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—
Chair

Mr. Derek Lee

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•(1110)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Colleagues, we're continuing with our review of the economic stimulus package on behalf of Canada's taxpayers. We have a number of departments in front of us today.

I want to apologize for the late start. The environmentalists who were in the room prior to us are using a different time clock from us. We forgive them for that. We'll start now, and I hope the witnesses are ready. We're getting off to a very quick start, but we are ten minutes behind time.

We have a large number of departments with us today. It's a large panel: Western Economic Diversification, the Department of Industry, National Research Council, Atomic Energy of Canada, Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, and Service Canada. That covers a lot of territory.

I'll go to the departments first and invite them to make opening statements. The first on our list, and I'll follow it, is Mr. Watson, associate deputy minister for western economic diversification.

The microphone is yours, sir.

[Translation]

Mr. Daniel Watson (Associate Deputy Minister, Western Economic Diversification): Good morning, Mr. Chairman. It is a great pleasure to be here today.

Given the fact that you have a very full agenda, I will reduce my opening statement to a minimum.

[English]

I understand from our discussions with the committee's clerk that the principal interests today are around vote 35 and two aspects of it that relate to Western Economic Diversification. What I would like to say about that, just to keep my comments to a minimum and allow others to question and make their presentations, is that we had a \$994,000 amount related to the Canada Business Network. We have spent \$766,000 of it and committed over \$300,000 further dollars of it; we cash-manage the rest. So that amount is completely spent or committed at this point in time.

The second amount that we had was related to the RInC program. This was an amount of approximately \$20 million that was under vote 35. We are now well beyond the stage of authorities. We have consulted with provinces, territories, and municipalities on a number

of occasions, have done outreach sessions, and have had the first deadline for applications. We have worked with the applicants in helping develop those and get them on track. We have a whole bunch in now, and at this point in time we expect to be able to make program announcements in the very short-term future. People have been working through this past weekend and this week to complete due diligence on a great many projects that we would hope to see announced in the very short-term future.

If I can leave my opening remarks with that, I'll return to you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: That's excellent. Thank you; it's just what we were looking for.

Next we'll turn to the Department of Industry and Kevin Lindsey, chief financial officer.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey (Chief Financial Officer, Department of Industry): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to address the committee. I will be similarly brief.

[Translation]

I'm pleased to be here today to report on Industry Canada's progress on its commitments under the Economic Action Plan, which was passed at the end of March of this year.

After this presentation, I would be pleased to answer your questions. Today, I will speak to you more particularly about the Marquee Tourism Events Program and the Canadian Youth Business Foundation.

•(1115)

[English]

I ask committee members to keep in mind that the program is much broader than those two initiatives. In a relatively short period, Industry Canada has announced programs that will support the building of new recreational facilities in communities across the country, increase the availability of broadband services in rural and remote areas, update infrastructure at universities and colleges from coast to coast, and update and modernize federal research facilities.

[Translation]

I would first of all like to talk to you about the \$100 million allocated to the Marquee Tourism Events Program over two years. This program's objective is to assist well-established, annual tourist events that have a track record of good programming and excellent management, as well as attracting a high number of tourists.

The program funding will result in more foreign tourists coming to Canada, which will help our tourism industry to overcome the difficulties related to the global economic crisis. Last April and June, the government announced funding for 10 events chosen within the framework of the summer 2009 program. This allocation was intended to provide critical financial assistance quickly to the tourism sector.

[English]

Let me now turn briefly to the Canadian Youth Business Foundation. As committee members know, small business is a key economic engine of the Canadian economy, and we're investing a further \$10 million in the Canadian Youth Business Foundation.

[Translation]

This \$10 million government funding will help many young entrepreneurs discover the challenges and joys of managing their own small business. Under the foundation's loan program, young entrepreneurs can borrow up to \$15,000 in start-up funds. In order to be eligible, applicants must be between the ages of 18 and 34, demonstrate that they are committed to starting up or ensuring the growth of their business in Canada and agree to work with a mentor.

