and a lot will have to do with health care systems to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit; social services to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit; what happens in the mental health system; as well as access to hospital services for people who live on and off reserves that belong to First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

But my first question to you, having said all of this, is: How well do you know those Ontarians? How well do we know them? Who keeps an eye out as to how many, how are they doing, where are they and how old are they? You talked about their median income. Who keeps track of all that?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** The answer to your question is sort of the precursor to my comments on building relationships. To build a relationship, you have to know the person or the peoples that you’re building the relationship with.

At a general level, I have made a commitment, over my term, to make every effort to visit all 133 First Nations. Actually, a couple of the First Nations don’t have a land base, so there are probably 131 or 130 that have a land base. So far, as of last week, I’ve visited 63 First Nations.

Let me tell you something—because we just have a few minutes, I think—about what a visit entails. I will attend a First Nation. An agenda is prepared in advance of the visit with the First Nation. I will always be accompanied by the relevant senior person from the Ontario public service and one of my senior political staff. We will then attend to the First Nation. We will greet the leadership. We will sit in a room, in a band council chamber, around the table, if you will. The chief will be there with his deputy chief and the other leadership from the First Nation. We will work through the agenda that has been prepared. Largely, at the first go-around on the preparation of the agenda, are items that the First Nation wants to talk about. We will probably, usually, add some items that we want to talk about.

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We will often spend the whole day working through those agenda items. When I say I’ve done 63 visits, many of those visits to those 63 First Nations have been multiple visits. I’ve visited, for instance, some First Nations two and three times; some, four times. In addition to that, of course, I’ve met virtually almost all—I think I can reasonably say—of the First Nation leadership and personalities, in meetings in Toronto, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Sudbury, and so on.

The visit to a First Nation then concludes after the meeting. There is always a very detailed tour of the First Nation itself. I will typically ride with the chief, who will conduct the tour—the deputy minister and one of my political staff, and there might be one, or two or three vehicles.

We visit the water treatment plant. We visit the community centre. We visit the nursing station. We visit the school. We visit the seniors’ home, if there is one. We visit virtually everything on the First Nation. The chief will introduce me to the head of the nursing station. The nursing station will then take over the tour, give us a walk-through, and will in great detail outline how the nursing station operates—I’m just using this as an example—and the challenges that the nursing station faces. There are always suggestions about how to deal with those challenges and what the needs are.

At the end of a visit, I have a pretty good feel for what’s going on in the community. In addition to that, before I and the team visit a First Nation, we have detailed briefing books about that First Nation.

I don’t think I brought one with me, but there is a very, very detailed profile of the First Nation which has

been compiled by information obtained from various federal sources, provincial sources, reporting statistics and the like. So we have everything from the total numbers on the First Nation, the age breakdown, how many are single mothers, how many are two-partner families, how many seniors there are, what the wage rates are, what the number of jobs are, where the jobs are in the First Nation community, what the pay scale is and all of that detail.

I don't know if we have an example of one of those community profiles. I don't think so, but I can bring one when we come back this afternoon.

So when you go through one of those community profiles—and they typically are three, four or five pages, depending on the size of the community. You combine that with the briefing, and the very detailed visit—so it's not just a visit where we sort of drop in and say hello, have some lunch and leave—that does give you a feel for the community. But I'll ask the deputy to add additional thoughts that she may have.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Just in terms of data—I think that's what you were asking, specifically, too—I'll turn it over to Assistant Deputy Minister Alison Pilla, who can speak to that. But I know that there are community well-being indexes that the federal government has in terms of baseline data. Statistics Canada is a really good resource for a lot of statistics in terms of socio-economic circumstances and just data. But maybe I'll turn it over to Alison in terms of additional data that is available.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Mantha):** On that note, we will hold onto that question and resume. I see the hour; it's time that we call recess. We will resume committee work following regular proceedings today. We are now adjourned for the moment—we are in recess.

*The committee recessed from 1015 to 1600.*

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Good afternoon, everyone. Good afternoon, members. We are here to resume consideration of vote 2001 of the estimates of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. When the committee recessed this morning, the NDP had 21 minutes left in the rotation. Madame Gélinas, the floor is yours.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm about to test everybody's memory. The last words you said were that you were going to ask the assistant deputy minister to give me more information about the data that exists and that your ministry uses when it comes to First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** The form of the data that we get.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** And I said there would be an example—I think it's—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sorry, Minister, you also offered to share with me what those briefings look like.

**Ms. Alison Pilla:** I can answer the question.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Yes. Say your name, please, when you begin to speak. Thank you.

**Ms. Alison Pilla:** Good afternoon. I'm Alison Pilla. I'm assistant deputy minister for the strategic policy and

planning division in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. I'm happy to be here to talk to the committee and answer the question about information and data, because I think information is very important. As we talk to other ministries, they also understand that having the right information and data, understanding where those gaps in services are and where those gaps in outcomes are, is truly important in order to make progress on the indigenous agenda for the government.

MAA has a mandate to work across government. We don't hold information for programs and services that other ministries deliver. For instance, the Ministry of Health delivers mental health and addiction services or primary care services or other services to indigenous people. They manage their own information with respect to what they're doing and what outcomes they can expect to achieve. All ministries are like that, but we kind of have a coordinating role across ministries, and of course we at MAA want to have a picture what's going on in the programs and what kind of outcomes people expect to achieve.

We do a number of things with ministries and for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. One thing the minister addressed—I think we've sent it electronically, or we're happy to send it electronically—is better understanding the communities. The minister spoke about visits to communities. The civil service and staff go to communities as well, and we talk to tribal councils, regional political organizations, the Chiefs of Ontario and others to get a better understanding of what priorities and what's going on in communities.

So we work with communities and we work with our other ministries. For instance, for communities in the north we work with the MNDM, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. We work with what's available on the INAC website, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. We work with what we hear from communities directly, and as the minister said, as he goes out and the deputy goes to visit some communities, we create these little profiles of the communities. I think that's what the minister was referencing, and that's what I'm holding up; we can provide you a couple of these.

These are always a bit of a work in progress, because they're a bit iterative as we get more information from ministries. I don't necessarily have them for all the communities; we do them on as-needed basis. But I think what we have is one for Alderville, which is in the southwest, and one for Pic Mobert, which is more in the north. The information contained is a bit about the land base, a little bit about the labour force activity, what the employment rate is in those communities, educational attainment and some community well-being. I think the minister or the deputy spoke about the community well-being index.

So this is a compilation of information. Some of it we get from Statistics Canada, and others we get from the community and other places. We're happy to share those with you. Those are for First Nations communities, essentially reserve communities, in the province.

The other thing we do is that we keep a close eye on what Statistics Canada is doing. Of course, they have a

five-year cycle. It was problematic when they got rid of the long-form census, because we relied on a lot of that information, and there are some data gaps.

Clearly, Statistics Canada does provide information that we rely on, from things as simple as what are the demographics in the province for indigenous people, how many people identify as First Nations, how many identify as Métis or Inuit or other, how many are on-reserve and off-reserve, what the labour force participation rate is, what the state of housing is on-reserve. We use that information.

We have a few data sheets that we provide that just coordinate or compile some of that information. Again, we're happy to share this data sheet we have on aboriginal demographics in Ontario that I'm holding up. It really gives you a basic understanding of things that I've talked about: Who is First Nations, who is Métis, who is Inuit, where they live on- and off-reserve and how the population is growing, because aboriginal young people are growing at a much faster rate than in the non-aboriginal population.

As ministries do policy and planning, we want them to think about the demographics. It's a bit different for First Nations particularly. It's a much younger population, so where they might be spending resources planning for seniors in health, we want them to think about young people and young people's needs because we have a bit of bulge in that demographic. We want to share that information with people as well.

Another thing that we do on occasion, if we can find the money, is we might commission a piece of research to provide us some information that we can't necessarily get either from the INAC website or from StatsCan, or it isn't really in the academic literature in a way that maybe is very specific to Ontario.

I'm happy to share this particular one that we did: If the province and the federal government—and the federal government has responsibility for education on-reserve—were able to work together on- and off-reserve to close that education attainment gap that is particularly experienced by First Nations on-reserve, what would be the result of that in terms of labour force participation at the end of the day; what is the aboriginal lifetime earnings potential for First Nations individuals where you can close the gap; what would be the potential GDP growth?

We hired, in this case, an economist to do that kind of analysis based on a similar study that was done for Canada as a whole. We're able to also look at that kind of information and share that information across government.

Those are the pieces that MAA does specifically for MAA—Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. As I said, we work closely with our sister or brother ministries—whatever you want to call them—across government to also help them think about indigenous populations and indigenous people as they develop programs and services.

