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Tuesday, February 27, 2007

—
Chair

The Honourable Diane Marleau

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•(1530)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.)): We do have a quorum, so I will call the meeting to order.

Welcome.

I believe Ms. Kenny is the lead person. If you'd introduce the people with you, we will give you about 10 minutes to make a presentation. We're a little flexible on that. We will have you here until about 5 o'clock, because our agenda has us deciding future business from 5 to 5:30.

So, please begin.

[Translation]

Ms. Margaret Kenny (Director General , Office of Greening Government Operations, Department of Public Works and Government Services): Madam Chair, members of the committee, I'd like to thank you for inviting us here today. I would like to introduce you to a number of my colleagues who are here this afternoon to assist me in answering your questions. Let me introduce

[English]

Berny Latreille from Environment Canada; Elizabeth Hopkins from Public Works and Government Services Canada; Shirley Jen from Treasury Board Secretariat; and Anne Auger from Natural Resources Canada.

As the committee will recall, last week the Honourable Minister Fortier briefly presented some information concerning the greening of government operations, and certainly today we appreciate the opportunity to provide you with further details to support your study.

The federal government, as you're aware, is one of the biggest enterprises in Canada and, as such, leaves a significant environmental footprint or environmental impact. At the same time, as one of the largest buyers of goods and services and a substantial property owner and manager, the government is uniquely positioned to demonstrate leadership and, in fact, to strengthen markets for environmental goods and services.

To this end, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development has long maintained that Canadians actually expect their government to manage their assets in a sustainable manner, and as the commissioner highlighted, it is important to have a federal lead undertaking such an initiative.

In 2005 the Office of Greening Government Operations was launched at Public Works and Government Services Canada to serve

as this focal point and to work with other departments and agencies, particularly those you see around the table here today, to accelerate the greening of government operations.

Public Works and Government Services Canada, as the procurement arm and property manager for the Government of Canada, was deemed a good fit for this focal point for a couple of reasons. One, as a common service agency, it has the potential to leverage action and influence results across the government. Secondly, there is a core of expertise within the department dealing with operational environmental matters.

Because of the mandate and given the specialized nature and knowledge of the other departments represented around the table here today, they became key partners in this exercise. They obviously include Environment Canada, with its expertise on environmental impacts and aspects, which are really at the heart of the green procurement policy, and which I'll talk a little bit about later; Natural Resources Canada, with its expertise in energy, particularly concerning buildings and vehicles; and certainly Treasury Board Secretariat, with its control over many of the policies and directives that guide all departments.

For those of you who have the deck that was distributed earlier, you will see

•(1535)

[Translation]

this slide shows our operations in diagram form.

[English]

At the centre of the diagram, you will see there are associate deputy ministers from the three organizations who really provide direction to this initiative. The outer part of the circle represents the interdepartmental steering groups that are in place and who meet regularly to identify opportunities and issues. You'll see that once this is done, there's the possibility of developing policies or guidelines, etc. Then OGGO, the Office of Greening Government Operations, can also help develop tools and offer advice to assist government departments and agencies in their implementation efforts. Obviously as you go around the circle, one of the ultimate objectives is to measure progress and performance, to make changes, to improve and to start again, because there's always more room for improvement.

As the committee is aware, the Office of Greening Government Operations is a relatively new organization, and to date a significant portion of the effort we have put into this work has been directed towards laying a foundation for change, bringing departments together and developing policies, guidelines, tools, pilots, etc., that can integrate environmental considerations right into the way we do our business.

Probably one of the best examples of this is the policy on green procurement. In essence, the green procurement policy—which came into effect last April—aims to embed environmental performance considerations into the decision-making processes of all departments and agencies in the same way, so that when these decisions are made, price, quality, availability, and performance are all considered. So this is about making green procurement a matter of our day-to-day normal business, not only to improve government performance but obviously also to generate some market pull for these technologies and to stimulate a certain demand.

It's not an ad hoc approach. We're not trying to create a special basket of green goods or a list of green products that procurement officers can choose from. Rather, it's a very comprehensive policy that starts with the planning stage and moves right into acquisition, and then to use and, ultimately, to disposal. It really is a good example of how the greening of government operations initiative works, because here we have a Treasury Board-approved policy being managed by Public Works, with expertise and assistance provided by Environment Canada and Natural Resources, and implemented by all departments.

So as a facilitator, we've worked with our partners to develop tools and training. In fact, that training is a mandatory component of the certification of procurement officers in the federal government.

The OGGO, Treasury Board Secretariat, and Environment Canada have also worked to set direction by providing guidance to departments in relation to the sustainable development strategies recently tabled in the House in December. This guidance actually targeted vehicles, building energy, and green procurement as three targets on which federal departments could collectively make a concerted effort to make progress.

In addition, the Office of Greening Government Operations worked with others to produce PWGSC's sustainable development strategy. We were very conscious of having targets in place, so that when we implemented them in our own department, they would be there to help and facilitate the work of other departments in greening their operations.

● (1540)

In the area of green buildings, you may be aware that in 2005, the federal government did adopt the LEED, or leadership in energy and environmental design, gold standard for new office buildings and major renovations, etc. There have been quite a number of our buildings that we hope have made that particular standard at this time.

[Translation]

I am aware that Sustainable Development Technologies Canada will be appearing before this committee in the upcoming weeks and will provide additional information on the LEED.

[English]

In our sustainable development strategy in PWGSC we took the next step. So this LEED standard was for building buildings, renovations, etc. The next step we took was our commitment to adopt the Building Operators and Managers Association Go Green Plus process for improving how we operate and manage our buildings in a sustainable way. It's an industry-developed tool that we believe is going to provide us with good, consistent, reliable data that will help us more strategically manage those buildings and find cost-effective ways to improve our environmental performance.

So the object here is not to just improve the buildings we own and operate, but to also lay the foundation for other custodial departments to do the same. These commitments on buildings are being rolled into a comprehensive sustainable building strategy. It's not as far along as the green procurement policy, but it's the same idea. It's about putting systems in place to improve our environmental performance, and make thinking green a normal part of the way we do business.

I again thank the committee for the opportunity for us to be here today. We will be pleased to take your questions.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Simard.

[English]

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Welcome to our witnesses today.

