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—
Chair

The Honourable Diane Marleau

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• (0905)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Before we start, I want to let you know what happened. Minister Fortier was to come today before the committee to speak to the estimates. Yesterday morning the clerk received a call, which I received shortly afterwards, telling us that Mr. Fortier was quite ill, that he had lost his voice, and could not appear before the committee. It's normal. People do get sick sometimes.

We're very pleased that the Privy Council Office decided on very short notice to come before us. They knew they'd have to come at some point, but they didn't have to do it within 24 hours. I thank you very much for being so collaborative to agree to come and fill in the void.

We will turn the mike over to you. If you'd like to, please introduce yourselves, then make a statement of up to ten minutes, and then there will be questions.

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson (Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services, Privy Council Office): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'm Marilyn MacPherson, and I'm the assistant deputy minister for corporate services for the Privy Council Office. I have with me Marc O'Sullivan, assistant secretary for senior personnel and special projects.

I'll start with my statement.

[Translation]

Good morning, Madam Chair. I am pleased to appear today before the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

I am accompanied by Mr. Marc O'Sullivan. We are appearing before you today to talk about the 2008-2009 main estimates for the Privy Council Office.

[English]

The Chair: Because the English is not forthcoming, I gather some of the members....

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): I find it helpful to follow along in the copy.

The Chair: I've got an English copy here, if you'd like. We'll have it photocopied so everyone can have it.

You can proceed. Sorry about that.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: PCO's last appearance before this committee was in November 2007, regarding the 2007-2008 supplementary estimates.

The mandate of the Privy Council Office is to serve Canada and Canadians by providing the best professional, non-partisan advice and support to the Prime Minister, the ministers within the Prime Minister's portfolio and the cabinet. PCO supports the development of the government's policy agenda, coordinates responses to issues facing the government and the country, and supports the effective operation of cabinet. As the head of the public service, the Clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the cabinet serves as the principal link between the Prime Minister and the public service.

[English]

The Privy Council Office reports directly to the Prime Minister and is headed by the Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet. The main roles of PCO are to provide professional, non-partisan advice to the Prime Minister and other ministers in the Prime Minister's portfolio and to cabinet on questions of national, intergovernmental, and international importance; to manage the cabinet's decision-making system by challenging and coordinating departmental policy, conducting analysis, and providing secretariat services to the cabinet and cabinet committees; to provide advice on the appropriate structure and organization of the government and its entities; to advance the development of the government's agenda across federal departments and agencies and with external stakeholders; to help foster a high performing and accountable public service for the 21st century; to manage the appointment process for senior positions in federal departments and crown corporations and agencies; and finally, to provide administrative support to the Prime Minister's Office, ministers' offices within the Prime Minister's portfolio, commissions of inquiry, task forces, and other independent bodies considering matters associated with good governance in Canada.

[Translation]

PCO has four priorities for 2008-2009.

First, in order to support the Prime Minister in exercising his overall leadership responsibility, PCO will create and sustain the unity of the ministry by providing a range of advice, as well as fulfilling the cabinet secretariat role. It will continue to play a central role in assisting the Prime Minister and cabinet in enhancing the overall management, transparency and accountability of government while ensuring that the objectives of improved efficiency and efficacy are met.

● (0910)

[English]

Secondly, PCO will provide advice and support the development and implementation of the government's focused policy and legislative agenda. It will also identify emerging issues to inform cabinet's deliberations, and through long-term strategic thinking provide advice for the government's forward-looking agenda.

Thirdly, to support management and accountability of government, PCO will continue to play a central role in assisting the Prime Minister and cabinet in enhancing the overall management, transparency, and accountability of government; will ensure strategic management of the Governor in Council population through open, competency-based selection and appointment processes, enhanced leadership development and talent management programs, and fair and appropriate compensation policies and practices; and will support the renewal of the public service to ensure strong leadership capacity at all levels, now and into the future.

Finally, achieving excellence in management requires ongoing strengthening of PCO's internal management practices, such as implementing a risk-based integrated business planning process, a performance measurement framework, an internal audit policy, and an emergency management and business continuity program.

PCO main estimates for 2008–09 total \$123 million, of which 80% is spent on providing advice and support to the Prime Minister and ministers of his portfolio; 16% is spent on providing policy advice and secretariat support to cabinet and cabinet committees; 3% is spent on providing overall leadership and direction to the public service in support of the government's agenda; and 1% is spent on providing the commissions of inquiry with administrative and financial support.

Because we only learned of our appearance before this committee yesterday morning, we have had limited time to prepare for your questions. Therefore if there's any information you require that we do not have readily at hand, we'll be pleased to provide it to you within a day or two.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will go to Mr. Holland, for the first seven minutes.

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witness for appearing today on very short notice.

Because I wasn't anticipating this coming forward, I'm just going to go to a couple of things that jumped out at me. The first was the Public Appointments Commission Secretariat. That's not an active secretariat. That's been, obviously, a point of some contention before this committee. There was an attempt to appoint somebody, but the committee disagreed with that and the government simply hasn't followed it up.

I'm trying to understand. When I look at the ministry's summary for the Public Appointments Commission Secretariat, the estimates for 2007-08 are over \$1 million, and then again, in 2008-09, over \$1

million. I'm wondering if you could explain that, given that it's not an active secretariat.

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: There are actually individuals now working in the secretariat. For a period of time there was no one in the secretariat. We now have two individuals who are employed and working in the secretariat. The estimates are based on the expectation that there will be someone appointed as the commissioner. Therefore, the estimates fairly represent the estimate of what they will need, as we know it, at this time.

Mr. Mark Holland: Maybe you could break down where exactly this \$1 million is coming from. You say you have two people who are working there now, and I imagine they're not getting paid \$500,000 each. If not, maybe I'm in the wrong line of work.