For instance, the Ministry of Education has identified a gap, or had identified a gap, in their understanding of indigenous educational attainment. Part of the stumbling

block that they had was that they weren't able to adequately identify who was First Nations, Métis or Inuit in their schools. So they implemented a voluntary identification approach, where students and their families can identify if they're First Nations or not.

The Ministry of Education can then look at that as a subset of information to think better about what kinds of wraparound supports and services should be put in place for these particular students: How well are these particular students doing and in what areas do they need some more help?

We work with other ministries, in addition to the Ministry of Education, to try to help people move down that path of being able to understand, for vulnerable populations like our indigenous populations around some of these outcome indicators, how to think about understanding what those gaps are—

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Excuse me for a minute. Madame Gélinas, you have three minutes left.

I would ask the assistant deputy minister: Are you willing to share that—you held up a piece of paper—with the committee?

**Ms. Alison Pilla:** Yes, sure. I'm happy to do that, yes.

That's basically how we work across the government.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** For my last three minutes, before I start to ask questions, how is working with the different ministries—

**The Chair (M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas):** Sorry, Madame Gélinas. I was wrong. You actually have 13 minutes left. I just realized that we're on a 30-minute rotation.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Oh, you stressed me for nothing.

*Laughter.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'll live, though.

Continuing on what you were talking about: You have access to data. You have put this together. You use it to inform and keep informing yourself as to how things are changing, for the better or the worse, in a number of key elements that describe the population's health, well-being and "scholarization" and all of this. My next question is, how do you use this knowledge with the other ministries? Where does your area of influence, if you want, end and how far does it go?

I don't know if I'm clear. It can be to any of you.

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**Ms. Alison Pilla:** One thing I neglected to say, that I should say as well, is that it's also important to work with indigenous partners. Sometimes, the way that we assess outcomes is not necessarily the way the communities would assess outcomes. That's why the Ministry of Education and others are working closely with indigenous communities, so that we can reflect properly the perspectives that indigenous people have.

At MAA, we have a small performance measures and data unit. It has a manager and three staff; it's very small. But at the end of the day, I think it's relatively well recognized across government that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has a particular expertise in understanding indigenous communities and indigenous issues.

We have a lot of expertise in terms of relationships and how those are built and what we hear during those discussions. In many senses, they look to us for advice on some of these issues. In other areas, where they have developed an expertise, we're quite happy to kind of just participate when they need us to help them out.

For instance, the Ministry of Education, which I mentioned, is quite far along in their work. The Ministry of Health, for instance, has a strong relationship with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, which is an external group that helps the health care system and the Ministry of Health understand what things really work in health, how you improve outcomes and what kind of information you need to support those outcomes. The Ministry of Health has been working very closely with ICES, which is the acronym for the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I know it very well.

**Ms. Alison Pilla:** —and the federal government and the First Nations. So they have a tripartite process, using ICES, to determine how best to collect information that health needs, to understand how health needs to move forward. The federal government provides some health care services and the provincial government provides others, so you need all of those people at the table to figure out how to pull that data together. They're quite well able to work with ICES to do that work. For other ministries, we provide a bit more support.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So from what you've told me, if another ministry needs information, they can come to your ministry, and they respect the work that you do to identify key performance measures or indicators of the community.

The part I don't understand, that I'm not quite clear on, is if you, through your work, identified a need or a gap, or the First Nation themselves have identified a priority and they come to you, how can you support them when it has to do with another ministry, which most of the time it does?

**Ms. Alison Pilla:** Right. We have an idea of what best practices are. We can link them up with appropriate indigenous groups, whether they're dealing with the community or larger groups, to have that discussion, and we can work with them. They need to understand the kinds of data that they're already collecting, and then we can help work with them to understand how best to add on it. So it's different levels of engagement with each ministry, depending on where they are and what their needs are. I'm not sure if that really gets at your question. It's really a bit of an iterative process in terms of what we can add. It depends on what their baseline is and where they want to go.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Can you ever dictate something? "This is a priority and it has to be done."

**Ms. Alison Pilla:** We certainly have discussions with ministries on a regular basis about the need and the priority for understanding the gaps in outcomes. We share that information so that they definitely understand that.

We also have those discussions about the need to collect aboriginal-specific information, but they have to

do that in partnership with indigenous communities and work out how to do that. We do that on an ongoing basis, and we can say—we can tell them—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** But not about data—about programs and services. You identified a gap in a program or a service. You identified in a community that needs access to post-secondary education so that they can work in the jobs of the future etc. How far is your realm of influence to make sure that those gaps are filled—not gaps in data, but gaps in the programs and services of the provincial government?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, as has become apparent from the answers so far, serves as a resource to all of the other ministries. Other ministries will call us on an issue and say, "How should we approach this issue? How should we deal with this issue? We want to be sensitive to cultural institutions, sensitive to the First Nation nuances" and all of that sort of thing.

We provide that sort of small-p political or social advice, if you will. Then we can drill down to the next level and provide the various pieces of technical information that the assistant deputy has outlined.

If something is identified that needs addressing, first and foremost we engage the First Nation to make sure and to see if they've made the same identification. If they have, we will sit down with them—our ministry and the relevant other ministry or ministries that are involved, both at the OPS level and, from my point of view, at the political level—and take those decisions, but again, take those decisions in consultation with the First Nation, the OPS and the relevant ministry.

It's not a situation where we issue diktats. We sit down, if an issue has been identified, and address it collectively.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** It's—do I need to introduce myself every time?

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Just this time, yes.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Deputy Minister Richardson. If I could speak specifically to your question about if there's an identification of a need for a program or service, what can we do? A really good example of that is through the joint working group. It's called the joint working group, and it's where we sit down with indigenous partners. The Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Independent First Nations Alliance and the Chiefs of Ontario comprise that.

They had tabled a long-term strategic plan to end violence against indigenous women and girls. Through that work and dialogue, there were a number of needs identified. Other ministries are at the table—I think there are about 11 other ministries. For example, there was a need that women needed a call centre, so MCSS, through the Ontario Native Women's Association, now funds a call centre for women.

Another example is that the OFIFC has a program called I Am a Kind Man. It creates a program for boys and men to respect women. That's actually also being piloted in the correctional facilities.

I think the most meaningful piece was the ending violence strategy that was launched. What communities were saying was that we need on-the-ground supports for families who experience violence which aren't necessarily through the child welfare agencies, but is somebody who can work with the family that experiences violence. That's what the family well-being program was. That was a direct response from a need identified by communities.

I hope that helps.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Yes, it does.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** There are a number of other examples that come about as a result. Historically, the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy was another one that came about for families that wanted support. I hope that helps.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Madame G  linas, now you really do have just under three minutes left.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Just under three minutes? Okay. I won't launch into any deep discussion.

I think the ADM said this morning that when you look at your Remote Electrification Readiness Program, there was close to \$1 million that had been spent. I think I'm quoting you, more or less—why they drop out of high school, you look at their readiness for the job market, so that they would be ready when the job comes; you look at young women's pregnancies, another reason why they don't finish school etc. This type of information was gathered through the Remote Electrification Readiness Program for all 21 reserves? Is it done? Is it still ongoing? Is it available? Is it finished?

1620

**Ms. Hillary Thatcher:** It's Hillary Thatcher, assistant deputy minister for aboriginal relations ministry partnerships. We're in the final year of funding the remote electrification program. It is about community readiness, and there is one year left of funding. We're just funding it now. It's a continuation of this research and they are starting to submit the data that they've gathered with their researchers.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Who does the research?

**Ms. Hillary Thatcher:** The tribal councils who applied for the funding on behalf of the communities are working in partnership, and each one has a different partnership with different researchers. I don't have the data of which researchers they're each working with, but they're working with the researchers to research with the First Nation communities that they represent. The 21 communities are partnered on that, and they've hired some of their own individual community members to also learn to do this type of research. It's another way of building additional skill sets in the communities.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Okay. I'll let my 30 seconds go for the next round.

**Ms. Hillary Thatcher:** I just had a correction, sorry. I just wanted to correct something I also said about the remotes this morning, around timelines. Mr. Miller had asked about timelines and I confirmed earlier that the two-phased remote connection project initially had been

slated to begin the build-out in 2018. I looked at their website; they've updated the data and the Ministry of Energy just confirmed that the proponent, who is the First Nation proponent, updated their data so they'll start their build-out of the line to Pickle Lake in 2020, and then the communities will start being connected in 2022. That's how the proponents have driven it. I just wanted to correct that information.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. We now move to the minister, who has 30 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Doesn't the government ask questions now?