My first question is on the government fleet. When we're talking about energy efficiencies, that always seems to be one of the places we go to immediately. We've heard in the House over the last years how government has these huge vehicles and we leave them running all the time. Is there a policy in place to allow us to replace the less gas-efficient vehicles we have now with more efficient vehicles over the years? Has that been working in the past, or have you started that already?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: That's certainly an interest of ours as well. It is one of the three priorities in this round of sustainable development strategies. We've started with the executive fleet, and a recent Treasury Board policy limits the vehicles ministers and deputy ministers use to essentially three types: four-cylinder vehicles with certain performance characteristics, hybrids, and E85 vehicles. Since that policy came into place, my understanding is that we've gone from one-quarter of the vehicles meeting that standard to three-quarters of them meeting it now. The eight-cylinder cars are out of the fleet, and the next job is to deal with the rest of the fleet.

As a community, within one of those steering groups I mentioned we are taking that next step. We're looking at some of the best practices. The Department of the Environment did a very interesting study on their fleet in the last year. They found that if they could put in some extra funding up front for the next few years down the road, they would obtain some very significant savings in the operation and maintenance of the fleet. So we're trying to share those best practices.

• (1545)

Hon. Raymond Simard: Do you have an idea how many vehicles we have out there?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: We have about 27,000 vehicles in all, but about 13,000 are RCMP and DND vehicles.

Hon. Raymond Simard: It does not include DND, does it?

Ms. Shirley Jen (Senior Director, Real Property and Materiel Policy Division, Government Operations Sector, Treasury Board Secretariat): There are roughly 27,000 commercial light-duty vehicles, and they include passenger cars, SUVs, and pickup trucks. Of the 27,000, roughly 85 are executive vehicles, and DND and RCMP vehicles make up about two-thirds of that 27,000, so it's a very large number.

Hon. Raymond Simard: That makes sense.

On greening government procurement, there's a statement here that says it focuses on embedding sustainable development concerns into operations rather than developing a list of green products and services. Can you tell me what that means? In other words, when we put out an RFP, for instance, do we have specific green criteria? If we do, what percentage is based on that? Is it 10%, 20%, or 30%?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Your question is certainly on the right track. When we are talking about embedding it into the process, that means we start with planning. If we were talking about something like electronic equipment, does everybody need a BlackBerry and a cell phone, for example? That's the first kind of planning decision you would make.

Then you get into the acquisitions part. At Public Works and Government Services Canada, there obviously is a process dealing with managing the commodities, such as developing some procurement tools like standing offers for all government departments to use. That is where the considerations for what kinds of environmental performance measures you could hope to achieve are considered. Obviously it's going to be different if we're talking about furniture or if we're talking about computers, for example.

It's always a little bit of an art to determine how far you can take it so that you still can have competition, because part of the value for money equation requires that there be competition in the market. For lack of a better example, there may be a requirement for 45% recycled material in chairs put in the standing offer this year, and maybe the next year it's going to be 55%. So it's something that constantly moves along, rather than just saying certain chairs are the normal chairs and then there are the green ones, and then individual procurement officers have to decide. In this way, anybody using that standing offer is going to get a product for which we've pushed the environmental considerations as far as we can.

Hon. Raymond Simard: I think we all agree that this is good policy. It's probably one of the only times here that we'll all agree on something.

We all know Public Works is on board with this. They've developed the policy with Treasury Board, I guess. But getting it down to departments is another story, getting those people on board and getting them to support the initiative. First of all, how have you done that? Secondly, what is the follow-up process to make sure they're doing it?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Part of the answer to that question lies in having standing offers for commodities that are mandatory and that people will use. Of course, those don't cover everything.

The policy on green procurement does make deputy ministers responsible for undertaking this work. We have also, as a community, developed tools, training, etc., to help the individual departments put this in place.

The guidance document that we've produced for the sustainable development strategies did identify that every department should identify at least three targets in their sustainable development strategy. They need to report on those through their departmental performance reports, their DPRs, on an annual basis.

• (1550)

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Thibault.

Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Thank you, Ms. Kenny. Thank you also to your colleagues who have come to see us to talk to us about greening.

I'll continue along the same lines as my colleague. I can understand what Public Works is trying to do with your directorate, but whether you like it or not, this needs to become part of the culture. People need to be motivated. It needs to be a top priority, they need to share these values.

Let's talk about the impact on our departments, for example, as far as procurement is concerned. I like the example of these 308 members. On Parliament Hill, in addition to the senators and the highly effective public servants, officials, and employees of the House of Commons, there is an army of people who use equipment. Members, both here and in their ridings, have belongings and buy things. In our riding, we pay for them; here, they're provided for us, but that's another story.

How do you ensure that we share these values with you, and how will you make sure, if indeed we don't share them, that we are accountable?

Accountability is extremely important, in my opinion. We have a program and we'll have measures to implement it, but after that, how are we going to ensure that people comply? I don't really like the idea of the carrot and the stick, but at the end of the day, if people don't comply, it will be disclosed, people will be aware and it will be one of the reasons why the program will not be the success we expected it to be.

It has been my pleasure to be here for almost three years and in all this time I have never received anything telling me I need to think about the environment. I do think about the environment but I've never been asked to help in making the environment here on Parliament Hill as green as possible. I have a number of tools at my disposal, such as the blue recycling bins, and so on, but they have been around for a long time.

How do you measure this? In other words, after providing the tools that are needed how do you determine there has been a change in culture, that people are using these tools, and at the end of the day, how do you hold these people to account?

[English]

Ms. Margaret Kenny: I wish there was a very easy answer to that. Under this initiative we are not in fact in a position where we can force individuals, or even departments. When I talked about the sustainable development strategy, the Office of Greening Government Operations provided guidance. I must say there was excellent take-up of that guidance, but it was not being forced.

We do have policies like the green procurement policy. That's helpful in that deputy ministers are accountable. We have these mandatory offers where the environmental considerations are embedded right into them, so by default they're green.

We certainly endeavour, through these interdepartmental groups, to share best practices and try to move thinking along. There is that stimulation in the system to help move people forward. But it's not something my office enforces per se.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Thibault: I want to talk about some of your greening government operations activities. Let's talk about reducing our use of energy. This is a particular case in which, of course, you need to be giving advice. Then, it's important for departments to ensure that—and let's take a very practical example; I'm a practical person—, that instead of using conventional light bulbs, twisted flame-shaped bulbs are used instead as it has been proved that they last for such and such a length of time. Now to begin with, you can perform a cost-benefit analysis as far as using energy is concerned. That's an example. You can also look at, for example, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions.