Secondly, you said you're anticipating our finally getting a public appointments commissioner. That's news to us. Do you have anything on that? Are you being told things about when we might see that happen?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: Maybe I will rephrase. I haven't been told we're not getting one, so therefore it continues to be an estimates item.

Mr. Mark Holland: Okay.

On the other item, could you break down that \$1 million for me?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: I certainly can. For salaries and wages, the amount is \$700,000. That's \$697,000 exactly, and that would be for 4 FTEs, which is what we're estimating.

Mr. Mark Holland: Those four full-time positions would include the commissioner himself or herself.

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: No, this is just the secretariat itself. It's the four people who would be in the secretariat.

● (0915)

Mr. Mark Holland: Out of curiosity, what do they do when they don't have a boss?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan (Acting Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Senior Personnel and Special Projects Secretariat, Privy Council Office): Just to give a bit of context, when the commission was first established by order in council, before the issue of Mr. Morgan's nomination came before this committee, the secretariat was established quickly. We brought in Mr. Peter Harrison, who was the executive director at the time. The idea was to get it up and running as quickly as possible.

Then, following the issue of Mr. Morgan's nomination and as the commission was held in abeyance, we nevertheless endeavoured to ensure that, at the time the government would want to proceed with the commission, everything would be in place to be able to proceed rapidly. That involved doing a lot of examination of other jurisdictions that have similar systems in place—Alberta, British Columbia, and the U.K. It involved consultations with departments and agencies. Also, there was work done on other peripheral issues. For example, Mr. Harrison did some work on the issue of nominations at the IRB, at the request of the minister.

We toned it down at one point, because it had four staff and we said there wasn't enough work for four people. But we've kept basically one senior person and one support staff to continue the preparatory work, in terms of drafting a code of conduct, drafting the plans, because this would be a massive undertaking, a massive change in ensuring that there are selection processes run not just for heads of agencies, but for all positions filled by the GIC, which in a typical year can be as many as 1,000. So 1,000 selection processes are quite an endeavour.

Right now, we have that minimum staff of, as I said, one senior analyst and one support staff who are continuing the work to ensure that if and when the government wants to proceed with the commission, we're able to do so very quickly.

Mr. Mark Holland: I guess my problem there is that if you have two people who are working full-time, there's only so much preparatory work that can be done. That's my first question. At what point is the preparatory work done? There's only so much consulting of other jurisdictions and only so many codes of conduct that can be written before you just start twiddling your thumbs waiting for a commissioner to be appointed. So how long will that go on before you're going to say to these two people, "Well, we're just going to have to fold up shop here for a while"?

The next question would be with respect to the 2007-08 estimates, which are before us now. If there are only two people working there, why are we looking at a figure of over \$1 million?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: It's based on the anticipation of having a secretariat operating at full complement, rather than just the minimum staff right now.

Mr. Mark Holland: But the fiscal year 2007-08 is finished.

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: One thing that could possibly happen here, too, is if there's a commissioner actually appointed and the secretariat needs to get into operational mode very quickly, in the fact there are four FTEs, and you could actually hire, for example, eight people for the last part of the year to really get things moving. So it's at the equivalent of four FTEs, but you could actually staff up more than that if you needed to move quickly.

Mr. Mark Holland: My understanding, then, is that for the fiscal year that has just been completed, 2007-08, the reason we're seeing over \$1 million there is so that you can use that unused room potentially in the current fiscal year, in 2008-09.

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: No.

Mr. Mark Holland: I hope you didn't spend \$1 million for two people in 2007-08. So why are we seeing that number in the estimates?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: You'll see the number of \$1 million in 2007-08 because that is the number that was approved in the main estimates last year.

Mr. Mark Holland: Do you know what was spent?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: I don't at this point, but the—

Mr. Mark Holland: Maybe you could let us know.

But before I run out of time, can you answer the question—I'm not sure that you had a chance to—about how long this goes on?

We don't have a public appointments commissioner. We continue to want one. We don't know how long the government is going to take before they may or may not appoint somebody. So at what point does the preparatory work end and you say, "Okay, guys, I guess the government is not appointing somebody, so it's time to find something else to do for a while"?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: In terms of the work that's being done now, I'd say that by the end of the summer it would be at that type of decision point of saying—

Mr. Mark Holland: At the end of the summer?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: I'd say so.

• (0920)

Mr. Mark Holland: Beyond the code of conduct, what are they doing?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: The selection processes that you would run for these positions would not be identical, because it's very different for the chairperson or the CEO of Canada Post from what it is for a part-time position that participates in four meetings a year with a \$150 per diem. You have to scope out exactly what kinds of selection processes would be considered acceptable for all these different types of positions.

The GIC community is more than 3,000 strong, so you're looking at trying to establish, for 3,000 positions, what types of selection processes would be considered sufficient to satisfy the requirements of what's set out in the Federal Accountability Act.

Mr. Mark Holland: I have a last question.

The Chair: You're way over. Thank you.

Mr. Mark Holland: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Madame Bourgeois.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, madam, sir. Please know that we really appreciate the fact that you've replaced the minister, who was to appear today, on such short notice.

In my first series of questions, I'll stick to the statement. I need information and to know your role. In the third paragraph on page 1, you state the following:

PCO supports the development of the government's policy agenda, coordinates responses to issues facing the government and the country, and supports the effective operation of cabinet.

The ministers sit around a table, they face problems, you raise problems, then to try to find solutions. Could you tell us how that actually works?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: First, we start with the throne speech, which establishes the government's agenda. The role of the Privy Council Office is to ensure that the public service as a whole prepares, for the ministers, the work that must be done to carry out the initiatives and programs.

The Privy Council Office plays a coordinating role because these initiatives often require the contributions of a number of departments. The Office also has to ensure that the initiatives are carried out. To do that, it convenes the deputy ministers to meetings to determine where those initiatives stand and when they can be submitted to cabinet for approval.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: And do you report certain problems in the machinery of government to the minister? Do you suggest solutions to him?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: The programs are first distributed to the departments. For example, such and such a department must develop such and such a program. The Privy Council Office ensures that the work is done and that there is interdepartmental coordination, because these programs often involve other departments.