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** No, it's the minister's time to respond. He has 30 minutes.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Minister, you'd better start speaking. They're using up your time.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** All right. Just give me a second here.

Well, I guess the first thing I would say as a pro forma statement is thank you for your opening round of questions and comments. It's apparent from the questions, and I hope it's apparent from the answers to the questions, that we're all in this together. We do want to build a stronger Ontario, a stronger Canada. To do that, we need the support of our indigenous partners as they build their stronger communities. Our efforts in this regard are going to go a long, long way towards the reconciliation that has to happen if we're in this together. I do appreciate the questions, because they were all headed in that direction of wanting to understand how we can get to a better place.

As I said in my opening remarks, the ministry is focused on strengthening relations with indigenous communities, not only as a part of the reconciliation process but to include outcomes for indigenous peoples. The ministry and our ministry partners work very hard to forge and maintain positive working relations. Therefore, we are well positioned to work with our indigenous partners on a going-forward basis.

Stronger relationships will lead to socio-economic enhancements. They will help to build trust, prosperity and hope in indigenous communities. That will in turn help us to incorporate indigenous voices and indigenous perspectives into our policy and program design. Policies and programs that have to be developed with indigenous partners always prove to be more effective in their outcomes.

Relationship building and ongoing discussions, even difficult ongoing discussions, help to identify and enable forward movement on the joint priorities. By joint priorities, I mean the priorities of the indigenous nations and the priorities of the government. We are working very hard to build and maintain those relationships. Like anything else in life, often the outcome of a project depends largely on the quality of the relationship.

In addition to the political core that I spoke about this morning, the ministry has established bilateral tables with



indigenous organizations. Some of those bilateral tables exist, for instance, with the Union of Ontario Indians, the Grand Council of Treaty 3, which is up in northwest Ontario in the Kenora area, the Métis Nation of Ontario, and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

We have regular meetings that include the Premier's annual meeting with indigenous leaders, from the Chiefs of Ontario, Métis Nation of Ontario, the Ontario Native Women's Association, and the Ontario federation of indigenous friendships. It's at these meetings that we discuss a lot of these issues that you raised in your last questions.

To date, we've also hosted two leaders in the Legislature. These are events in which First Nation leaders come and meet with ministers and the Premier. The last one was in November of this year. It was spread over a couple of days. We had 10 round table sessions that focused on areas of health, the environment, youth engagement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, resource revenue sharing, economic development and justice.

It's important to say that when those round tables were settled upon—that is, when the agenda of the round table was determined—that agenda was worked out in close consultation with the First Nation. So it wasn't just Ontario's agenda or the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs' agenda or the Minister of Education's agenda; it was an agenda that was jointly arrived at.

I want to say something about indigenous youth and suicide. I would be remiss if I did not mention the terrible tragedy taking place in Attawapiskat, where, as you all know, a recent string of attempted youth suicides has led the indigenous community to declare a state of emergency. It's a terrible tragedy. It cannot be ignored. It is not being ignored.

The safety and well-being of the people in Attawapiskat and indeed in all indigenous communities is important. It's important to the ministry; it's important to all Ontarians and Canadians.

We are concerned about the conditions that led indigenous communities to declare an emergency due to this type of social crisis. That's why the ministry is working very closely with indigenous organizations to support prevention and treatment programs that focus on the well-being of indigenous youth.

We are using our strong relationships across government and with communities to take action. The ministry is working with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to put in place an aboriginal social emergency protocol. That protocol will help coordinate action by the province, the federal partner and our First Nation partners.

The protocol is expected to include the deployment of nurses, nurse practitioners and social workers that enter the community to determine what supports are needed for the medium term.

We will continue to work with the community in the coming days and weeks to determine what other supports and what other investments can be made to help deal

with this crisis. But the actions that we take are not just reactive. We are also working with indigenous partners to implement Ontario's Youth Suicide Prevention Plan.

The plan will support communities to better respond to young people in crisis. We have supported the Ministry of Children and Youth Services in building the Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy to transform the very delivery of programs and services to aboriginal children and youth.

The strategy has been developed, again, jointly with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban indigenous partners. It will focus on increasing the availability of culturally appropriate services. It will enhance community control over service delivery and design.

A number of ministries are joining the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in funding the Promoting Life-skills in Aboriginal Youth Program—the acronym is PLAY—through Right to Play and partner communities.

This program develops youth leadership and sparks positive change. It's a program that's had tremendous uptake in the indigenous communities and with our other partners. It provides an opportunity for youth to participate in consistent—and that is really important—weekly and year-round programming to strengthen self-confidence and leadership capacity.

**1630**

I want to emphasize this idea of consistency in the program. It's not an in-and-out. It has been offered in some 50 communities to date, and we have about 4,500 children and youth who participate in it. I've been to some of their events. You have no idea how uplifting it is to see those programs in action.

We're very proud at the ministry to report that PLAY has been consistently able to leverage every dollar that Ontario has invested to secure two additional dollars from the public, private and non-profit sectors. That program is very successful, and the idea that not just government but other non-government partners are stepping in on a \$2-to-\$1 match is huge.

I want to say something on the issue of violence against indigenous women. As I mentioned this morning, we are proud of the work the ministry has completed. It's launching—you weren't here this morning, Chair—Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women. I don't know if you've had a chance to have a look at it, but it's worth reading. This strategy outlines actions to prevent violence against indigenous women and reduce its impact on youth, their families and their communities. Ontario has committed \$100 million over three years in new funding to support the implementation of this strategy, and an additional \$8 million in existing funding has been allocated. Walking Together is a very important strategy. I urge you to get a copy of it and read it.

Let me tell you something about the investment—

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask the minister if he could maybe bring the microphone a little closer to him or maybe go a little closer to the microphone.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Oh, sorry. Let me give you some details of that \$100-million investment.

It will focus on six areas of action. First, support for children and youth in families, including the launch of a new family well-being program to support indigenous families in crisis and to help communities deal with the effects of inter-generational trauma. Funding will be provided to programs that indigenous communities design and deliver, in order for them to meet their unique community needs. Again, we have this theme of involving the indigenous community.

Second, community and safety healing, which will include the development of a survivor-oriented strategy to assist the identification, intervention and prevention of human trafficking in Ontario. The government will also develop and expand programs that support the health and well-being of indigenous survivors and their families and affected communities and, indeed, the perpetrators of the violence.

Policing and justice: That will include developing a new police training curriculum that will be sensitive to the special needs of indigenous communities.

Prevention and awareness will include public education campaigns to change and alter a lot of harmful attitudes and norms that are out there in the province generally, that perpetuate violence against indigenous women and girls. That's a very important piece of the strategy: to change harmful attitudes and existing norms.

Leadership: I'll say something about leadership, collaboration, alignment and accountability. That's very important when we're talking about the kind of money and the kind of investment that we're talking about. We will continue to build strong relationships with our indigenous partners and the federal government in this area of alignment, accountability and collaboration.

Another piece to the strategy—and the assistant deputy minister talked about this earlier this afternoon—is to improve data and research to guide partners in developing new programs and policies that fit the needs of indigenous communities.

The strategy that I've just outlined would not have been possible without our partners on the joint working group. That working group includes, as I've said earlier today, representatives of indigenous organizations and 10 ministries. The working group collaborated to develop and implement new initiatives aimed at preventing violence and improving supports to victims. It's an important step towards tackling the violence by addressing the socio-economic conditions facing indigenous women and it includes a discussion on housing issues, child care, education and economic opportunities.

I can tell you that after being the minister for three and a half years, addressing these are essential to reducing poverty on- and off-reserve. That poverty on-reserve and off-reserve is a key cause of violence against indigenous women and girls. We are proud of the work we've done so far and we are going to continue to work towards preventing and ultimately ending this violence.

I want to say a few words about economic development. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, the Min-

istry of Aboriginal Affairs is helping to create jobs, support new skills training opportunities and improve the economic conditions of indigenous peoples. I want to take a few minutes to highlight a few projects funded by the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund that are making a real difference. The Aboriginal Economic Development Fund is something we are very proud of.

This year, I had the pleasure of announcing \$224,000 over two years to the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business to help create the tools and financing options for aboriginal businesses. This initiative is a centralized, online service that will connect indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses to service providers across Ontario and Canada.

I also had the opportunity of announcing \$175,000 to help establish the new Experience Akwesasne Welcome Centre, located near the Peace Tree Trade Centre on Cornwall Island. I had the chance to visit this community and tour the welcome centre. It features local artists, it promotes local businesses and it supports local tourism and events. It's a huge success for the indigenous community and for the surrounding municipality of Cornwall and other surrounding communities. I think Mr. Crack is probably aware of that program.