But if you want to make progress in this area, you really have to have targets. You have to be able to measure progress. Now, in 2007, we are at a certain point and we hope, in 2012, that we'll have reached new levels of success within government.

How do you intend, as an organization, to determine to what extent I comply with what you are setting out and whether I am to whatever extent being influenced by you? Because, Ms. Kenny, I really do hope you'll have an influence. That's what we all hope. You need to be influential for departments to toe the line.

• (1555)

[English]

Ms. Margaret Kenny: When we talk about energy in particular, in fact there is a target that government departments have vis-à-vis their 1990 level of energy for buildings and vehicles. That's something we report to the public through the sustainable development strategies. So that's one target to work toward.

As well, I mentioned the LEED gold standard for new buildings. If we're hitting gold with that particular standard, most of the buildings would be at least 50% more energy efficient than if they were not meeting that target. We've seen a lot of progress in that area as well.

There's also a very important economic consideration when it comes to this. Maybe I could turn to my colleagues from Natural Resources on the federal buildings initiative, where there has been a lot of activity to upgrade buildings so energy is reduced.

Anne.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Auger (Director, Buildings Division, Office of Energy Efficiency, Department of Natural Resources): In answer to your question, the Federal Buildings Initiative has existed since 1991 and uses energy performance contracts, eco-energy service contracts, in order to assist departments to undertake energy-efficient upgrades in their buildings without having to spend money. Companies such as Amaresco, energy efficiency companies, come and do the upgrades and are paid out of the energy savings generated through the upgrades.

Since 1991, 7,500 buildings, or 88 projects, have been upgraded. Some projects are extensive and include several buildings. That has generated private sector investments of approximately \$265 million and has generated savings of \$38 million per year, because those savings are cumulative. That is one method. This program encourages departments and provides them with the necessary tools to act. It assists them in using energy performance contracts with these companies in order to help them carry out these energy efficiency upgrades.

Ms. Louise Thibault: I suppose I don't have much time left.

The Chair: No. Thank you.

You can come back on the next round.

Ms. Louise Thibault: Fine.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Kramp

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome all.

I have a couple of thoughts. Obviously the federal government has a critical mass, a very large size relative to other entities that might not be able to effectively change. Now, relative to other countries, relative to other jurisdictions, there are some nations that don't have a government with quite the dramatic size and scope that we do, and there are others that are very heavy in government administration. Rather than reinvent the wheel and just come up with and design and plan and execute many new environmentally friendly strategies and/or green strategies, we have a lot to learn from other nations.

What have you done to explore the positive results that other jurisdictions have been able to achieve? Have you been able to import any of those successes into the process you're involved with now?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: In fact, it goes beyond even looking to other countries. Even jurisdictions here in Canada have been very helpful in terms of sharing what they have learned.

If I start with green procurement, I would say that we did a lot of work in particular at looking at what other jurisdictions were doing, and certainly this idea of looking at the whole life cycle of the product was a characteristic across other jurisdictions that were successful. That's certainly one thing that we adopted.

We knew we had an extra advantage in that the Government of Canada was consolidating its commodity management processes. That helped us there. But we also have a committee that we co-chair, as the federal government, with all of the provinces, looking at what various jurisdictions have found in terms of the technologies that they're looking at in their buildings, the approaches they're taking.

You might have seen in some of our sustainable development strategy that we are looking for a sustainable building policy. Well, in fact, Manitoba is the jurisdiction that's come along as one of the fastest in developing that, and so that is something we have taken from a good idea that they had and we're taking it forward.

• (1600)

Mr. Daryl Kramp: You have been looking outward, though; you're not simply—

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Yes. We absolutely have to.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: That's reassuring.

We have a bit of a contradiction, potentially, but I'd like to know if it is a contradiction. We understand that obviously your department is committed to achieving savings both through its management of property and through its various varieties of procurement. But now, to carry on with these greening initiatives, is this going to be a direct outlay of cost and expense? Or do you see this potentially being offset with not only environmental gain but cost savings, by embracing a technology that could actually be of real advantage to the government?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: There are many examples, and we're coming across them more and more often, of where there is a good intersection point between what is the right thing to do for the environment and what is fiscally prudent to do.

An example we talk about sometimes—it's relatively easy for those of us who use a lot of paper to understand—is printers. You buy a printer that can print on both sides of the paper; it's a duplexing capability, and as long as you actually use that feature, the statistics suggest you could save about \$700 per printer per year. Even though the printer might cost a little more, you multiply that out across the number of people who actually have printers in the federal government and you can see there can be a savings.

It's a matter of looking at the whole life cycle of the product to see where savings are possible.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: That's a very good idea.

Just to follow up on that, initiatives are wonderful, but I hope your department would demonstrate, not only to this committee but obviously to all facets of government, that you have a control mechanism in place to monitor all the progress you're making, complete with benchmarks so we can evaluate exactly what you were just saying. In other words, are we spending \$1 and saving \$2, are we spending \$5 and saving \$10, or are we spending \$10 and costing \$40? We need to have a steady evaluation of this in order to naturally assess the results of the greening progress and the success you have had, but also the success in dealing with the budgetary process that all of us naturally have to be accountable for, as well. We need the benchmarks, we need the control mechanism, we need the reporting—and we need that consistently to Parliament so as not to demand unrealistic expectations.

We have a responsibility for oversight, and we would appreciate that.

The Chair: Is that it? Okay.

We'll go to Ms. Nash.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome to our committee.

I would like to pick up on the 45,000 buildings that Canada has. I know you have talked about, in new construction or in massive renovations, greater energy efficiency. What is the plan for increasing the energy efficiency of all the buildings that Canada owns?

• (1605)

Ms. Margaret Kenny: The plans you will see laid out in sustainable development strategies give some indication of what we're trying to do. We have targets for energy. You will also see in the strategy plans for improving water efficiency and so on.

I understand that about one-third of the inventory has gone through the FBI program that Madame Auger spoke about. There's work going on to adjust that program so it can be very helpful for things like laboratories and so on.

The kind of work that is going on is with the LEED, as you had mentioned—us and, hopefully soon, other custodial departments doing those BOMA assessments so we can see what we can cost-effectively improve environmentally. And then with the federal building initiative, we take action.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Is there a plan, for example, to replace all the windows in buildings that are owned by the government, to put in energy-efficient windows? Is that one of the things? What kinds of things are you doing?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Shirley, did you want to respond to that?