Some cabinet committees examine the issues before they are approved by cabinet, then proposed to Parliament, if a bill has to be prepared. We ensure that the problems are in fact addressed and that the ministers are aware of all the aspects of those problems and their repercussions. The ministers must be able to examine all the options before making an informed decision.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: What you're saying is very important. This committee has, on a number of occasions, discussed the sale of federal government buildings with the Minister of Public Works. Whether or not we agree, he came to tell us that that was a cabinet decision. The same is true of public service employees.

If I understood you correctly, the buildings issue would probably have been put before the minister or cabinet by you, a subcommittee or Public Works employees. At that point, a cabinet decision is made, and you then ensure that the measures are taken. Is that correct?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: The departments take the measures required to implement cabinet's decisions. The Privy Council Office, as a central agency, ensures that that is done. We ask where the programs stand and at what point they will be implemented, and we ensure that there is indeed interdepartmental coordination.

• (0925)

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: With regard to the sale of buildings, was it you who pointed out a problem and reported it to cabinet?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: I'm not aware of the specific file concerning the sale of the buildings. That's not at all my field.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: We know there are major problems on the human resources side. Is that file normally one of those that should pass through the hands of the members of the Privy Council Office?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Once again, it's physically impossible for an agency such as the Privy Council Office, which has fewer than 1,000 employees, to micromanage all files across government. That wouldn't be a good way to do it. Its role instead is to coordinate everything and to warn the Prime Minister when problems must be brought to his attention.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Your coordinating role means that you engage in strategic planning. Is that correct?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Partly, yes.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Strategic plans are supposed to include time and performance indicators and so on. How is it there aren't any? When we get your plan or your three-year priorities, we very rarely see any performance indicators so that elements can be improved. How is it there aren't any?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: It would be impossible for us to do that for all the government's activities. The dilemma of a central agency is that all government initiatives that must have cabinet approval go through the Privy Council Office because it is the secretariat to cabinet and its committees. That's all the major activities of government. But we don't manage all government activities; that would be impossible. That is why our business plan does not include indicators and timetables for all government initiatives. That would be a very thick document.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: However, you understand that the plans and priorities that we receive are yours. They are sent to the public and to parliamentarians, but we can't do our job properly because we can't evaluate them. It's possible for you to evaluate the work done by the departments, because you probably ask your departments for time and performance indicators, and so on. You tell us parliamentarians that, in the space of three years, you will do such and such a thing. However, we can't evaluate what is planned for those three years. That results in a shambles. Or else we simply forget that our work is to supervise you a little.

I imagine you'll soon be presenting your plans and priorities over three years. Moreover, the Auditor General of Canada requires it. I hope you'll report to your boss that we would like you to include time and performance indicators, as well as information on planned funding, necessary human resources, and so on. It's so vast.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Bourgeois.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Kramp.

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

Welcome, witnesses. Like you, we've had little time to prepare. There are a number of concerns we all have, but I'd like to keep my focus on the main mandate and purpose of this committee, which is basically oversight and accountability.

We're committed to assess or evaluate the efficiency or credibility of governance, whether it applies to departments, commissions, or agencies. We have a broad mandate, as you are well aware. We also have a responsibility to assess or comment on your assessment. I'm particularly concerned today with PCO's internal management practices. The efficiency and effectiveness of this is naturally a concern to all parliamentarians, to government, and to the people of Canada.

You mentioned a number of initiatives and practices that you perform either on a recurrent or occasional basis. I'd like you to expand a little more on them, maybe piece by piece. You state that you are implementing a risk-based integrated business planning process, a performance measurement framework, an internal audit policy. I think it's important that we know what stage these are at. Have they been ongoing? Are they new? Have you had measurable results? Have you had conclusions reached that could affect the operation of government? I know that's a bit of a broad question. The response could take hours, because it's very complex. But I wonder if you could give us an overview of your internal practices on oversight.

● (0930)

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: I'll give you a thumbnail sketch, and then if I've left any blanks you can question me.

With respect to the risk-based integrated business planning process, last year under the direction of the clerk we put into place our strategic HR plan for PCO. It was the first ever done. It was launched in March 2007. In the clerk's last report, the 14th report, to the Prime Minister, he challenged departments to formulate a strategic HR plan, as well as an integrated business plan that would include the HR requirements with the business requirements. The report challenged departments to do an integrated business plan for this year. Inside PCO, we went through this process, and we published it. I have a copy of it here. We sat down with all the secretariats and looked at all of the challenges. Out of that, we prioritized a number of things. Probably the most important was our HR renewal. It makes sure that we have the appropriate capacity, defining how we are going to recruit so that the PCO operates efficiently and effectively.

We also looked at our IT. We have a good IT system, but we have to continue to update it and make it more relevant. We have younger people coming in as analysts, and we want to make sure that we have the best systems for them to use.

We also highlighted information management. We are a knowledge organization with a fairly high turnover. Many decisions are made and a lot of information is collated and analyzed. We wanted to make sure that we're capturing all of that information, so that new employees are able to access all of our documents.

Last, but certainly not least, we have our emergency management and business continuity planning. We had a business continuity plan in place after 9/11, and we are now doing a new business impact analysis. We are updating all of our business continuity plans. We are

also ensuring that we have an appropriate emergency management program in place.

With respect to audit and evaluation, until last May we did not have a full-time auditor in the Privy Council Office. We hired a chief audit executive. She has been doing audits, and we now have a risk-based audit plan in place. So that's where we are at this point.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Thank you.

Obviously, that's a fair bit of activity.