The Aboriginal Economic Development Fund is a key initiative of the province's aboriginal economic development strategy, which we announced in 2010. It contributes to the goals of the overarching Poverty Reduction Strategy by supporting economic development and the government's goal of reducing poverty, inequality and exclusion. In addition, the ministry recently redesigned the Aboriginal Community Capital Grants Program to address gaps in the infrastructure needs of indigenous communities while considering the infrastructure priorities of the province as a whole. This program supports the construction, renovation and/or retrofit of indigenous community facilities, including community centres and learning facilities, at three stages in the development process: (1) the feasibility study completion; (2) the design completion stage; and (3) the actual construction or renovation. We are continuing to support the Métis Voyageur Development Fund, which was created in 2010, by providing \$30 million in funding over 10 years to support Métis economic development.

A few words about consultation: The Supreme Court has made several decisions that have addressed and refined our understanding of the crown's consultation obligations, including circumstances where accommodation may be required. Accommodation may involve a ministry taking steps to avoid irreparable harm or to minimize the adverse effects of a proposed government action or a decision on established or asserted indigenous or treaty rights. The Supreme Court of Canada has also indicated that in some circumstances, consultation and accommodation may involve seeking the consent of indigenous communities.

This year, the ministry has taken steps to explore new provincial approaches to the consultation process. The ministry has formed a time-limited consultations policy

project office. It's tasked with undertaking engagements with First Nations, Métis partners and industry; to review the province's current consultation practices and protocols; and to identify opportunities for improvement in the protocols. Consultation practices help support reconciliation between the crown and indigenous peoples. It helps to strengthen relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous communities in Ontario. Successful consultation and, in some circumstances, accommodation can lead to agreements between indigenous communities, proponents and the crown that create opportunities for new partnerships, employment opportunities and economic spin-offs for all.

**1640**

As I mentioned early, the New Relationship Fund is designed to support indigenous communities and organizations' participation in meaningful consultation and engagement with government and the private sector. Ontario established the New Relationship Fund in 2008 to fulfill a key recommendation of the Ipperwash Inquiry report. This fund is vital to participation in meaningful consultation and engagement by indigenous communities and organizations, including on such issues as land and resource planning.

It has a number of objectives:

- assist First Nation and Métis communities and indigenous communities in building consultation and engagement capacity, as well as the organizational capacity and expertise necessary;

- create jobs by building capacity to engage in economic development;

- assist in developing and improving relationships and partnerships among governments and indigenous organizations and communities; and

- assist in improving the quality of life and in closing the socio-economic gap that exists between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Ontario.

The results have been positive. In 2016-17, we will be funding 108 projects, representing 158 communities across Ontario.

A few words about water: According to Health Canada, 32% of Ontario First Nations reserves do not have access to safe, clean water. We are concerned about the health and safety of all residents of Ontario. We want to ensure that all residents have access to safe, clean drinking water. Although the federal government is primarily responsible for water quality on-reserve, Ontario is committed to working with First Nations and the federal government to improve the state of water on-reserve.

In the spring of 2015, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change developed an action plan to improve First Nations' drinking water in Ontario. The action plan received support, interestingly enough, from the previous federal government and Chiefs of Ontario.

In April 2016, Canada, Ontario and the First Nations met to set up a tripartite steering committee to establish objectives and a governance structure for collaboration

on drinking water. A follow-up to the working group meeting will take place in May of this year, and it will develop a work plan and a critical path forward on the water issue. My ministry will continue to work with the federal government and First Nation leadership to deal with this issue of safe drinking water on-reserve in Ontario.

In conclusion, just let me offer one or two thoughts. Living together in Ontario, we should all—all of us—share in the benefits and obligations of the treaties. Together, we can make that real difference. We have to understand our respective responsibilities under the treaties.

From my conversations when I visit First Nations, when I have meetings with private sector entities, when I have casual conversations and when I talk to my colleagues in the Legislature here from all the parties, I sense a real willingness and a real recognition of the need to deal with the issues that I've highlighted in my remarks and to move towards an era of true reconciliation.

We should continue to build on the momentum and the energy that has already been built. But more importantly, we should look for even better ways and more ways to accelerate this success and get to where we want to go faster. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you.

We now move to the opposition. We're back to 20-minute rotations.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you. The last time I had the opportunity to ask questions, we were talking about the Algonquin land claim. We were kind of partly through that. I think that the last response I had was about next steps. From what I understand there was going to be a bit of a pause, allowing some time for the communities to look at what's been proposed. Maybe you could follow up on that as to how long the pause will be, and then, beyond that, what happens next.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I'm going to refer that to the deputy, who in turn will answer it or refer it to—

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** I can speak quickly to it, I think. Pikwakanagan and others need time to digest in terms of what their next steps are. We're still open and willing to continue to move on. I can't speak to the timing specifically. I know that within Pikwakanagan, they're determining what their next steps are, and then the Algonquin globally are determining what next steps are. It's a fine line to dance, because we can't really push all the parties to say what's happening today. I think we really have to work collaboratively with everybody. But ADM Didluck might be able to add some additional specifics.

**Mr. David Didluck:** Thank you—

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Again, if you could just introduce yourself and your title first. Thank you.

**Mr. David Didluck:** Sorry, I've forgotten again. David Didluck, ADM of negotiations and reconciliation.

The question you ask, member Miller, is an excellent one. To the minister's and deputy's comments, obviously

we're creating space for the Pikwakanagan and the larger Algonquin community to have internal discussions.

The key is this—and we've certainly reminded our federal negotiating partner of this, and they share the view with us: The 20-year investment that the two crown governments have made, particularly with the 85-odd municipalities within the claim area, the 36 specifically that would be impacted by the land selections—the relationships that we've built in the process of working together to figure out on the ground what the modern-day treaty would look like from a land and resource perspective, including with our fisheries, our wildlife groups, the various cottagers and private users of the crown land base, working with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry—all those have been long-term investments. It's a long way of saying that we don't want to turn away from that investment. We've made that front-end investment, and I think the goal is to allow, as the deputy had noted, some space for the communities to internally decide if the parameters of this agreement in principle—do they support, and is it going to achieve, the longer-term reconciliation?

What we continue to hear back from the Algonquins and also the Pikwakanagan community is that the parameters of the AIP are something they support. After all, their leadership took these agreements out to a community vote. But the main issue that remains is really for Pikwakanagan. They are the only reserve-based community.

We have to look at it, perhaps, from their perspective. At the end of this modern-day treaty, that reserve no longer exists. Section 91(24) in the Constitution, which means the Indians and lands reserved for Indians which were attached to that, no longer exists. That's a fundamental change of identity, so we appreciate that that's going to take some time for the community to work through.

In terms of time frame, we've been talking to all of our ministry partners to continue the internal work. There's lots of fishery studies; there's lots of preparatory pieces around self-government; conversations still with municipalities around consultation on the land component, including if the agreement moves into final agreement negotiations; there would need to be a declaration order; there would need to be an environmental assessment. There's a lot of work to do still. That will continue in the interim period, until we get a firmer response from the community. I think we'd like to be in a position of saying within the next six months there's clarity, but again, that is a very rough time frame.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** If you reach that clarity in the process, then, is there more public consultation for the various municipalities and all those other groups that you've just described, which you've invested so much time with—the fish and wildlife groups, the municipalities and landowners and all the various people affected?

**Mr. David Didluck:** Absolutely. There were 200 meetings with over 2,000 individuals in the consultation process leading up to the release of the draft agreement in

principle. If the parties come to a consensus that that agreement in principle is sound, it's the basis to move into the next phase.

**1650**

Again, the work doesn't stop. Remember that an agreement in principle is just that. It's not actually a constitutionally protected treaty. It's not actually a legally binding document. It's an agreement between the parties of principles. It means that there's still work to be done.

The estimated time frame: If I'm going to anticipate, your next question, Mr. Miller, is, "How long after that?" As I suspected that might be where you're going, again, I refer you to some of the comparative examples nationally. We talked about British Columbia a bit this morning; they're 35-, 40-year time frames. I think our best estimate, as we've advised the minister and deputy, might be an additional five to six years before we would actually see the final agreement.