[English]

Since 1996 the foundation has helped over 3,000 young entrepreneurs create more than 15,500 new jobs. Under the knowledge infrastructure program, Industry Canada has begun to commit funding that will total \$2 billion to support new buildings and facilities at universities and colleges. The program responds directly to needs identified by universities and colleges, including affiliated research hospitals, CÉGEPs, publicly funded polytechnical schools, and institutes of technology across Canada.

[Translation]

For its part, the Recreational Infrastructure Canada Program will invest \$500 million to help Canadian communities build and upgrade arenas, pools and other recreational facilities.

Within the framework of another initiative intended to offer broadband services to rural and distant communities, we will invest \$225 million to ensure that modern communication services are not only available in major centres and cities.

[English]

In conclusion, the department remains committed to the timely and targeted delivery of stimulus funds and to all these important programs. These initiatives are helping to lay a strong foundation for Canada's long-term prosperity.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my formal remarks. I thank you for the opportunity.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

I'll now turn to the National Research Council Canada, Pat Mortimer, vice-president, technology and industry support.

Mrs. Pat Mortimer (Vice-President, Technology and Industry Support, National Research Council Canada): Thank you for inviting the National Research Council to your meeting.

The National Research Council is a powerful tool of the federal government, with a mandate to transform science and technology into social and economic well-being for Canada. It does this working closely with industry, and indeed working with industry has been its mandate for its whole 93-year history.

One of the key programs that NRC has for working with industry is its industrial research assistance program, or IRAP. IRAP provides innovation support to technology-based Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs, and has been doing this as part of NRC for over 60 years. It delivers the program through a network of experienced technology advisers located in more than 100 communities across the country. They work directly with the SMEs to address their technology challenges with advice, guidance, and business assistance, but also some financial support.

IRAP's financial support is for R and D projects or R and D related expenses, and the cost is shared with the company, ensuring their own investment in R and D. We generally pay the cost of the salaries of the technology workers involved in the projects and do not pay general operating or infrastructure costs.

The amounts may be small, but they come at a critical time in the evolution of a small business. Last year we provided \$70 million in contributions of this type to firms. There is a strong demand for these funds, and last year the program was fully committed very early in the year, as early as May.

IRAP also administers a program with funding from HRSDC to help SMEs hire graduates from universities and colleges. Through this youth program, IRAP helps the small business hire graduates by paying a portion of their salary. It's a very successful program. We've found that 91%, on average, of these students are eventually hired by the firms.

The incremental resources that IRAP received through the budget of \$100 million a year for two years will be invested in these two highly successful programs: the contributions to firms for R and D and the youth program. As such, they'll use the existing IRAP terms and conditions, existing management frameworks, and existing delivery systems. This has allowed us to move quickly and to get the money into the hands of Canadian SMEs. The full \$200 million will go to firms. There are no operating funds for NRC-IRAP included in this funding.

For these funds, we will use the same criteria for selecting projects as in the past, but we will be focused on selecting projects that contribute to innovations that will position these firms for the future. We're not supporting just to survive through the difficult times, but to allow them to prosper and grow when the economy turns around.

As these are well-established programs, we have robust management and control systems already in place: existing terms and conditions, standard operating procedures, a standard contribution agreement, a risk-based management framework, and lots of audits and evaluations. We've been audited seven times in the last five years.

These additional funds provided to IRAP by budget 2009 are very much appreciated, and the access to them through vote 35 was critical for their delivery. In order to optimize the expenditure of the funds, commitment authority is needed early in the year, and waiting for supplementary estimates would probably have necessitated the lapsing of funds. Since it's a large amount incrementally, in proportion to the NRC budget, we were not able to cash-manage it ourselves. Based on the experience we have with the program to date, we estimated that \$76 million of the \$100 million would be required from vote 35.

How are we doing with committing them? We are right on schedule. Our regular A-base contribution to firms was fully committed as of the first week of April this year. For the new funds, as of May 31, 57% of the \$71 million for firms was committed, and 90% of the funding for the youth program was committed. They're moving quickly, but I want to assure you that we're treating them with the same due diligence and attention to documentation that we would in any other year.

