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Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

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Thursday, November 23, 2006

—
Chair

The Honourable Diane Marleau

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• (1110)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.)): I think we should begin by dealing with the estimates so we can get that over with. Then we can move in camera to study the draft report on accrual accounting.

We're going to start with vote 95a.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Public Service Commission

Vote 95a—Program expenditures.....\$2,100,944

(Vote 95a agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the chair report vote 95a under Canadian Heritage to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall vote 1a under Governor General carry?

GOVERNOR GENERAL

Vote 1a—Program expenditures.....\$320,818

(Vote 1a agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the chair report vote 1a under Governor General to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall vote 1a and vote 10a under Privy Council carry?

PRIVY COUNCIL

Department

Vote 1a—Program expenditures.....\$16,435,412

Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board

Vote 10a—Program expenditures.....\$1,573,856

(Votes 1a and 10a agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the chair report votes 1a and 10a under Privy Council to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall vote 1a under Public Works and Government Services carry?

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Could we pull it, do the others, and come back to that?

The Chair: Let's do the others then.

Do you want to wait to do all of Public Works together?

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Why do we have to wait until the end? Let's just deal with Ms. Chow's motion. Just do it in sequence.

The Chair: It's up to you.

Vote 5a is fine.

Mr. Moore says he wants to deal with Madame Chow's motion right away.

Please read it into the record.

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): This \$8.4 million is part of the administrative and the advertising cost of the universal child care benefit and—

The Chair: Read the motion, please.

Ms. Olivia Chow: It has been circulated, I believe.

It's that vote 1a under Public Works and Government Services be reduced by \$8 million—

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): That's not how it reads, Madam Chair. I believe the one that was circulated talks about \$107,473. That's the one that was circulated.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Madame Chair, to be very clear, I submitted a motion earlier that basically said to take out on page 243 of the budget estimates, Public Works and Government Services, vote 1a, the funding for the administration and delivery of the universal child care benefit to Canadian families with young children. The dollar amount is \$8.437 million.

The clerk then wrote a motion of some kind—

Mr. Raymond Bonin: Point of order, Madam Chair. We're into a debate. We don't have a motion on the floor.

The Chair: Okay. What's the objection?

He had a point of order.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: The one we circulated is different from what Olivia is reading. I just want clarification as to whether we're debating the one she circulated or the one she's now talking about.

The Chair: It's the new corrected motion.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): We don't have a corrected motion.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mine still says \$107,473. It has nothing to do with millions of dollars.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Bibiane Ouellette): It's the way it's written.

The Chair: Madame Thibault.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): I'd like to propose a friendly amendment to my colleague. I suggest that we say: "as it appears on page [...] Vote [...]". That way, everyone will understand that of course, the reference is to \$107,473,862, because figures in the book are always expressed in thousands of dollars. They will also understand that the figures in question are \$8,347,000 and \$99,036,000, because these are drawn exactly from your book. I think that's what you mean. It's a friendly amendment.

An hon. member: hat's a pretty good friendly amendment.

t's a good friendly amendment. The amendment essentially says, on page....

[English]

Ms. Olivia Chow: Page 243.

The Chair: It makes it clear that it's millions.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Yes. It's \$107 million. I guess I didn't....

My motion was very clear when I first amended it.

The Chair: Okay.

We have a friendly amendment to make it clearer. Is that carried?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Thank you.

Do you want me to read it again?

• (1115)

The Chair: Okay. Keep going, and make sure you use the word "millions".

Ms. Olivia Chow: I was going to.

This reads, to be precise: that vote 1a in the amount of \$107,473,000 under Public Works and Government Services be reduced by \$8,437,000 to \$99,036,000.

The Chair: We don't need a seconder. We can debate that.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Why don't I describe what this is.

The Chair: Please.

Ms. Olivia Chow: I'm of the firm belief, and the NDP is of the belief, that the universal child care benefit should be delivered with the Canada child tax benefit. It is the same department. It should be on the same cheque.

In Quebec that dollar has been transferred to the Quebec government, and the Quebec government has.... The Bloc has always taken the position to have that cheque sent through the Quebec government. That has been the argument from day one.

The Conservative government chose to have a separate cheque and have a separate advertisement. The advertisement is in another budget at \$2 million, to advertise universal child care. It comes with its own flyer and its own envelope. There's a radio ad and a newspaper advertisement. This dollar amount, together with other amounts, means that close to \$27 million is used to deliver this program.