Keep in mind that that final agreement has to be passed by the federal Legislature, by the Algonquin through a vote, and certainly through the provincial Legislature. It would require legislation to implement, so as you can appreciate, there would be some implementation time required there.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I guess I might as well stay on this sort of theme. I think you mentioned before that you have a mandate to increase awareness with regard to treaties. I think you were talking about the posters you were handing out in 5,000 schools around the province. Can you update me on what's happening with that process, please?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I've got my mandate letter here and I'm going to quote from it. Just a second here. I was waiting for this question because I wanted to get my mandate letter out.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I've got it here, if you want.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Have you? Okay.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I can read it to you.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I had it here somewhere. Anyway, you've got my mandate letter there. Do you want to know about my mandate letter or about treaties?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** No, I just wanted to know what you had done to satisfy the mandate letter in terms of education about treaties, and also what the anticipated costs of that program are.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Well, we are committed to working with—just a second. I do want to get my mandate letter out. We had it here because we anticipated that question.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have: "Moving forward with a new treaty strategy that will promote constructive engagement with First Nation communities, revitalize treaty relationships and promote improved socio-economic outcomes for aboriginal peoples. You will also develop an education and awareness campaign to increase public awareness, understanding and recognition of treaties and treaty rights."

**Mr. Todd Smith:** You should have it memorized.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Yes, I do. But I am going to take the opportunity of your question to read my mandate letter into the record.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** The whole thing?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** The whole thing.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** But you've already spoken for an hour.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** But I want the mandate letter on the record.

I received this mandate letter from the Premier on September 23, 2014. It is very important because it's the document that is changing the way we interact with our indigenous communities.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I don't have that much time. I mean, if we get to the end of the 15 hours and we're running out of things, then that would be good, but I don't have that much time to be able to ask questions, so I'd rather you didn't read the whole mandate letter into the record. I will refer to it, though, in going to the next topic, which is about the duty to consult.

In your mandate letter, it says, "Working with ministers to ensure that Ontario continues to meet its duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate aboriginal communities."

I think this is a really important issue. As the mining critic as well, when you talk to mining companies, there seems to be a lot of concern about the uncertainty about their responsibilities in the field as to what they need to do and how every agreement seems to be a little bit different. So there is uncertainty out there.

I guess in the worst-case scenario—I see in the October 29, 2015, *Financial Post* the case of a Canadian company that's left the province and is suing the province. The headline is, "The Canadian Resource Sector's Messy Duty to Consult."

"The company cancelled further work—even while believing that it had found a world-class mineral deposit."

It goes on: "Next week, closing arguments will be heard in a lawsuit that highlights the Ontario provincial government's slowness in developing clear approaches to the duty to consult aboriginal communities and in offering any clarity to those attempting to operate in the Canadian resource sector."

He concludes by saying, "In turn, that uncertain environment causes challenges for everyone and risks undermining prosperity for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities even in circumstances where resource developments might have worked for everyone. Governments facing lawsuits and having to pay out larger sums might turn out to be the pressure needed to get them to work more proactively to establish a clear, predictable legal environment."

The whole article was written by Dwight Newman—he's a professor of law and Canada research chair in indigenous rights at the University of Saskatchewan and a visiting fellow at the James Madison Program, Princeton University. I think this is the case where Northern Superior Resources, a junior exploration company, is suing the Ontario government for \$20 million.

It seems to me—and I say it having talked to mining companies—that there is a lot of uncertainty out there. What are you doing about having more certainty and more of a solid template so that the people involved in the mining industry know what to do and so that the aboriginal communities are going to benefit from the development of mines? I think we would all agree that that's a positive and one of the best reasons for hope for aboriginal communities, particularly when you look at remote ones like in the Ring of Fire, for example.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** That's a very good question. I do agree with the tail end of your question—that this is something that we want to improve upon, that we want to get right, and we want to have a meaningful and fair consultation process so we avoid these issues that you've raised.

A while ago, this issue came directly to the attention of the Premier and the Premier's office. A meeting was convened with the relevant ministries, and we decided that what we needed in Ontario was a comprehensive review of our consultation process. The reality was we were hearing from different entities in the private sector, often from different ministries, different people who had different ideas about how the consultation process worked, how deep the consultation process had to be, what outcomes should be looked at in terms of the end result of the consultation process and so on.

Having recognized that problem, a review led by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has been established. We are working with other ministries, so forestry and mines and so on. We are working with the private sector. We are working with others who have a view on this issue, who have to work with these issues on a day-to-day basis.

I'm going to ask the deputy now to give a report, if you will, on where that consultation review is. It started a number of months ago, probably six months ago. The idea is that at the end of that review, we will have a sounder basis, a set of common themes or approaches, to approach the consultation process, so everybody's working from the same playbook, if you will.

Deputy?

1700

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** MPP Miller, you're exactly right. I think that people are looking for clarity. There are a lot of moving pieces. You've got the Supreme Court of Canada ruling that talks about the legal duty to consult and accommodate, then you have the federal government recognizing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and then you have industry asking for what the rules of the game are.

What we are undertaking—and actually, the director of the consultation unit, Matt Garrow, is sitting here if we have more detailed questions. What we did is we compiled a little consultation project team and we brought in other ministries that actually do direct line consultation. We borrowed resources from within existing resources to start to look at what else is out there and what others are doing. We're also working with indigenous partners to

engage, to start having conversations. We've also been meeting with the mining sector, as well as the forestry sector, on looking at how all of this looks. So we're hoping to be able to bring something forward, probably in late fall, to start to look at all these different pieces, whether it's the resource revenue sharing piece, whether it's the consultation piece and the UN declaration, and what a bit of a plan is or a road map going forward. That's sort of what we're working on internally.

The other thing I did want to speak to is what the New Relationship Fund does, because before the New Relationship Fund was announced in 2008, communities were being inundated by environmental assessment requests or even requests from municipalities of, "This sidewalk development is happening," in terms of the legal duty to consult. So you can imagine a First Nation that has very limited resources with a pile like this on their desk of EAs. What the New Relationship Fund did was establish a core body in every single community. Then there became a point of contact for communities, in terms of a point of contact for industry and for others. So that's another thing that the New Relationship Fund did.

I didn't want to miss your other question around treaties, because I think it's a very, very important one. You did ask the question about what we are doing with treaties.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Just a reminder, you have about two minutes.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Two minutes? So we are directly engaging with indigenous partners in terms of—when we talk about treaties, what do you mean? Right? What do you mean in terms of treaties? Some will say sharing, some will say food security, and a whole different range of things. The first piece that we're doing is engaging, which is huge, because the province never had authority to be able to do that before. We were able to get authority for that.

The second piece is around public education. We've been working with a number of partners around providing tools to teachers to be able to teach about treaties in the schools. For example, we worked with the Anishinabek Nation, or the Union of Ontario Indians, on the creation of a Lego toolkit of a wampum belt that gives a teaching curriculum for teachers. It's now been translated into French as well, so it's in English and French. That's a tool available.

Myself and my staff, we actually go into public schools to provide an overview of indigenous people in terms of who they are, treaties, what treaties are and all the different lenses that are available. Those are some of the things that we do within the province in terms of public education, and we also are providing advice and counsel to the Ministry of Education, who is working in terms of developing some curriculum on residential schools and treaties.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** You have 30 seconds.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thirty seconds. Coming back to the duty to consult, because I think that's really important

for First Nation communities and for industry in Ontario as well: In your review that you're doing, are you also looking outside of Ontario to see maybe where other areas have handled the situation differently?

I know in Ontario you kind of delegated, in many cases in the mining sector, the duty to consult to industry. I believe it's Saskatchewan where they have not done that. I just know that they have a much higher rating in the Fraser report on mining than we do, for example. So I'm just asking if you're looking at other jurisdictions.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you, Mr. Miller—

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Absolutely.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** —I'm afraid your time is up. Madame Gélinas, you have 20 minutes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Just to piggyback on what he just said: This morning you mentioned that you had 64 land claims; 47 of them are in negotiation. You mentioned about \$121 million in settlements. When I looked in your estimates book, it's quite obvious that it doesn't come from your ministry, because you haven't got \$121 million.

When I'm trying to follow the money—first of all, where does the money to pay the lawyers and the people to do the work come from? Then, where does the money for the settlement come from and where in the estimates book would I find it?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Just the short answer—then I'll ask the CAO to give the details—there's a placeholder in the estimates, which is a nominal amount, because when the claims are paid out monies are transferred from finance or whatever the other ministry that it comes from. It flows into our office, if you will, and right out. So we don't set aside MAA money to settle the claim, other than a placeholder. The money flows in and flows out. That's why it's not reflected in here.

A more detailed accounting explanation will come from—

**Ms. Paula Reid:** Hi. My name is Paula Reid. I'm the chief administrative officer for the ministry.

As the minister just outlined, within our printed estimates, we have a statutory appropriation line that's \$1,000 because each year the ministry does not know absolutely which land claims will be settled or how much the cost to settle the claim may be. So that's why we're provisionally given \$1,000.