When you're approaching this, I'm interested as to the direction of how and why you're acting or reacting in the manner in which you are. Is it from an executive authority suggesting that this is exactly what has to happen, or have you done almost some form of SWOT analysis? As such, if you have done that kind of analysis, what were the perceived highlights, either in weaknesses or in strengths? Obviously, if you have a weakness and it's a particular area in the administration, then more attention has to be paid to that.

I'm concerned whether you feel there's a level of comfort in moving forward, or that it needs tinkering, or if there's anything standing out that says, hey, we really have to move on that.

● (0935)

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: First of all, to answer your question about the process, we did actually put in place a risk-based analysis process. We've done a risk profile for the department, and we continue to refine that to make sure we're identifying those areas where we really do need to put priority.

Out of that whole process is where we came to the understanding that our human resource capacity is by far our greatest challenge, so it is getting a great deal of attention and emergency management audit and evaluation. The reason those items are actually mentioned here is that they were identified by the department as being weaknesses for us that we needed to strengthen, whether just for internal business or because it was being guided by greater or broader government policy.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Just for your information, this committee, of course, has heard testimony from various groups, organizations, and departments regarding HR problems. The turnover in the public service, etc., has been an ongoing problem. It's problematic not only, of course, for the individuals involved, but for the departments and constitutional memory and corporate memory, etc.

I'm wondering if your department has given any thought to or has any plans about how to deal with your particular method of solving this. Is it a question of money? Is it a question of job security? Is it the nature of the business? Is it the fact that we just don't have people qualified? Could you give us some...? Do you have an overview regarding your own situation?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: Inside PCO, when we did our strategic HR plan, we actually identified four separate communities that are in different states of disrepair or have different needs. We identified the analysts, the executives, the administrative support group, and corporate services. There are challenges in all of them.

For example, with our analyst community, we always need to be bringing into PCO people who are not necessarily recruited from university but are people who have been in departments, so that when they come into PCO they can bring a certain level of understanding around files. These folks tend to stay for two or three years, get the experience at PCO, understand how PCO operates and how we support the cabinet committees, and then go back out to departments again. They're considered to be quite valuable. We are looking at opportunities to actually bring folks in from departments, in a coordinated way, to actually do the analyst function.

In the administrative support area—this is not unique to PCO—it is extremely difficult to keep really good administrative support at the AS-1 and AS-2 levels, for example. We are going to increase the amount of staffing we do, trying to create inventory pools of people. We're also trying to put in place a little bit more of a developmental program so that, when people come in at the AS-1 level, we'll be able to give them development so that they can go to AS-2 or AS-3. This will not only increase their capacity, ability, and contribution to the organization, but it will also help us to retain them.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Thank you, Madame Chair.

Thank you for coming this morning on such short notice. I think all of us are working almost from the same page at this time, because we were not expecting your presence and it is a complicated file.

At our last meeting we passed a motion calling upon the government to act upon its commitment to institute the public appointments commission. The public appointments commission was meant to be a patronage watchdog that was accountable to Parliament. It was an independent agency that actually had teeth, that had a budget. It's very different from the role of a secretariat, and that's been pointed out a number of times.

There was a March 7 Canwest article that said the public appointments commission has been undermined by the fact that we've created something sounding very similar, a secretariat, but a secretariat works through the PCO and reports to the PM.

If a commission is to be set up, will that money be transferred to the commission? What is the role the secretariat will continue to play when we're looking to have an independent commission set up?

● (0940)

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: With the establishment of the commission, the secretariat would be a stand-alone department. When the commission was established, first of all administratively, by order in council, the secretariat was established as a full-blown, stand-alone independent department, exactly for the reasons you mentioned, namely, to ensure that support for the commission

comes from its own entity and not from a secretariat attached to any other entity.

Because the creation of the commission is in abeyance, for administrative purposes the secretariat is functioning within PCO, in the sense that there's an agreement for shared corporate services. It made no sense in such a small entity to establish an HR shop, an access to information shop, etc.

There's such an arrangement with PCO for administrative services. But the way it would be established by order in council would be for the secretariat to be an independent stand-alone department. It would continue under a commission established under the Federal Accountability Act.

Mr. Charlie Angus: When the commission plans were put on ice, did the secretariat continue to do any work? Was it preparing for the commission? What was its role? This is what I find confusing.

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Yes, I understand. It's not obvious when there's a secretariat supporting a commission that doesn't exist yet. But the scope of the work is enormous. We're talking about more than 3,000 positions, from members of the freshwater fish marketing board to Canada Post to major crown corporations, quasi-judicial tribunals, and international organizations.

There's such a wide scope of organizations that the staff have to sit down and go through each organization, one by one. They look at the positions and ask themselves, what selection process would be appropriate for these positions? It's a massive undertaking.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Was it doing this work last year?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Yes, it was working on it. The staff started with two, went up to four, and then gradually went down to zero. Then we staffed it back up again.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Sometimes our friend Pierre Poilievre sits in on this committee. He was interviewed in the *Toronto Sun* on March 28, 2007, and he explained the role that this secretariat, under the Prime Minister's Office, would assume.

Under the headline "Only Tories Need Apply: Looking for a government job? New commission says lean to your right", the article said:

Conservatives have no plan to cleanse partisanship from the government appointments and will use the promised Public Appointments Commission to ensure that their qualified friends get jobs, says an Ottawa Conservative MP.

MP Pierre Poilievre, parliamentary secretary to the Treasury Board president Vic Toews, apparently said that the government wouldn't be appointing people who don't agree with its agenda—this in reference to a secretariat directed by the PM and not accountable to Parliament.

Given that we've had a thousand appointments, many of them openly partisan, what accountability is there to the taxpayer? Should the taxpayer continue to put \$1 million into this fund that one of the sometime members of this committee says is there to ensure that Conservatives only need apply?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: First of all, the headline says one thing, but the quote you gave from Mr. Poilievre is slightly different.