Ms. Shirley Jen: One of the things that might be helpful, to speak to this point, is to talk about the various responsibilities of the custodial departments, because you're really talking about the whole of the government inventory in terms of its real property holdings. The Federal Real Property and Federal Immovables Act basically provides a minister with the authority to hold real property in order to support programs. The minister has a responsibility for administering that property.

As well, there's something at the Treasury Board called the real property management framework policy, which also vests with deputies of those departments the full authority and stewardship responsibilities for their particular suites of assets, which include real property and in some cases include other tangible assets, such as cars.

That's just to say that when it comes to questions about managing a particular portfolio of buildings in a particular department, that decision on whether to replace those windows, although it's certainly influenced by the types of initiatives that Margaret and her team have been undertaking in terms of the greening of government operations, is really a decision that is taken by the individual custodial department.

So in the case of Public Works, if it's a Public Works building, the decision would be taken by that department. *Au contraire*, if it was a Health Canada building—Health Canada owns many laboratories—it would be Health Canada that would be responsible for making that investment decision. There's a whole series of things that they would factor in to determine whether it was best value, the right priority, and the right stewardship decision for their department at that point in time.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Is it your responsibility, though, to say, in regard to a list of priorities that they should be looking at as a minister or deputy minister, here are the greatest energy-saving initiatives they could undertake? And in terms of procurement by volume, if they're going to be replacing windows or whatever they're doing, do you suggest they do that within a given period? Is that the kind of thing you're doing?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: The kind of thing we're doing is working within those interdepartmental groups that I spoke about to share best practices. If I look in my office, they've changed ballasts recently, and they've changed the bulbs. We're apparently using 65% less energy on lighting than we did in the past.

So we have a responsibility to be sharing that information with others, and that certainly is happening.

•(1610)

Ms. Peggy Nash: Thank you.

When you look at what are the best procurement decisions, what are the most energy-efficient products, whether it's a machine or a desk or whatever, what do you factor into that? Is it the end use of the equipment, or the desk or whatever? Do you include shipping in that? Do you track the whole footprint of that item, or is it strictly the end use that is measured?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Actually, it sometimes depends on the particular commodity that we're talking about, how much information we have and how far we can push it. If we look at a recent standing offer that's being developed right now for computers, for example, we can in that particular instance, knowing where the industry is, say that this will no doubt be the greenest computer standing offer we've ever had because we're going to be able to require, it would appear, an eco-label on it that in itself contains a lot of environmental considerations and a take-back for the hardware by the supplier/manufacturer.

Ms. Peggy Nash: You mean recycling it end of use.

Ms. Margaret Kenny: That's right, and a requirement for a certain amount of recycled materials and more non-toxic materials being used. So it depends a little bit on the commodity and where the supplier community is to ensure we have competition.

Mr. Berny Latreille (Director, Environmental Affairs, Department of the Environment): I was just going to add that there are groups who meet to determine the criteria for these commodities as they will be hitting the marketplace. They will determine product by product what are the ideal specifications for those.

For instance, coming back to paper, which was an example Margaret used earlier, most of us think that in the world of paper the higher the recycle content the better, and that's what you need to consider. In fact, for paper, if it has chlorine, that's something you'd like to get rid of. And is the fibre from sustainably managed forests,

and is there recycled content? This can be quite complicated, and those are considered product group by product group.

In some cases it's a mixture of a lot of things. In the case of printers, for instance, when they're considering the kinds of printers we should be buying, or the kinds of specifications we need to consider for printers, there are certainly some things we could do today to be buying printers that are slightly greener than what we have traditionally purchased. But the real leap forward is in how we manage what comes out of the printers—perhaps having more of the new multi-function devices that consume less energy and better manage your printing.

So there are things you can do in the short term in the commodity, but we're always thinking in the long term about what we can do over the life cycle of the use of that product.

The Chair: Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

What is the cost of the program?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: It's hard to say that there's actually a single cost for the program.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I'm trying to separate that out from the benefit side.

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Only in that I have a small office doing this kind of work. But because it's integrated into the standard work of other departments, it's hard to separate that out. There's going to be—procurement again—that commodity management work going on whether or not they are considering environmental parameters in their decision-making. So it's very hard to tease it out that way, as having a specific cost.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: This is a program that's meant to make a difference, not just to make us feel good. I would assume, to approach it in a serious way, what we would want to see is some sort of prioritization list, with cost and benefit sides to it, to see what particular initiatives are going to lead to what sorts of savings in terms of tonnes of carbon emissions or any other measure. At this point, has that sort of work not even been looked at?

•(1615)

Ms. Margaret Kenny: We know that the air emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, are a priority, of course. When we look at government operations, we know that it's our buildings that are accounting for about 40% of these; vehicles are more of a leadership issue. So there has been a lot of effort going into improving the energy efficiency of our buildings. That's the kind of approach we've been taking.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I'm actually very supportive, but it sounds very airy-fairy to me. I'd like to see some hard numbers: what the benefits are, what the costs are.

We have 45,000 buildings in our inventory. Have there been any specific initiatives that we expect under this initiative? There will be regulations or some sort of orders, but through those, in the buildings we will hold the temperatures....

For instance, I feel pretty hot right now. Are there any particular initiatives right now to say that this is the temperature we'll keep our buildings at; that in the evenings we'll be decreasing the temperatures in the buildings, or at the time when breaks take place, or summer holidays, or that sort of thing? Do we have that sort of detail in any of these programs?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: We don't have an actual program per se to address it. Certainly we have standard operating procedures for the buildings. Last summer as well as the summer before, through Treasury Board Secretariat as well as Public Works, we issued to our building managers requirements to lower the energy use in the buildings by letting the temperatures go up. But there's not a law or regulation per se.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: You said that initiative came out of Treasury Board. What temperature are we supposed to set the thermostats at in our government buildings? Can you tell me?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: I'm sure there are people here who—

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I think we are at around 72 or 73 degrees right now here.

A voice: Yes.

Ms. Margaret Kenny: There are people within the audience here who can tell us.

Anne.