Each time, we do go back to Treasury Board and cabinet to seek that approval in the appropriation. We usually do it in two steps: We go and ask for a mandate to do the negotiation, with some parameters, so that we understand what the impact will be. Then we go back when we have the draft agreement or land claim in place.

Sometimes there is a transfer of land, so the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is involved because they are the crown-land holder. There is some impact when we transfer land to the federal government to assign it to a reserve.

There is also, within our printed estimates, some funding that we do use to help the communities participate in

the land claims with us. There is also a provision within our printed estimates from our salary line—salary and wage appropriation—where we do pay our own internal negotiators and legal staff who go out and do the negotiations with the community.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm looking at page 33 of your estimates book. Salaries and wages: \$4,096,314, or about \$4 million. That's ministry administration, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, for a total of about \$13 million in employee salaries and wages. All of the people who negotiate those land claims are captured within that \$13-million line?

**Ms. Paula Reid:** All of the staff within MAA proper are within that \$13.2 million.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Would there be staff paid by other ministries also participating in those negotiations?

**Ms. Paula Reid:** Not within our allocation, no. But if we have to seek legal counsel through the Ministry of the Attorney General, they would have provision within their ongoing business to assist us with some of that. That would be buried within their printed estimates.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. Any money given to—any support, I should say, given to the First Nations to be able to enter into those land claim negotiations: Where does that money come from and where does it show?

**Ms. Paula Reid:** That is within our printed estimates. It's under transfer—

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could you move the mike a little closer?

**Ms. Paula Reid:** Oh, sorry. I feel like I'm yelling. My apologies.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Move close to the mike.

**Ms. Paula Reid:** Where we provide money to the communities is through a transfer payment. I'm not exactly sure where it is in the book. Within our printed estimates, it is under "Support for Community Negotiations Fund," which is \$3.2 million.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, so the \$3.2 million is what the 47 communities in negotiations—they share that \$3 million?

1710

**Ms. Paula Reid:** Yes. That's where we would provide additional money when we are in the process of negotiating with them, for them to participate in the process with us.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So if I wanted to have an idea as to altogether how much in salaries and legal fees from your ministry, from the AG and from the other ministries were put in to come to a negotiated land claim, would that ever be feasible or possible?

**Ms. Paula Reid:** Yes, I think we could come up with it. I don't have that off the top of my head.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So you never keep track as to how many resources the Ontario government has put in to come to a land claim settlement?

**Mr. David Didluck:** The short answer is that we do. Just to give you a tangible example: In fiscal 2015-16, it's about \$13 million, all in negotiation—the operational

costs to the ministry to negotiate. That includes the large-scale Algonquin claim and the other land claims that we're working on across Ontario.

You could look in estimates and break down the budget of my division into its respective parts. We have a negotiations branch, and of that branch, there are two line items for a director and deputy director. For all of the staff of those individuals, the budget for the staffing costs works out to about \$3 million.

We could go down further and look at transportation expenses. To the CAO's point, yes, we could develop that. But to give you some rough numbers, it's about \$3 million in a year for staffing costs alone, and the overall cost of administration for 2015-16 as a measure was about \$13 million.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** All right, but that is not claim-by-claim. So if a claim takes 30 years, at \$3 million that would be a lot of money.

**Mr. David Didluck:** I understand the calculation you're trying to make. I think the challenge, of course, is that claims are always moving at different paces and different speeds. No two claims are typically the same because they're rooted in the treaty history and whatever legal obligations are owed to the crown. It's very common where we would have a negotiator working with multiple communities. I won't name the negotiator by name, but I have a negotiator working on a group of flooding claims. That individual is managing about 14 files at one time. There could be another negotiator who might be attached to one or two claims because of their size and complexity.

So you can't do a per capita calculation for how many staff per claim equal a dollar figure. You would have to look at the annual costs that we're quoting here and calculate it out by the number of claims that are in the system at the moment, the 48 that are accepted. You could get a rough calculation per claim, but I would caution members in making that calculation, because you could do that and you would find that the per capita for Algonquin would be the same as a tiny treaty land entitlement claim in northern Ontario. They're apples and oranges in terms of calculations.

So, we do track the numbers; it's just hard to do it claim by claim.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, so the answer to my question—do we know how much the government invests in good people like you to come to a settlement, by settlement?—is, "We don't know"? We put in the resources that are needed to get the job done, but we don't know what those resources are in numbers?

**Ms. Paula Reid:** We do. In each year, as David has mentioned—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No, per claim, not per year. Once we reach a claim, we know what the settlement amount for that claim is, but we don't know how much the government has invested to get there—per claim, not per year.

**Ms. Paula Reid:** As David was mentioning, because individual staff may work on multiple claims, they're

also working on reconciliation activities, normal travel—those types of activities. We would be requiring staff to actually log their time—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It's okay to say you don't have it.

**Ms. Paula Reid:** We don't have that information.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** That's just fine. When you did mention the \$121 million in settlement—this is for this year?

**Ms. Paula Reid:** No.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** That's the number that the minister mentioned this morning, when he was talking about 64 claims: 47 are in negotiations, and \$121 million in settlement.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Let me offer an analogy here that might clear it up. The assistant deputy has referred to one of his negotiators, who is working on 14 claims, and another negotiator, who is working on three—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I've moved on, Minister. I'm asking about the \$121 million in settlement. Is this for the last three years, or is this just this year's transfer?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Well, here you go. Deputy, you can give the answer.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Specifically, since 2003, Ontario has settled 18 land claims and land-related matters, involving the transfer of 58,604 acres of land to Canada, to be added to First Nations reserves. The compensation package has totalled \$121,491,000.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So that's for the last 13 years?

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And that happens to be for 13 claims?

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay—

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** No, 18 land claims.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Eighteen claims in 13 years.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Yes.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, thank you. I just wanted to be clear on that.

I still don't know in which book of estimates I look to see where that \$121 million came from. I fully understand that you have a line to allow you to do the transfer. What I'm not so clear on is, if I looked at the Ministry of Finance, will I see a line for land claims, so I know how much was paid each year?

**Ms. Paula Reid:** That would appear in our public accounts, and it would be under our settlements. If you add up those 10 years, part of that would be under that statutory line that we would be able to rebuild that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I don't know what a statutory line is.

**Ms. Paula Reid:** Oh, sorry. It's the \$1,000 line that appears in our printed estimates. We'll have a far bigger number in the public accounts, that same line.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. So if I go through the public accounts and look at that line, then year by year, I will see how much money you have transferred.

**Ms. Paula Reid:** Right.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. But I won't know to who?

**Ms. Paula Reid:** Right.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Could I ask you to do that work, rather than me, and let me know how much money went to who and when?

**Ms. Paula Reid:** In the public accounts, absolutely, we can build that for you.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, thank you. I'm sure that you will be way better at it than I could ever be.

**Ms. Paula Reid:** No problem.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. These are one-off questions that I want to put on today before my time goes. Minister, it's something that I have talked to you about, and I know that you have made a trip to go see those good people in Wahnapiatae First Nation.

Wahnapiatae First Nation is a tiny, weeny little First Nation—one kilometre square—on the side of Lake Wanapitei. For reasons unknown—and I will show my bias—because somebody down south did not even know they existed, they decided that all of this vast land, where nobody lives, should be in the riding of Timiskaming. Then, on the ground, there is a thriving First Nation, with beautiful resources, who live there and are in the wrong riding. They are minutes away from my constituency office. They come to me for constituency work, and I'm quite happy to service them. But when it comes time to vote, they look on the ballot and my name is not there, because they're not in Nickel Belt. They're in another riding.

We had an opportunity to do boundary changes, and we changed the boundaries so that we would have 122 ridings, just like the federal government did. It was a bonus opportunity to make sure that Wahnapiatae First Nation got put into the right riding, which is Nickel Belt, and not Timiskaming–Cochrane, which is three ridings and a seven-hour drive away.

But members of your party decided that that was going to open up a floodgate of First Nations who would want to change ridings. I did write to every single First Nation and ask them if any of them were interested in changing ridings, and I can assure you that none of them are except for Wahnapiatae First Nation. I'm asking you again, Minister: When will the ridings of Nickel Belt and Timiskaming–Cochrane change so that Wahnapiatae gets to vote in the riding where they live, not seven hours and three ridings away from where they live?