Mr. Poilievre—don't quote me, I'm just going on the basis of what you just said—is talking about appointing people who are ready to implement the government's agenda. When there's a transition in government, especially after a long period of time, it's not surprising that an incoming government has a certain tack it wants to take—an agenda, a program, a Speech from the Throne—and that it expects some of the commissions to move forward in line with that agenda. It's the government of the day, the democratically elected government, and it expects the whole of the government apparatus to move in the direction of the government's program.

So saying that they want to appoint people who will advance their agenda is a legitimate comment from a new government in the midst of a transition.

• (0945)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Certainly governments want to do that, but the commitment was that this was going to be accountable to Parliament to ensure that we weren't just filling the place up with partisan appointments. If the government is committed to partisan appointments, then the secretariat certainly will remain in place under the PM, accountable only to the PM and not to the people of Parliament. That's different from the commitment that was made for a public appointments commission.

So I return to the question: if we ever see this independent public appointments commission that is actually a watchdog, that is accountable to Parliament, as this committee has asked for, will the money be transferred from this existing secretariat to that independent commission, or are we going to have to wait and go back to estimates?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: No. The money would be transferred.

The whole way it was set up when the order in council was passed, establishing the secretariat as well as the commission, the whole notion was to have that secretariat support the commission as an independent body. It was established that way; it was set up that way. Under the terms of the Federal Accountability Act, the independence of the commission and its role is clearly set out in the legislation. Its mandate is clearly set out, and it's hot-wired into the legislation. So the government won't have much choice in terms of the mandate of the commission. It's set out in the legislation.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you very much.

The Chair: I'm going to ask a question here because I have a particular interest.

Last year, and I believe we're continuing now, we were looking into the issues of pay and benefits. A lot of our employees are not getting the pay they should be getting; if they have a transfer, it's incredibly difficult; and there's a backlog.

I believe there was some work done, and I must say, last June in particular, this particular committee was very frustrated with the lack of answers and the lack of coordination. It was as if we were unable to find who in the system was responsible, and at that time we asked that the Clerk of the Privy Council appear before the committee. Of course, he did not, because the House adjourned, but there was some work done afterwards. I realize that.

What kind of role are you playing in the coordination of the response to this really big challenge within the public service? It's not something you hear about every day, but if you're the one who's not getting paid on time or getting paid the amount you're supposed to be getting, it's a very serious thing. If you're a member of the pay and benefits community actually trying to catch up the backlog, it's very serious, as well. Perhaps you could explain the coordination role that you may be playing at this time—I'm not sure.

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Thank you for the question, Madam Chair.

The Clerk of the Privy Council just yesterday issued his fifteenth report to the Prime Minister on the state of the public service, and the notions advanced in that report, which also includes the report of the Prime Minister's advisory committee—Mr. Mazankowski and Mr. Tellier chair that committee for the Prime Minister—on the public service. Basically the approach set out by the clerk in that report I think is relevant to all the HR challenges facing the government, notably in the HR community.

The emphasis is basically on four elements, which are general in nature, but if you just give me a minute, you will see the link to the specific problems for the pay community.

First of all, the first approach is integrated business planning. In the past, as a result of insufficient planning, departments were not even in a position to know what their HR needs were going to be next year, two years, three years down the road. So the clerk has challenged all deputy ministers to ensure that every department has an integrated business plan that makes the direct link between their priorities in terms of what the department does, to the HR needs of the department, to ensure they have the right people in the right jobs to get things done and to identify exactly what their needs are. Marilyn gave the example in PCO. I'm pretty sure that for every single department they're going to identify in their HR group some specific needs that need to be addressed. Now, it's just a plan, a first step, but you have to have that plan in order to be able to address it thereafter.

The second element is recruitment. Because of the churn right now in the public service and because of the demographic pressures on the public service, the emphasis is on recruitment to make sure we're bringing in the people. This won't solve the problems immediately, but it's a necessary step to ensure that the problems can be solved, if only two or three years down the road. So there is an emphasis on recruitment, and once again, the Clerk of the Privy Council challenged all deputy ministers to ensure that they focus on the recruitment needs of the department and that they don't just rely on the Public Service Commission, but that departments take the responsibility for recruitment within their departments personally.

The clerk has challenged deputy ministers personally, along with their senior management teams, to go to job fairs at universities, to actively recruit within universities. He likes to use the example of how Bill Gates personally calls the top students at some of the key engineering faculties in North America to invite them to come to work at Microsoft. Now, if Bill Gates can find the time to make those phone calls, then senior executives in the government should find time to participate in job fairs at universities and colleges.

The third element is development. Okay, it's one thing to bring in new staff, but then you have to ensure the development, especially because of the demographic challenge. We have a real need to be able to bring people up to speed rapidly. The HR field is a very specialized field and compensation is a very specialized field. It takes at least two years to get the person trained to do the first aspects of the job. It takes three to five years to get them fully trained, and so the emphasis is on development. Once again, as part of the integrated HR plan, deputies are expected to identify not only their recruitment needs, but then to say, "What steps are being taken to ensure the development of those employees as quickly as possible?"

The fourth element set out in this report is the enabling infrastructures to ensure that we have within government essential HR functions that are controlled either by the Public Service Commission or with a public service agency—Treasury Board Secretariat or the Canada School of Public Service—to ensure that those services are as efficient as possible. Notably, on the issue of compensation, there is a notion that our colleagues at Public Works are working very hard at modernizing the whole pay system, which is antiquated, and they would be the first to say so, that this needs to be modernized. I know they are working extremely hard at doing that.

• (0950)

So those four elements, which apply to all elements of HR within government, I think are relevant to the specific issue of the compensation community. And this is not just PWGSC's problem; it's every single department. HR groups have to ensure that, because of the churn, the compensation trail follows the employees in an efficient way. In order to do so, the departments have to clearly identify what their needs are and provide for them through recruitment and development.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

There's one other point they need to look at, and that's retention in the pay and benefits section, because they're having a hard time keeping those employees they've trained.