Ms. Anne Auger: I can try to answer. I think there are regulations; all those parameters are governed by some regulations, so there is a range in which we can play. But I don't have this information. We can provide you with it, I suppose.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Frankly, I'm pretty astounded that the officials in charge of this greening initiative, with simple questions like that, wouldn't be able to provide me with an answer. But I'm more worried that we're starting in on initiatives—which I support—without having any concrete numbers. There could be initiatives that actually have a greater cost than the benefit that will be produced in terms of tonnage of pollutants, and perhaps efforts would be better placed elsewhere.

So you haven't prioritized any of this either.

Ms. Margaret Kenny: The priorities we have set for green government operations are reflected in sustainable development strategies, and they were and are building energy; green procurement, where decisions are made commodity by commodity, taking into consideration just the kinds of things you've been talking about; and vehicles, recognizing that there is an important leadership issue here as well.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I have a final question. We have a lot of properties that require lawn care, etc. Is there any initiative involving pesticide use and that sort of thing?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: I'll speak for Public Works on this, and maybe Environment Canada can add to it.

We have in our sustainable development strategies a commitment to use integrated pest management and to reduce the amount of pesticide we're using in our buildings and in the management of our facilities.

Mr. Berny Latreille: Indeed, standards have been produced around how to develop an integrated pest management program for federal properties—or others, for the tools are available to others—and these have been shared with all federal departments.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I know that a number of our larger municipal governments have actually been quite proactive. You talked about looking at other jurisdictions. Are there any results that you've looked at?

For instance, I believe Kitchener-Waterloo also banned pesticide use.

• (1620)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): For July and August.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: The City of Toronto is looking at it as well—

A voice: It's banned in Toronto.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: —or has banned it. Have you looked at any of those, and have any recommendations been made?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: There has been a working group looking at pesticide use in general. They have been looking at minimizing the use of any kind of pesticide as far as possible and relying more on integrated approaches, where you're taking action to prevent pests, etc.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: You haven't answered whether they have looked at other jurisdictions that have actually banned the use of pesticides, such as the City of Toronto, and have done some sort of analysis. Can that sort of outright ban be applied?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: I'm not aware that the City of Toronto has banned the use of all pesticides within all of their buildings per se.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Moore.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Can you tell us about the building in Montreal and its success? The questions that were raised about technology were a bit about windows, and Ray brought up the issue about the fleet.

Tell us about the building in Montreal and the reforms that were put in place there. How can those things be copied, not only in government buildings but in the private sector? I know there's a lot of interesting technology there.

Ms. Margaret Kenny: The building in Montreal, which is at 740 Bel-Air Avenue, is an example of some of the newer buildings coming on stream that are employing a lot of interesting technology.

In that particular building, there is a green roof, which means that we have the ability to collect rainwater to be used for irrigating the landscape and also for some non-potable water uses, such as flushing and so on. Also quite a number of geothermal wells were used for the heating and cooling system. Shading was used on that building, so that it doesn't rely on as much energy as other buildings might. The operational cost of that building has actually been reduced by 30%, meaning there's a savings of about \$200,000 a year in energy.

That's just one example. In fact there are new buildings coming up all over the place where some very innovative technologies are being employed.

Mr. James Moore: What's being done to take that technology and demonstrate it or market it in some ways to the private sector?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Interestingly, concerning these Government of Canada buildings, I'm thinking of one in Yellowknife that has a very large photovoltaic curtain that at peak produces about 14% of the building's energy. We worked with industry partners to put that technology in, and the Yellowknife building was a demonstration project with Natural Resources Canada.

From there, you're working with industry to put it in place, and then the results are made available to industry for further use.

Mr. James Moore: What was this year's budget for the office of greening government?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: For the Office of Greening Government Operations...?

Mr. James Moore: I know the answer.

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Do you?

Mr. James Moore: Yes. The committee should know, though. I want to let the committee know how it's been ramped up since it was first put in place, and what your needs are.

That's where I'm going, but you can go ahead and launch.

Ms. Margaret Kenny: It's all very complicated, but I would say that all in all there is probably about \$5.5 million being put into the office.

Mr. James Moore: You mentioned Manitoba. Some provinces do it through their version of public works, while some do it through their environment ministries and different offices. What provinces are doing this and leading the way, and which ones don't make this initiative at all?

• (1625)

Ms. Margaret Kenny: The meeting we had this year with the provinces would suggest to me that every province is pretty much taking steps here.

British Columbia is very good, and they have a lot of talent. Maybe it's the climate that promotes a lot of energy in the green building area, but they're certainly leaders.

Ontario is certainly leading with on-site energy generation, for example. That is quite exciting as well.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Simard.

[English]

Hon. Raymond Simard: I have a few questions. As a matter of fact, James mentioned Manitoba. I know that the new Manitoba Hydro building in Winnipeg that's being built right now will be, if not the most energy efficient in the world, one of the most energy efficient. So we are leading by example.

That brings me to the provinces, I think we all realize that the environment is probably the number one issue with Canadians right now, and they expect us to use our leverage wherever we can. One of the questions I'd like to ask is, have we considered at one point including clauses in our contracts with the government, in our agreements with other levels of government, to ensure that they follow certain green rules as well? It's going one step further than just the departments, but have we thought of that already?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: I'm sorry, if I could just have a little clarification on the—

Hon. Raymond Simard: Sure. In a lot of our agreements with the provinces we have clauses—for instance, linguistic clauses—where a certain percentage goes towards minority language communities. Could there be incorporated in our agreements with the provinces certain clauses where they have to respect certain green initiatives? It seems to me that if we're going to fund certain things, there are a lot of transfers happening between the federal government and provincial governments, or even private-public partnerships for instance, where we should maybe have clauses incorporated in our agreements.

Is that something we're considering?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: It isn't something that my office has pursued per se. I agree that it's very interesting.

I'm not sure if anyone else at the table has an idea.

Hon. Raymond Simard: You will just consider it?

My second question, just quickly, is with regard to my colleagues' comments on measuring results. I think we're expected to lead by example, and one of my colleagues, Mr. Albrecht, and I were talking about that before the committee meeting. It's important for us to set the example. But if we're not measuring the outcomes properly, if we don't know what our costs are and we don't know what the benefits are, it's going to be very difficult for us to convince the private sector that we're doing well, that it's worthwhile getting on board with some of these initiatives. I would encourage the department or your organization to really look at that very seriously.

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Agreed.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Thank you.

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): I'll be brief.