**1720**

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Thank you. You did raise that issue with me. Subsequent to that, I did pay a visit to Wahnapiatae First Nation. We had a very good visit. We had an afternoon discussion about a host of issues that Wahnapiatae was dealing with. They did raise this issue. As you know, this is a federal boundary commission issue. As you have written to all of the First Nations and others, I hope that you will take the same time and engage the federal government on this issue.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** No, at the federal level they are in Nickel Belt. The federal got it right. At the federal



level, they're quite happy. Federally they're in Nickel Belt. It's only provincially that they're in Timiskaming–Cochrane. The feds are quite happy to lend their support for the provincial government to do something, but there is nothing they can do. They've already got it right.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Madame Gélinas, you have just about three minutes left.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So what can we do to get those good people in the right riding?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Well, I will take that under advisement. Thank you.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** All right. How much time do you figure that advisement will take?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I will take that under advisement.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** All right, so if I say before the next election? Scheduled for 2018?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Sorry, can I make a point of order?

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Point of order, Ms. Kiwala.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I'm just not sure what this line of questioning has to do with a line item in estimates.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It's not a point of order, but thank you. We'll continue. Madame Gélinas?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So is there a chance that it will be done before the 2018 election?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** By advisement, I have noted your comments and I'll just let it stop there.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay. Would a private member's bill help you?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I've taken the matter under advisement and I'll let the matter stop there.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Just as the ministers are quite free to say whatever they want—you're quite free to follow whatever you want to follow in terms of lines of questioning—so is Madame Gélinas and the official opposition. I hope that satisfies your concern.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I'm just not sure if this is relevant to the discussion that we should be having at estimates.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It's about First Nations. It's about, presumably, this portfolio.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Estimates.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Madame Gélinas, you now have a minute and a half if you'd like to move on.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You've met with Chief Roque. They are small in territory, but they are growing. They are a tremendous First Nation. All of them are educated. All of them have good jobs. They are self-employed. They do a ton of work in environment. They are a model to follow for many other First Nations. They do environmental work all over the globe.

Not very often do they turn to the provincial government for help, but this time they did. They turned to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and said, "This has been going on for too long. We need this to be settled." To

take it under advisement—I'll respect this, but I want more.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Well, you've heard my remarks—my opening remarks, my closing remarks. You've heard remarks from the deputy and assistant deputy about this idea of consultation. When you raised this matter with me and Wahnapiatae raised this matter with the ministry, we thought about it and we organized a trip up there. We have met with the chief and band council on this issue. We are taking our consultation theme that I've talked about, and that has been a part of the day's discussions. In that sense, I am taking your comments under advisement.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** You raised their expectations—

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I'm sorry, Madame Gélinas. Your time is up. We now move to the government side. Ms. Kiwala.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Before I begin with my question, I just wanted to provide you with a little bit of context on my question. As you know, I was elected for the first time on June 14, 2014.

One week later, on June 21, 2014, was National Aboriginal Day. I went to National Aboriginal Day, one of my first official functions. I was very happy to be there. I saw a friend of mine there, a Mohawk grandmother who was in her wheelchair watching the proceedings down below, in the atrium at Kingston city hall. She had not heard about the results of the election. When she saw me, she asked me who had won the election.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I hope you're listening; it's a good story.

When I told her that I won the election, she looked at me and she grabbed me and gave me a great big hug, cheek to cheek. Tears streamed down her cheek. She said to me, "Things seem to be coming into place now." I said, "What do you mean by that?" She said, "Well, I think that the right people are coming into the right place now, and I see that with you winning this election." I thought, "Wow, that's pretty weighty."

Of course, at that time, there was a lot of discussion about a national inquiry for the missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. Following that time when we came back in September, I learned that I had my first opportunity for a private member's bill. I brought forward—I'm sure you probably remember—a motion to ask the federal government for a national inquiry on the missing and murdered aboriginal women.

I just wanted to say that Laurel Claus-Johnson, that grandmother that I told you about, was right. I feel like we are in a good time right now. I think that the right people are coming into the right place to advance aboriginal and indigenous causes throughout our province. I have to say that I have been very inspired by the work of the ministry, and not just this ministry but many other ministries that have worked together to support indigenous peoples across this province.

Back to the meat of the question: We all know that indigenous women are nearly three times more likely

than non-indigenous women to experience violence, whether it's assault, robbery or sexual assault. In the past five years, 15% of indigenous women have been victimized by a spouse, compared to only 6% of non-indigenous women. First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban indigenous organizations are unanimous in identifying violence against indigenous women as a priority issue in their communities, and have applied significant effort to raise awareness of this issue.

I understand that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs currently co-chairs Ontario's Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women and supports a number of high-priority and high-profile initiatives that engage several ministries across government, indigenous partners across the province and members of the joint working group on this issue.

I know that Ontario has long supported the call for a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada. I have to say that I was very happy to have unanimous support of that motion in the Ontario Legislature in 2014.

I'm glad to see that we will be an active participant in the national inquiry that was launched by the federal government in December 2015. I understand that your ministry worked to support the national aboriginal organizations, the NAOs, for the second National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, in Winnipeg last February, which you attended with the Premier.

1730

At the round table, Ontario presented a proposed Canada-wide prevention and awareness campaign to focus on changing public perception and attitudes to help end violence against indigenous women and girls, and I'd like to compliment you and your ministry on that effort.

My question to you, Minister, is: Can you provide more details on your ministry's involvement with the joint working group?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Thank you very much for that question, because it provides the opportunity to discuss a very real and sensitive issue, and an issue that needs addressing.

Our government is very troubled—indeed, we all are; everybody—by the high rates of violence against indigenous women and girls. According to Statistics Canada, indigenous women are three times more likely than other Canadian women to report being victims of violence. The government of Ontario established the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women in 2010 to address the high rates of violence against indigenous women and their families.

The joint working group had a very significant role in the development of the Walking Together strategy, which I've referred to a couple of times. Again, I urge everybody to have a look at it. It is, in many ways, a foundational document.

Ontario is considering a variety of options to support indigenous partners in implementing the long-term strategy. Partners are continuing to be consulted and will be engaged throughout the entire process.

But as we chart forward on the implementation of the long-term strategy, we have to work hand in hand with the indigenous organizations, we have to work hand in hand with the federal government, and we have to work hand in hand with other provinces and territories to strengthen the existing initiatives and to take a very coordinated approach to ending violence against indigenous women and girls.

Let me tell you something about the joint working group. The joint working group is currently co-chaired by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres and the OWD, the Ontario Women's Directorate, and consists of officials from 10 provincial ministries. That includes aboriginal affairs, Attorney General, citizenship and immigration, children and youth services, education; Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; community and social services, community safety and correctional services, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It's a part of what we have been referring to over the past few years as the "whole of government" approach. The idea is not to deal with this thing silo by silo.

We also have representatives from the many indigenous organizations, including the Chiefs of Ontario, the Independent First Nations, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, the Ontario Native Women's Association, and Métis Nation of Ontario.

The joint working group has been guided by the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women, which was developed by our indigenous partners and includes recommendations for broad actions on this issue.

An evaluation of the joint working group was completed just recently, in December 2015, with key outcomes highlighting that indigenous and ministry partners should continue to play an advisory role in the implementation of a long-term strategy, although there is an opportunity to modify the current working group structure.

The joint working group has been responsive in addressing the call to end the violence against indigenous women and girls. The establishment of the relationship between indigenous and ministry partners was considered a success of the joint working group.

The key findings suggest that the current format and processes of the joint working group need some re-positioning in order to maximize the role of indigenous and ministry partners and fully engage partners in implementing the long-term strategy.

The long-term strategy includes proposed initiatives under the pillars of prevention, awareness, socio-economic conditions, community safety, healing, policing and justice, children and youth, government leadership, accountability, and data and research. The total cost of the strategy is \$108 million over three years: \$100 million of that is in new funding and the remaining \$8 million will be managed from within existing allocations.

The investment is going to focus on six areas of action: first, supporting children, youth and families; second, community safety and healing; third, policing and justice;

fourth, prevention and awareness; fifth, leadership, collaboration, alignment and accountability; and last, data, research and performance measures. Performance measures are very important when we're dealing with an issue as serious as this and with the amounts of money that we're investing in the strategy.

The majority of both new and existing funding will be used for front-line service delivery of supports under the long-term strategy and awareness training. The strategy includes support for a Canada-wide public awareness campaign in Ontario—the Ontario portion of it—including adapting it, as appropriate, to the Ontario context.

The Premier has publicly committed that Ontario will provide \$1.15 million to fund the creative and production costs for the national prevention and awareness campaign. That's a campaign to change attitudes and prevent violence against indigenous women and girls.

This is a commitment that arose from the Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The outcomes of this campaign will include increased awareness of the racism and sexism that are in many, many ways the root causes of this violence against indigenous women and girls. It will change attitudes. It will change norms. It will change behaviours that perpetuate violence against indigenous women. We are looking for a cultural change here.