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Yes, the churn is enormous.

The Chair: Mr. Bains.

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.): Thank you very much, Chair.

I want to echo the comments of my colleague and thank you for coming on such short notice.

I want to speak regarding the priorities you outline in your opening remarks on the estimates as well, and I want clarification on the specific matter I'm currently working on, which is—I've written to the clerk about this as well—the "NAFTA-gate" issue that has emerged. As we all know, that's a very serious issue. There were these leaks, verbal and a memo, that came out and really compromised our position vis-à-vis the U.S. Trust was breached and damage was done, and many Americans and Canadians are concerned about this. So I was asked to write about this, or I felt I was compelled to write about this, to the clerk to get further clarification, knowing that he is currently looking into the investigation.

In your third priority, you indicate that it's to support management and accountability of government. Now, would that investigation fall under this particular priority in terms of the internal investigation that's taking place with regard to these diplomatic leaks and the verbal leaks?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: I would say so. I don't think it was anticipated, but certainly from accountability and good management it would seem to fit there.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: So in terms of the budget line items, is there any budget ever allocated for a particular issue of this nature, or which budget line item would this go under in terms of the cost of investigation and the resources it would require? Which particular main estimate line item would this be allocated under? I was trying to understand that. I wasn't sure exactly where that would come from.

• (0955)

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: Let me think....

Probably, as an organization, it would be under security and intelligence. From a program activity, it's probably advice to the Prime Minister.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: I know that part of the investigation now has been outsourced to BMCI, a company that's currently helping out with this investigation. Is that outsourcing common practice in these types of investigations from the Privy Council Office?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: I'm not familiar. This is the only investigation I have seen since my arrival at PCO, so I'm not aware.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: According to you, do you think BMCI was asked to investigate because of the nature of the investigation? Because it includes the PMO as well, is that why it was outsourced?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: I have no idea. I'm sorry, I don't know the answer.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Are you aware if this contract was sole-sourced, or was there a competitive bid for this contract with respect to the investigation?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: I would have to check. I don't know the details of the contract.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Okay, not a problem. So if you don't know the details, you're not aware of any criteria for this investigation or its outsourcing, or why they were outsourced, and so forth. There's nothing that you are aware of presently.

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: No, I'm sorry, I haven't seen the contract.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: I just want clarification, because from hearing your remarks this morning, I feel that the priority that you indicated of government accountability.... I wanted to know in terms of the priorities you've outlined specifically with regard to this investigation, does it fit into the priorities of the PCO? Obviously, you've indicated it does.

Second, I wanted to get an understanding of the budgets that are allocated for investigations of this nature. Do you have an idea of the amount this is costing the PCO, or anything along those lines, any idea of the total allocation for this particular initiative?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: I don't know what the actual cost of the investigation would be. I doubt if it would be significant enough to make a difference on the budget or the estimates.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Any idea of the timeline of this investigation?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: I'm sorry, I don't know. I believe there is a date when the Prime Minister was expecting a report back from the clerk, but I would have to check and find out whether in fact that's been declared or not. I don't know.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Faillie.

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faillie (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Like my colleagues, I would like to thank you for being here on such short notice. It's also a pleasure for us to welcome you in the same circumstances.

My colleague talked about public appointments. I previously sat on the Citizenship and Immigration Committee. As parliamentarians, we made many recommendations concerning appointments. It is part of committee practice to welcome the new board members or the chair on a regular basis.

You aren't unaware that there was a crisis last year. If you hadn't come here to talk about your role as an impartial and professional board and about the appointment process management role, as well as your concern to ensure that the process is conducted in a non-partisan manner, I might not have asked you any questions on the subject.

I find it hard to understand how you can approve a process that was non-partisan and how, following the only report that Mr. Harrison prepared on immigration, you dismissed out of hand the non-partisanship of the board member selection committee, a process in which the community got involved, that is to say the Barreau, the various groups concerned with immigration and the academics. Last year, a crisis led one chair and a selection panel to resign. The people from the community are still making submissions, and opinions have been expressed by parliamentarians.

You're resisting all that by putting in place the new process enabling a representative of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, in fact the minister, to sit on the selection panel. How do you view the participation of the minister's office in the process of selecting immigration board members? How do you explain that decision?

•(1000)

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: I'd like to draw a distinction between the selection process and the appointment process. The minister has the authority to recommend board appointments to cabinet. So these are

appointments made by the governor in council, on recommendation by the minister.

Mr. Jean-Guy Fleury established the selection process, which could be called the prequalification process. That process consisted of a written exam and interviews. A list of qualified persons was established, which was submitted to the minister for review. The minister selected from that list the persons to be recommended for an appointment by the governor in council. The Harrison Report examined that process.

Ms. Meili Faillie: Which, incidentally, was rejected by parliamentarians.

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Yes. We then introduced a new process, designed to establish a list of qualified persons. The instruments used remain the same, that is to say a written exam, followed by an interview. Since it is ultimately the minister who recommends the appointments, it is reasonable for a representative of the minister's office to sit on the committee working at the prequalification stage.

Ms. Meili Faillie: However, we had a process that worked. It was described as acceptable by the community. Naturally, we recommended that it be changed, but what Mr. Harrison recommended was never raised by the community.

Is this a directive from the minister?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: No. We asked Mr. Harrison to examine the process used at the time, which had been established by Mr. Fleury. What I remember is that Mr. Harrison had concluded that the process was too costly and that all the preselection stages took an enormous amount of time. The changes he proposed were not that significant; they were more in the way of adjustments.

Ms. Meili Faillie: And yet including the minister's office in the selection is a major step.

I simply wanted to illustrate the fact that, although we heard no one recommend that the minister sit on the selection panel, you nevertheless contend that you gave non-partisan opinions. The only request made was a request by the minister to Mr. Harrison.

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Pardon me, I've lost the point of your question.