I'm from a mining community, and energy is very expensive there, so we went through this years ago. As a matter of fact, you mentioned changing light bulbs in your office. We did that at the school board 25 years ago when I was a school trustee. I'm starting to suspect that the federal government is lagging behind.

But in the mining sector, the best suggestions and the best solutions were provided by employees through a suggestion plan. As a matter of fact, we're into robotic mining, and it comes from labourers who have invented these things.

Do you have a suggestion program for your employees, or do you depend on committees of either skilled or unskilled people?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: I agree with you about where some of the most interesting ideas come from. Our deputy has a system where people send him ideas, and I must say people don't seem to be shy about sending me ideas either. With e-mail it's so easy in our department. We don't have a formal suggestion box other than the website, but I think that is a very good idea.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: The mining companies pay the employees for these suggestions. They calculate the savings and they give them a percentage. That's a good incentive, and you're—

Ms. Margaret Kenny: That won't happen.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: It's just an idea for you.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: I think that's where the true specialists are. Ten per cent of a dollar is only a dime.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

The Canadian government owns approximately 45,000 properties. Amongst those, do you have any buildings that have been classified as green, whether that be through solar energy or otherwise, like the Bel-Air building in Montreal, for example? Do you have an inventory of that type of building? Do you see us going in that direction?

The reason I ask the question is that the government, like the previous government, is talking about selling buildings in order to rent buildings in the private sector. If that happens, will the buildings that are being rented have to be green buildings? Is this a short-term policy rather than long-term planning?

• (1630)

[English]

Ms. Margaret Kenny: The standard that we have for our buildings, being new buildings, being LEED Gold, has been in place just since the spring of 2005. We have 17 buildings in the federal government that we believe we can get certification for.

There has been a lot of work done in buildings, but in terms of meeting an actual standard like that, we have not gone through a process to certify them per se. But certainly in Public Works, when we unroll this BOMA Go Green Plus standard, we will be evaluating all of our buildings to see how they rate in terms of environmental performance. That is going to give us a very good base that we can

work from, and some information that's benchmarked against industry.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Then, 17 have a green certification.

Have any federal funds been allocated to your office to ensure that these buildings are upgraded in order to comply with those criteria or are you just being told to do your best without any funds being provided?

[English]

Ms. Margaret Kenny: There are a couple of ways in which the buildings are upgraded. One is through the program that my colleague from Natural Resources described, the federal buildings initiative, where the company would come in and do the work and that work would be paid for through the savings.

For the other, in a department like Public Works, money is set aside—approximately \$20 million this year—to specifically undertake these green initiatives. But at the same time, we do work.... For example, there's a building here in Ottawa that we are fitting up for tenants. We are making use of the cabinetry, the furniture, and everything that is still there. We're refurbishing it, which in itself is a green activity to undertake, but it doesn't really get captured in the dollar figures that we've put in the ledger. There are HVAC systems being upgraded all the time, etc., to improve their efficiency. These also contribute to the greening of the building.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: With respect to vehicles, can you tell us what the current situation is with respect to the consumption of petroleum-based fuels as opposed to greener fuels?

[English]

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Shirley, I think you have the data on that. Could you share it with the group?

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: For example, is ethanol being used?

[English]

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: The other day, when we were at CPAC, I listened at the door and I heard Mr. Kramp state that Mexican corn producers sell a lot of corn to the United States, which means that corn-based food in Mexico is three times more expensive now. We know that ethanol is a big polluter. We also know that a lot of land, a lot of space is required to produce ethanol, and this is not consistent with an environmental plan.

Are you phasing out the use of petroleum-based fuel in order to replace it by something else, without necessarily moving in to a green era, or are you simply copying in order to cover certain angles?

[English]

Ms. Margaret Kenny: I'll just say at the outset that this is always an issue when you're looking at any kind of technology. There are pros and cons to it.

We have been looking at alternative fuels. We do use ethanol. As a matter of fact, there's an increase in the use of ethanol, and there are certain advantages in terms of reducing pollutants from ethanol. At the same time, there is an increase in the use of hybrid vehicles, using another kind of technology. So there is more than one technology that we're using.

Do you have the figures?

• (1635)

[Translation]

Ms. Shirley Jen: Yes.

Mr. Nadeau, in 1995, Parliament passed the Alternative Fuels Act, the goal of which was to require that 75 vehicles purchased by the government be able to run on alternative fuels.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: You mean 75%?

Ms. Shirley Jen: Yes, 75%, but on condition that it be efficient and feasible.

With your permission, I will continue in English.

[English]

Presently the number of vehicles in the federal fleet, as you heard before, is

[Translation]

approximately 27,000 vehicles.

[English]

Of the 27,000 vehicles, we have roughly 2,000, or 7%, operating on ethanol—that's E85 ethanol—and about 200, or 1%, on propane or natural gas. As well, we have another 2%, or 600 vehicles, that are hybrid vehicles. Those are not technically vehicles that are running on alternative fuels, but the end result is the same: you're trying to invest in vehicles that operate on non-petroleum-based fuels and that therefore emit fewer pollutants.

Totally, then, that's roughly 10% of the federal fleet.

Actually, we have some statistics on this. Since 1997, when you look at the total number of vehicles purchased by the federal government in any one year and the number that were deemed operationally feasible and cost-effective to purchase because they ran on alternative fuel, in every single year since we've tracked this—1997-98 up to 2005-06—we have met or exceeded the target.

You may do the math and ask, why is she telling us we've exceeded our target of 75%, when 75% of 27,000 is...? She only said 10%; it's not 75%. The reason is that if you look at any given year... Let's give an example.

In 2004-05 the federal government, *grosso modo*, purchased 3,700 vehicles. The total number of vehicles in that year estimated to meet the test of being cost-effective and operationally feasible was 34 vehicles. If you look at 75% of those 34 vehicles, it meant that we had to purchase 26 vehicles that ran on alternative fuels. In actual fact, that year we didn't buy just 26 vehicles that ran on alternative fuels; we bought 394.

That gives you a bit of a sense for setting targets, which I think some of you have mentioned, in terms of improving performance on

something very tangible. Then we are actually measuring the results and trying to trend it. I think it illustrates that when people see these types of data, it actually is quite interesting, because I think it's actually generating a certain groundswell, and people are more enthusiastic about it.