I'm of the opinion that it still should be delivered through the child tax benefit program. There has been an established program for quite a few years. It works quite well—even though, one could say, it's a Liberal program. I've always been in support of this child tax benefit, and it could have been done through there.

The entire amount is actually \$16 million through Canada Revenue Agency. That's the main delivery program. Social Development has \$1.98 million for advertisements, and Public Works and Government Services has \$8.4 million.

What I'm trying to say is that this is an amount that should not be there. I would much prefer it if this money had been delivered through Canada child tax benefit, because it would save \$27 million in total of Canadian taxpayers' money. It would also respect the right of the Quebec government to send the cheque directly, the way it's been done, with an agreement with the Quebec government. Outside Quebec, it would mean that it would come in one envelope, one cheque, through the Canada child tax benefit.

An hon. member: Let's put the question.

The Chair: All right.

(Motion negated) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

Mr. Chris Warkentin: There will be Christmas for children this year.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Olivia Chow: I tried.

An hon. member: Grinch.

The Chair: Shall votes 1a, 5a, and 10a under Public Works and Government Services carry?

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

1a—Operating expenditures—To authorize the transfer of \$2,877,360 from Public Works and Government Services Vote 5, \$235,600 from Human Resources and Skills Development Vote 1, and \$26,000 from Treasury Board Vote 1, Appropriation Act No. 1, 2006-2007 for the purposes of this Vote and to provide a further amount of.....\$107,473,862

5a—Capital expenditures—To authorize the transfer of \$13,479,000 from Public Works and Government Services Vote 1, Appropriation Act No. 1, 2006-2007 for the purposes of this Vote and to provide a further amount of.....\$10,554,000

10a—The grants listed in the Estimates.....\$41,670,000

(Votes 1a, 5a, and 10a agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the chair report votes 1a, 5a, and 10a under Public Works and Government Services to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall votes 1a, 2a, and 15a under Treasury Board carry?

TREASURY BOARD

Secretariat

1a—Operating expenditures and authority to expend revenues received during the fiscal year arising from activities of the Treasury Board Secretariat—To authorize the transfer of \$6,092,432 from Privy Council Vote 1 and \$1,084,000 from Citizenship and Immigration Vote 1, Appropriation Act No. 1, 2006-2007 for the purposes of this Vote and to provide a further amount of.....\$9,516,736

2a—Contributions—To authorize the transfer of \$230,000 from Treasury Board Vote 1, and \$86,039,000 from Citizenship and Immigration Vote 5, Appropriation Act No. 1, 2006-2007 for the purposes of this Vote.....\$1

15a—Compensation Adjustments—Subject to the approval of the Treasury Board, to supplement other appropriations, that may need to be partially or fully funded, as a result of adjustments made to terms and conditions of service or employment of the public service including members of the RCMP and the Canadian Forces.....\$407,994,000

(Votes 1a, 2a, and 15a agreed to)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Thibault: Madam Chair, I just wanted to point out that Vote 15 has been omitted from the French version. We skip from Vote 10 to Vote 20.

The Chair: Has Vote 15 been omitted?

Ms. Louise Thibault: No. I simply wanted to point this out so that you could update your documents.

The Chair: I was following along in the English version.

Ms. Louise Thibault: I understand. Generally speaking, both versions are identical.

[*English*]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): It's not missing; it's just the wrong number.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Moving along, shall votes 20a, 27a and 30a under the heading “Treasury Board” carry?

TREASURY BOARD

Secretariat

20a—Public Service Insurance.....\$ 3,046,228

27a—Program expenditures—To authorize the transfer of \$13,000 from Industry Vote 1, *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2006-2007* for the purpose of this Vote and to provide a further amount of\$ 2,838,666

Total Agency.....\$ 2,838,666

Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada

30a—Program expenditures — To authorize the transfer of \$166,898 from Privy Council Vote 1, *Appropriation Act No. 1, 2006-2007* for the purpose of this Vote and to provide a further amount of\$ 788,237

(Votes 20a, 27a and 30a agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the committee instruct the Chair to report to the House votes 1a, 15a, 20a, 27a 30a under “Treasury Board”.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

● (1120)

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, done.

We'll take one-minute break and move in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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