Ms. Meili Faillie: Despite the hearings held on this question and on the report, despite the parliamentarians, the universities, community representatives, the Barreau and all the people who work in this field, despite the resignation of an IRB chair and a shortage of board members—which undermines the operation of the IRB and of the various divisions—you maintain that it is necessary for the minister to intervene in the selection, then overturn the entire selection process.

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: It's ultimately the minister who recommends the appointment. So, with respect to the point at which the minister's office should be involved in the process, it seems logical to me that that should take into account the fact that it is the minister who ultimately recommends the appointment. That he should be involved only at the end or a little earlier in the process is consistent with the way in which all of government operates.

Ms. Meili Faillie: That makes no sense. You say you're non-partisan, but you've just shown that you aren't. In short, in—

The Chair: Your time is up. I gave you a lot.

[English]

We'll go to Mr. Albrecht.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Witnesses, thanks for being here today.

I want to follow up a little bit on the third point in your submission, on page 4, the second bullet, where you speak about "strategic management of the Governor in Council population through open, competency-based selection and appointment processes".

I think we've heard this information before, but could you remind me, roughly how many applications are received for these Governor in Council appointments vis-à-vis the number of actual openings? Is it a hundred to one, or ten to one? Could you give me a bit of an idea as to the number of applications and also the level, generally speaking, of competency? Are 90% of them fully qualified, and maybe 10% would not be? I'm looking for those sorts of figures.

• (1005)

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: It's not standard. It varies enormously, because the nature of the positions varies enormously. There are some that are very specialized, for which we will get maybe four or five applications, and we have to beat the bushes to get them. Sometimes we hire search firms to identify people. At the most senior level, people aren't looking at the want ads in the newspapers and applying; they expect to be approached and recruited for the job. So it varies enormously according to the level. In some of the more junior positions we'll get a higher number. For the ones that are more or less a generalist function, we'll obviously get a much higher number; we'll get a dozen or maybe 20 or 25 applications for a given position.

Some of them are quite particular. We had the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod recently, and surprisingly we actually got about a dozen applications. I was a bit surprised by that. In fact it was a bit more than that—almost 20 applications for that position.

So it varies enormously. There are some that are more generic—for example, board members or directors of crown corporations, and the CEOs and chairpersons of crown corporations. There we're targeting people within the private sector. For commercial crown corporations, oftentimes we'll go to the private sector. Or in other related areas of the public sector we find candidates from other levels of government. Also, there are some candidates from within government. There are some senior public servants who are at the tail end of their career and see this as a nice last assignment before retiring. They sometimes provide actually very good candidates for those positions.

We set out a statement of selection criteria for all the positions. The statements of qualifications are announced. They are published in the *Canada Gazette*. They are put on the government appointments website. They're there for everyone to see. Overall in terms of the number of processes we've run, I'm quite satisfied—in fact pleasantly surprised at times—at the level we've been able to recruit people.

One thing that's surprising is that the average age—I don't have the statistics with me—is actually quite high. We're getting a lot of

people—as I mentioned, public servants, but also from the private sector and other sectors of society—coming in at the tail end of their career. They are somebody in the private sector saying that they've made money, their family is taken care of, their kids have gone through university, and they'd like to do something in the public interest. They come and work for a crown corporation or some agency, board, or commission. Being able to recruit such people is actually quite nice.

We've had former judges. Mr. Konrad von Finckenstein at the CRTC was a Federal Court judge. He indicated an interest in assuming some other kind of role, and he has played a very dynamic role at the CRTC.

I think we're making progress in terms of being able to recruit qualified people. One difficulty we have is on the compensation issue. The economy has been going strongly for so long that private sector salaries have gone up quite a bit, and we're having trouble recruiting in some instances, especially for crown corporations. They're saying that the people they want to attract are making much more money than they're offering. We try to keep a lid on compensation to avoid compensation creep. That's an ongoing struggle.

But the thing I've found interesting is the number of people saying that as a last step in their career this is something they want to do.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: On the issue of the more generalist applications, you mentioned people who might work a few days a month, or a year, on the review boards and those kinds of things. Are there significant applications for those? And are the website and the *Gazette* adequate in terms of getting the word out that these openings actually exist? Does the ordinary Canadian know about the possibility of serving on some of these boards? Because I'll be frank with you, I would not have been aware of those a few years back.

• (1010)

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: The website is a recent innovation. The website was started about a year and a half ago, and it was recently upgraded. It's not yet at Workopolis level. We want to improve it. We want to make it more interactive. We want to make it more attractive. And that's ongoing.

Also, we can't run all these selection processes, because the volume is simply too great. Several organizations run their own qualification processes. The IRB is one example. The Veterans Review and Appeal Board is another one. The National Parole Board is another one. For citizenship judges, for EI referees.... Several departments and agencies have selection processes that they run. We'd have to quintuple our staff if we were to run them all out of the Privy Council Office, so it's farmed out to different agencies and departments. We want to expand the number. We want to keep increasing the number of agencies and departments that run selection processes for their part-time positions, with the ultimate goal of covering everybody.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Based on the number of applications for all of these more generalist appointments, are you totally comfortable that the word is out there and there is awareness of these positions?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Yes. The awareness overall may not be at the level we want it to be, but in terms of the specific areas, within the communities, within the specialized areas, people are aware of it and they know where to apply and where to go.

In some cases it is a very small community and word gets around quite quickly. In some cases all we have to do is talk to a couple of industry associations and publish an ad in one trade magazine, and we'll cover the whole waterfront. In other cases it has to be a lot broader than that, and we go to search firms and occasionally advertise in national newspapers, but that is becoming less and less. It's a generational thing. The current generation does not look at want ads in newspapers any more.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Albrecht.

[Translation]

It's Ms. Faille's turn, and she will be followed by Mr. Angus.

Ms. Meili Faille: Thank you.