In fact, my colleague provided one statistic to me just before coming here that I thought was quite significant. It relates to the executive fleet, which is basically the fleet provided to ministers and deputies and equivalents. It's roughly 85 vehicles. Over the last 16 months alone, there has been an increase of about 40% in terms of this fleet's usage of alternative fuels, so the executive fleet of the ministers and deputies is actually a pretty good example of the leadership and showing by example that some people mentioned. I think it's a very good illustration.

• (1640)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Albrecht.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to each of the witnesses for appearing today.

I just want to go back for a moment to these 45,000 buildings. I'm having trouble getting my head around that number of buildings in the federal government, especially when it refers in our briefing notes to about 500 communities. That's 90 federal buildings per community. It's over 110 buildings per riding.

Could you help me understand the range of those buildings? You broke down, for example, the different types of vehicles—executive, RCMP, Department of Defence. Is there some kind of breakdown in the types of buildings that we have? I can't imagine, for example in my riding, 110 federal buildings. I'm sure there aren't in my riding; I know that's an average. I know there are probably 400 here, but still it takes a lot of buildings here to make up for a riding that has 10 or 20.

Can you help me with that?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: I think that may be information we would have to get back to you with. I assure you they're not all like Place du Portage.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: And they're not all Centre Blocks.

Ms. Margaret Kenny: You're right. I've seen figures of the numbers on the Experimental Farm, for example, and all those it'sy bitsy little buildings seem to be included. But we can certainly get that information back to you.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: And the shower rooms in our national parks would also be included.

Ms. Anne Auger: Perhaps I could add to that.

Office buildings with Public Works are about one-quarter of the inventory, so in terms of the number of buildings, you would divide by four. But they are office buildings mainly.

• (1645)

Mr. Harold Albrecht: A quarter of them.

Ms. Anne Auger: Yes, about that. We need to confirm those numbers.

National Defence has about half of the inventory, and the rest is divided among departments. Of course, Public Works and office buildings are mainly in the national capital area, so a big portion of the inventory is here. National Defence, for example, has buildings in remote areas more than others, perhaps. So from that you can see that most of the buildings are here.

But then, yes, that's a good point: 500 communities gives the potential to the federal government to show an image in a lot of places in the country.

We'll come back to you with details on that.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: I don't need fine detail on it, but it would be helpful to know. I know they're not all high-rises. I know they're not all Centre Blocks. But it would be nice to have a bit of a breakdown.

Could you help me, as well, to understand what the differences are between your LEED gold program and your Building Owners and Managers Association's Go Green Plus? Are they complementary? Are they additive? How do they relate to each other?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: In fact, those programs are very complementary. The LEED standard speaks to how we actually build our buildings. The kinds of considerations that are taken into account include the site itself, water efficiency, materials and resources that are actually used in construction, what's being done with the construction waste, etc. So LEED is about building the building or renovating the building.

BOMA Go Green Plus is about how you operate the building. It's one thing to start with a green building, but if you're not operating it in an environmentally sensitive manner, then you can certainly lose a lot of the gains that you started out with. That's the difference.

So we see them as being very complementary. BOMA is the next step after LEED for us.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: So at this point BOMA isn't actually being mandated in government buildings? You're looking at this, or is it already in being?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: We've made the commitment. We've had to wait. BOMA just put this in place very recently and they've had to get their capacity up as well, because they actually come in and do an independent verification audit of the building. So on April 1 we start to unroll this.

Actually, this had to go into our building plans for our long-term plan way back in August. So we have a three-year plan going forward with this right now.

The Chair: By the way, BOMA is coming in next Thursday, just to let you know.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Okay. I would like to follow up, then, on some comments that were made earlier in terms of the small steps that can be taken, whether it's reducing temperatures or having motion sensors to turn lights off and on. As I walk around these few buildings that the federal government operates, it seems there are a lot of times when there are lights on and there's nobody in the room, or the heat is high. So I think we should continue to work at it, whether it's zone heating or thermostat setbacks and those kinds of things. I just want to echo that.

I'm certainly affirming of the green steps that have already been taken. I just think we need to keep moving ahead. And each of us individually needs to take responsibility for that. We can't expect all of it to come from a government mandate. I think in our homes and here on the Hill we can all take little steps that will make a huge difference.

Thank you for your presentation today.

The Chair: I was wondering whether those buildings you mentioned would include Canada Post buildings?

Ms. Anne Auger: Do you want me to answer?

The Chair: Yes. It did seem like a high number, but if it includes Canada Post, that adds quite a few.

Ms. Anne Auger: Actually, regarding what I told you about the number of buildings, I meant in floor space. Floor space and the number don't necessarily equate. I based those numbers on the 32 million square metres of buildings the government owns. I'm not sure if that coincides with the 45,000. That would not include Canada Post. If you would like Canada Post numbers, we'll have to come back with that.

The Chair: They have a lot of buildings as well.

I'm just going to use the prerogative of the chair for a minute and ask whether your plan looks into the purchasing power the Government of Canada has in forcing companies, say, to use less packaging. All of that packaging comes when you purchase something. It drives you crazy, and it fills up the landfill sites.

That's just a thought.

Ms. Elizabeth Hopkins (Director, Policy Development, Office of Greening Government Operations, Department of Public Works and Government Services): When we look at the bundling of government purchases, the green procurement policy certainly provides the opportunity to identify the interest of the government to have a supplier take back the packaging.

The Chair: It's not only that they take it back, but that they supply the product without the packaging. That's what I'm asking for.

Ms. Elizabeth Hopkins: Depending on the commodity, certainly that requirement can be built into the specifications.

The Chair: It should be built into all of them. There's a lot of packaging you don't need.

Is there another Liberal who wants to speak here? No?

Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Thank you very much.

I'd like to thank each of you who have come today.

We often like to take credit for the work that happens, and we know it's the civil service that does so much of this. We'd like to thank you for your leadership in this area. Obviously with the movement towards the greening of the country, never mind government, you are on the forefront.

Of course you're going to have no end of suggestions. Here we go with my continued list.

One of my pet projects in the last while has been this whole idea of net metering, the average individual putting a solar panel on their house and having the opportunity to buy energy when they need it and being able to supply energy when they have an excess within their home. The biggest problem with this of course has been the issue of the transmission and power companies and who will buy it.

The Province of Alberta has actually led the country on a number of these fronts; it has gone completely green in its energy consumption. As well, they're actually speaking about being the purchasers of this energy that's produced by the private individuals—this non-commercialized energy.

I'm wondering if the federal government has ever looked at this particular initiative, or the possibility of this.