Under the long-term strategy, Ontario has also committed to developing mandatory training for the Ontario public service to address racism, discrimination and bias against indigenous peoples. I spoke a bit about this issue this morning. The introduction of the mandatory cultural competency training was announced by the Premier in February 2016. What that will involve is the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs engaging with our indigenous partners on the design and development to ensure that the mandatory training is designed to support a wide variety of professions for public servants.

The Ontario government has publicly announced a target of ensuring that all employees of the Ontario public service—and that's approximately 60,000—will receive this training. That training will be delivered from the entry-level clerk right up to the deputy minister sitting on my left, and throughout all ministries.

The training will help to address the pervasive effects of colonization and the underlying racist attitudes, the underlying stereotypes and the implicit biases that are really hard to root out that perpetuate this high rate of violence against indigenous women and girls. We are looking to improve policy, program and service delivery to indigenous peoples. A component on violence against indigenous women will be included in the training.

My ministry, aboriginal affairs, will lead the design, development and implementation of the cultural competency training across the OPS. We will work with all of the other ministries and the Anti-Racism Directorate. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is currently developing an aboriginal inclusion lens that can assist other ministries in considering the implications for indigenous people as they are developing their policies and other actions.

An inter-ministerial working group has been established to provide input to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs as we move forward with the development and implementation of the mandatory cultural competency training.

**1740**

The long-term strategy is also aligned with a number of other initiatives across government—this comes through the whole-of-government approach—including, but not limited to, the enhancing aboriginal voices and control framework, the Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy, the mental health and addictions strategy, the Ontario Youth Action Plan and the sexual violence and harassment action plan.

We at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs will be actively working with our federal partners, because they have the heavy on-reserve responsibilities, to ensure that the initiatives that we take at the provincial level align with the initiatives that are taken at the federal level. Again: whole-of-government idea.

This will include a national awareness and prevention activities program. We will be working with the Ontario Native Women's Association to coordinate Ontario's role in the substantial work across the region, across the province and with the federal government. It will include the alignment of provincial and federal commitments in relation to the federal government's \$40-million national inquiry.

I am going to ask the deputy to speak a little more about this issue.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Thank you, Minister. I just wanted to speak a little bit about the round table that we attended in Winnipeg, which is the second round table with the five national aboriginal organizations and all of the different provinces and territories from across Canada, as well as the federal government.

It was a really powerful event, because you had a lot of families speaking about murdered or missing family members. You needed a box of Kleenex for sure, because it was a very emotional time and there was quite a large delegation from this province of people whose family members have gone missing or were murdered. That was a really powerful event.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Just to let the government side know, you've got under three minutes left.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** But what was really moving was a blanket ceremony that was held, where every single family member was draped in a blanket. It's very symbolic, in terms of the blanket themselves, but even the just wrapping around to show that we're all wrapping our arms and ourselves around them to comfort them. Every single family member was awarded one of those blankets.

I think that through that process, we were able to establish a good relationship with a number of the families. As we figure out how the provincial role works in the national inquiry, we have that network now. For example, I know that up in treaty 3, there's quite a network and they're quite organized in terms of the

families of murdered and missing people. But also through the First Nations Women's Caucus, which is a number of female chiefs, they also have a network. They did have one annual gathering with the families and they expressed an interest in having another one.

We need to make sure as this inquiry unfolds that families have supports: the necessary mental health supports and also just supports that they're going to need in terms of what the process is and how things work. We're still waiting to find out from the federal government what that will look like, but we want to be able to be responsive and work with the partners to make sure that we're meeting their needs too and working together collaboratively.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** You have a minute and a bit left. Would you like to take it?

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** I think that another event that I would like to speak to that we are also hosting, as it evolves from province to province every couple of years, is the NAWS, the—

**Interjection:** National Aboriginal Women's Summit.

**Ms. Deborah Richardson:** Right, the National Aboriginal Women's Summit. It's funny how you get stuck on acronyms and you forget what the actual full word is. It's a little alarming, actually.

We will be hosting that here in Toronto this November. It's a number of national aboriginal women's organizations and provinces and territories and the federal government that will come together. We're working right now with our joint working group on how that unfolds. I don't know, ADM Thatcher, if you want to just elaborate a little bit on that.

**Ms. Hillary Thatcher:** It just looks like it's a two-day event at the end of November. All of the national aboriginal organizations will be here.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** And that about does it. Thank you. We now move to the official opposition. Mr. Smith.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I know this is a complex file and we've been talking a lot about it for a long time today. We only have a few minutes left, but I wanted to touch on an issue a little bit closer to my home in Prince Edward-Hastings. One of my municipalities is Deseronto, right along the Bay of Quinte, and, of course, there's the Culbertson land tract issue there as well.

I was just wondering, in the short time that we have before we have to go to the House to vote, if you could bring us up to date on where the province is involved with the Culbertson land tract issue because it's having a devastating impact on the town of Deseronto.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I'm going to ask Assistant Deputy Minister Didluck, who is the negotiations person, to speak to this.

**Mr. David Didluck:** Great. Thank you for your question. It's a very timely one, in fact.

I attended a meeting with the federal senior assistant deputy minister, Joe Wild, from the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada treaty and self-government directorate about a month ago, along with Chief Maracle. As you know, Chief Don Maracle is the chief of the

Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. As you also know, there is a claim assertion—the Culbertson tract—which includes the town of Deseronto and lands even north of the 401.

The challenge remains that this is a pre-Confederation claim. It is a claim or assertion prior to when Ontario joined the federation and, of course, prior to that date we didn't exist as a province. We have a view, and that would be that our liability would be limited to Confederation and onward. That's more of our issue. The challenge remains the one of debate between Canada and the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.

As I understand the issue, the challenge remains that—well, two things, one of which is that there are private land holdings within the tract, and certainly there are lots of private properties within the municipality. The second challenge is that the community has taken a very strong and direct view on a federal requirement to cede, release and surrender the land.

So typically how it works is that there would be an exchange of the uncertainty of the rights for an agreement and the First Nation would be asked to surrender any aboriginal title or lingering interests in that land. It's not a position that the First Nation, as I understand from the chief, is willing to take. There are assertions of sovereignty and there are assertions that date well back before Confederation.

The debate remains, to be blunt, between our federal colleagues and the community on how they would go about trying to resolve that. I think what we've heard from the town—and I know, Minister, you've received some correspondence from area municipalities—is that that creates uncertainty. Unfortunately, that wouldn't be the only part of Ontario where there would be uncertainty because of unresolved land claims, dare I say, although we're working on it.

So on this case, our function has been very much trying to advocate for a federal return to the negotiation table. There is some outstanding litigation involving the province and an individual private landholder, which I can't comment on here, but that is the extent of Ontario's involvement—trying to engage with the First Nation to better understand how might we facilitate some of the economic development and other positive initiatives that they have within the area.

As you know, Chief Maracle is a very strident advocate for his community, but he also has a very solid economic development lens. I believe he is in the process of making an application to our Aboriginal Economic Development Fund as well as our New Relationship Fund for some of the supports to look at those initiatives. Regardless, the underlying claim with Canada remains. That's kind of where things are at.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Sure. I'm sure you're aware, as well, that the mayor of Deseronto and some other local municipal councillors are very worried about the impact. I believe I had written to you, Minister—it may have been your predecessor—about this. The mayor has said to me that because of the lack of economic development and negative growth in that community and the increas-

ing costs of things like policing and other outside costs on the municipality, he's at a point now where he says that one of these days he's going to come down here to Queen's Park and just drop off the keys to the city hall or to the town hall on your desk and have you take over, because they just can't afford to run the municipality any longer.

I'm just wondering if your ministry works in conjunction with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in these types of situations—and there are others across the province, as you alluded to, where there is a similar situation—to help those municipalities that are caught inside these types of negotiations, to deal with some of the outside costs, to make life a little bit easier for them until these issues are resolved by the federal government.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** That's a very good question. I'm aware of this issue, and this issue has cropped up at other places throughout the province.

Without being too political here, you heard from the deputy that, essentially, this is a matter between the First Nation and the federal government. I can tell you that in the last nine or 10 years, the previous federal government was—I'll just say that they weren't as engaged, with the same level of passion, as the new federal government is engaged on a host of treaty issues—

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Well, I know that, in this case, the previous federal government had what they thought was an agreement in place, but at the eleventh hour, the chief of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte decided not to accept the deal.

And we'll have to end there, I guess.

**The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I'm afraid that the bells call us to the House. This committee will be adjourned until tomorrow, after routine proceedings in the afternoon at 3:30.

*The committee adjourned at 1752.*





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