I have a question on the new Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board. Can you briefly tell us exactly what that is?

[English]

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: I'm sorry, you're talking about the transportation committee?

[Translation]

Ms. Meili Faille: I don't know what it's called in English. In French, it's the Bureau canadien d'enquête sur les accidents de transport et de la sécurité des transports.

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: It's chaired by Mr. Ian Glen, with Mr. Duchesneau as CEO.

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: That organization doesn't report to us, but rather to a deputy minister. It doesn't report to us, as Privy Council officials.

Ms. Meili Faille: That's because here, in the votes, there are program activities totalling nearly \$28 million.

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: You're right. That's part of the Prime Minister's responsibilities, but it isn't part of our department; it's separate.

Ms. Meili Faille: All right. So you don't know what its purpose is. It's on page 11-8.

The Chair: Indeed, the Privy Council isn't responsible for these—

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: It's the agency that conducts investigations when there are accidents. I assume it's investigating the recent tragedy.

Ms. Meili Faille: Is it an agency that conducts public investigations at the Prime Minister's request?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: It investigates when accidents happen. Ms. Wendy Tadros chairs the organization. I don't know the

background. I don't know why it's in the Prime Minister's portfolio. Sometimes it's a historical question, sometimes—

• (1015)

Ms. Meili Faille: You don't know where to put it, so you put it there.

The Chair: I would think it's more historical, because it's a board that investigates all major accidents, air and others. As soon as a plane has a problem somewhere, this group goes and sees what happened.

Ms. Meili Faille: The reason I asked questions is that, previously, there was simply one heading entitled "Safety Investigations", whereas it's now been broken down. That's fine.

There's one thing that isn't here. Since Mr. O'Sullivan is here, I only want to ask him one question. Another item that's extremely costly is information technologies. I remember, since I was a public servant as well, major technological orientations, where we were headed toward what was called shared systems in the area of infrastructures, applications development and so on.

Can you give us a snapshot and tell us where that stands?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: Not really; it's the Treasury Board that handles shared systems, and I'm not entirely sure—

Ms. Meili Faille: All right. So, in the Privy Council, you don't necessarily have a say on the orientation that can take. This is nevertheless a major budget item, and major projects were undertaken some 15 years ago, if I remember correctly. I remember approaches made to the Privy Council. That's why I was wondering whether the major budget items had been followed up.

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: There may be someone at the Privy Council who knows the details, but—

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: We would have to check, madam.

Ms. Meili Faille: You can get back to us on that, if someone has some follow-up on the subject. That's fine.

I'd like to have a simple explanation. In the chapter on the votes of the various departments—but here as well—there is a heading where we see a decline in amounts allocated, in particular contributions to the employee benefits plan. Can you give me an explanation on that subject? Is that simply the result of attrition, retirements?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: The contribution rate is determined by the Treasury Board. The percentage was 18.5% last year, but it's 17.5% this year. That establishes the employer contributions for the Canada Pension Plan and all other social benefits.

Ms. Meili Faille: Do I have a minute or 30 seconds left?

The Chair: Yes. I've been quite flexible this morning.

Ms. Meili Faille: Thank you.

With regard to the Department of Public Works and Government Services, you explained a little earlier that you periodically review the various programs and portfolios of the various departments. When did you conduct the last evaluation of the Department of Public Works and Government Services? Was there any question of the sale of buildings?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: We don't evaluate the departments as a whole. We coordinate and closely monitor the implementation of government priorities. As regards the specific question of the sale of buildings, I must check with my colleagues to see who is familiar with that file and where it now stands. We focus on key aspects of the government agenda.

Ms. Meili Faillie: You can simply file the two follow-ups with the committee, the one on the technology question and that on the sale of the buildings, please.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

We'll end with Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'm still trying to get a sense of the difference between the role of the secretariat and the role of the commission. It has always been the privilege of the Prime Minister to appoint certain key positions—for example, the head of the CBC. Recently the heritage department and the CBC have undertaken a headhunting process to make sure that whoever comes in actually knows something about broadcasting. But then it would still have to go back to the Privy Council. Was there not always a budget in place to vet appointments and to ensure that whoever the Prime Minister was giving his imprimatur to was the right candidate?

• (1020)

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: The secretariat within PCO where I work, the senior personnel secretariat, coordinates and does the staff work for Governor in Council appointments. When it comes to heads of agencies such as the CBC, we run the selection processes. We're the ones who work closely with the agency in question and the department in developing selection criteria, advertising the position, and then, if necessary, hiring a search firm, or sometimes the organization hires a search firm and launches a process.

I personally sat in on the process that ended up with Hubert Lacroix's recommendation as a qualified candidate for the position, an extraordinary man, a top-flight lawyer who, while in one of the

most senior positions in the legal community in Montreal, on weekends would go off and do *des reportages* on amateur sport across the world for CBC, and was also a top-flight marathon runner. He qualifies for Boston every year. So he's a very driven A-type personality who showed the knowledge, the experience, the expertise, and the drive that you want in a top-flight CEO like that.

Mr. Charlie Angus: That has always been a role within PCO. So is there a separate budget pocket or envelope for this, then, for the secretariat?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Yes, the operation budget of the secretariat.

Mr. Charlie Angus: So was all the money that was assigned last year for the secretariat spent, or did it go back to the Treasury Board?

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: Are you talking about the organization inside PCO, or are you talking about the secretariat?

Mr. Charlie Angus: The public appointments secretariat.

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson: Actually, I just got confirmation for Mr. Holland's question. Last year we spent only \$84,000.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Oh, you spent only \$84,000. You've allowed yourself quite an envelope to use then, if necessary?

Mr. Marc O'Sullivan: Yes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay, thank you very much. I'm satisfied.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much for agreeing to appear on 24 hours' notice.

[English]

I thank you very much. It's been good time spent.

Now I'll ask that we suspend the session and that we move in camera, following a break of two or three minutes.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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