• (1650)

Ms. Margaret Kenny: We have a number of contracts where we have purchased green electricity. Right here in Ottawa we have a substantial contract in place for that, and certainly in Alberta, where there is a supply as well. With the last contract we put in place there, 85% of the power that Public Works was using is coming from green sources.

In terms of generating our own power, it's interesting. As Ontario starts to...it looks like changes will be made to allow someone to feed into the grid. We have had conversations with some people who are interested in pursuing that in government buildings. We don't have concrete plans right now, but it's something we're interested in looking into further.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: That's fantastic.

It's exciting to hear about the project in Yellowknife. Of course we'd love to see that duplicated in all of our federal buildings. It looks like as the technology advances we're going to see a reduction in the cost of solar panels. There's a lot of exciting things on that front. Certainly we encourage you and wish you the best on that. I guess tying into that would be having solar panels on all the roofs of our federal buildings. Maybe down the road we can do that.

I'll say as just a side point that I'm running on green power at my constituency office. We actually tie into a cogen plant that's in our community. The RCMP, on the lower level, have actually done it as well. It's a wonderful thing. There are some exciting things happening in smaller communities. I know the federal government will poll some of those ideas that have happened there.

Our committee is going to be looking at some possibilities for business moving forward. I guess my question would be what the largest challenge is as the government tries to move forward on its agenda to green itself. Are there some things that we, as a committee,

could possibly look into—places where the federal government may be running into roadblocks and places where we could be of service to you in this effort to clean up the way we do things?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: As always, on an initiative like this, leadership is very important. It's very symbolic. When we talk about the executive fleet, for example, that means something, because people watch what leaders are doing, and departments watch what their ministers are doing and what the members of Parliament are encouraging. I think there are probably a lot of areas where we can all contribute. But leadership is very important for a file like this.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Thank you very much. We really appreciate your coming in today, and we appreciate the work that you're doing.

If you could figure out a way to outlaw form letters, I'm certain we'd save a lot of paper in our offices. After this weekend, I came in and there were 300 pages with the same wording. It was obviously... as a joke.

But I do appreciate your work and effort in this area.

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Thibault.

Ms. Louise Thibault: That's fine, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Do you have a question, Madam? No.

Ms. Nash.

[English]

Ms. Peggy Nash: I have just a quick question. Does “buy local” factor in at all to the green procurement program? We described paper earlier. The question I was going to ask is, would we be buying domestic paper whenever possible? Or is that part of our criteria?

Ms. Elizabeth Hopkins: The procurement will be done respecting our trade agreement obligations. So under those obligations under NAFTA or the Agreement on Internal Trade, you wouldn't be able to identify “local” as a requirement in that procurement. It would be a competitive process.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Okay, so that's something we could identify as a criterion that we would see?

Ms. Elizabeth Hopkins: The trade agreement obligations do not allow you to identify it as a criterion in the procurement process.

Ms. Peggy Nash: How does that affect our green procurement, then, if we're importing paper from wherever, if we produce it domestically?

• (1655)

Ms. Elizabeth Hopkins: The green procurement policy provides for value for money. So taking account of the cost and the availability, quality, and performance, there would be a determination as to what the requirement would be, and there would be a competitive process. As we saw of that process, it may or may not be a Canadian supplier who is the successful bidder.

Ms. Peggy Nash: So if we were shipping paper from Brazil, wouldn't we factor that into our procurement process in terms of the carbon costs of the transportation?

Ms. Elizabeth Hopkins: I think it would be factored in, in terms of the cost of the product. So when the bids come in, you would find that because there would be a significant transportation cost, the bidder—

Ms. Peggy Nash: But I'm distinguishing between the cost of shipping and the carbon cost of transporting products over long distances. Is that taken into account in our procurement program?

Ms. Elizabeth Hopkins: No, it isn't.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Is that something that could be looked at as a factor? It seems to me that going long distances to transport products certainly does use carbon and is something we ought to be looking at.

Ms. Elizabeth Hopkins: Yes.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll go to Mr. Kramp, then Mr. Simard, two very short questions.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I'd like to discuss with you a possible unintended consequence of the LEED program.

There have been a number of complaints that I and others have received. My understanding with the LEED program is that you have to be a certified contractor in order to be able to implement the LEED program. So obviously, to start with, there were no certified contractors; they had to learn to become certified. But it's also my understanding that this is relegated to just a very small...only your SNC-Lavalins, your ACONs, etc. In essence, this has excluded all of the other contractors in the country from building on a LEED program. Whether or not they can be certified or bonded for \$25 million or \$30 million, \$40 million, \$50 million doesn't matter. They need not apply.

Now, this is a problem if that is the application of LEED, and I'm hearing that directly from constituents and contractors and engineers and developers and builders. So if that is a problem, I would certainly welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and perhaps see if we can have it resolved. I would certainly hope that all of the independent engineers, contractors who are capable and are able to get bonding, should not be excluded from the possibility of bidding on any of these jobs simply because they don't have that "designation".

How do they get a designation if they don't have an opportunity to bid on it?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: I'm not familiar with that being an issue per se in the construction, to actually certify the building. Obviously there was a need for people to have a certain accreditation to be able to do that, and certainly my understanding is that this has grown exponentially. But we're happy to pursue that issue with you further.

The Chair: Mr. Simard.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

We discussed earlier the fact that Manitoba has probably some of the lowest energy costs in Canada, and I would assume that Quebec would probably be close as well, with the hydro-electric potential there. Given that people can operate anywhere in this new world, is there any consideration given to maybe moving some of our federal public service to low-cost provinces? This is an unbiased remark, by the way. It would seem to me an interesting solution. Have you considered that at all?

Seriously, we should consider that. If provinces such as Manitoba, and Quebec as well, are really working not only on their costs but are very upfront or very avant-garde when it comes to their environmental policies, we should maybe consider *les récompenser, si vous voulez*.

No comment?

Ms. Margaret Kenny: I certainly appreciate and applaud their environmental efforts, but I don't think that's a decision they're going to let me make.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Thank you.

The Chair: Put that in the suggestion box.

Thank you very much for coming. We're not going to end our meeting, because we want to discuss future business, but we want to take a second to say thank you very much, and you can be on your way.

Ms. Margaret Kenny: Thank you very much, Madam Chair and committee.

The Chair: We're going to have to go in camera for future business.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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