We've committed to targets for the number of new SMEs to be reached with these funds of 720 this year and 640 next year, and for the youth program, 333 graduates supported this year and 667 next year. We are fully confident that we can meet these targets.

• (1120)

We're also monitoring the number of jobs supported. As of May 31, we have already identified 1,773 jobs supported in 458 new firms and 178 graduates hired through these vote 35 funds.

So the uptake of these new funds has been outstanding, and I want to thank Parliament for their continuing support of NRC and the IRAP program.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that.

I'll now turn to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, to Michael Robins, senior vice-president and chief financial officer.

Mr. Michael F. Robins (Senior Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will abbreviate my remarks to reflect the time availability.

First of all, Mr. Chairman and honourable members, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss approved vote 35 funding of \$222 million provided to AECL.

A national nuclear energy program, safety support to provincial and international reactors, isotope production, and other essential R and D require investment. Let me describe the public investment in AECL as a commercial crown corporation.

AECL currently receives an annual parliamentary appropriation, included in the main estimates, of \$103 million to support the ongoing operations of the large, complex, and aging Chalk River

nuclear laboratories. Incremental funding for health, safety, security, and environmental projects totalling \$6 million was also included in our 2009 appropriations.

Chalk River Laboratories, which employs about 3,000 of the country's best scientists, engineers, and technical staff, is where Canada's unique and successful CANDU nuclear energy program was born in the 1940s. The primary public policy objective of Chalk River is to carry out nuclear safety research, nuclear R and D, new reactor development, isotope production, and nuclear waste management.

Budget 2009 provides a \$351 million one-time cash contribution to AECL for 2009-10 operations, including ongoing support for the development of the advanced CANDU reactor and to maintain safe and reliable operations at the Chalk River Laboratories.

The vote 35 contribution approved in budget 2009 will be used as follows: \$67 million for Project New Lease, which reflects capital projects and operations to upgrade the Chalk River site; \$50 million to support ongoing Chalk River operations; and \$105 million for the continuing advanced CANDU reactor design engineering and systems development in 2009-10.

Many of the items being funded are multi-year projects that extend beyond 2009-10. To date in 2009, we have spent \$45 million on budget 2009 initiatives: \$9 million for Project New Lease, \$19 million for Chalk River operations, and \$17 million for the ACR development.

Vote 35 funding has allowed AECL to support an estimated 1,600 positions: engineering and design jobs, construction, logistics, and security, to name just a few. Some of the funding is being used to pay for external labour and subcontractors estimated to create an additional 720 jobs outside of AECL.

AECL has a solid accountability framework and a sound governance regime in place, with appropriate mechanisms for financial oversight on spending, including approval and monitoring processes. The Chalk River projects, including PNL, are approved by the science, technology, and nuclear oversight committees of our board of directors, and they are monitored quarterly by the board.

ACR development timelines and expenditures are monitored by the project risk review committee of the board, and recently completed internal audits on both Project New Lease and advanced CANDU reactor projects were provided to the audit committee of the board. Washington Safety Management Solutions, an independent firm, reviewed the PNL plan to ensure that the infrastructure and process improvements were required to meet the regulatory and safety standards.

Specific budgets and monitoring processes are in place. Monthly and quarterly management meetings confirm we are tracking to plan.

And finally, the Office of the Auditor General reviews AECL's systems and practices and audits us on an annual basis.

To conclude, nuclear technology is a proven and reliable source of clean energy. In Canada and around the world, energy authorities are investing in nuclear power to meet energy security and climate change goals.

Continued government support for maintaining safe and reliable operations at the Chalk River Laboratories, as well as the development of the advanced CANDU reactor, will help strengthen Canada's nuclear advantage and generate significant value to Canadians through the creation of high-paying jobs. Vote 35 funding has enabled AECL to invest in these important jobs and to improve the safety of its nuclear infrastructure. It is seizing this opportunity, which is foremost in our goals at AECL, while being an effective steward of taxpayer money.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

• (1125)

The Chair: Thank you as well. I'll now turn to the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development.

Mr. Frank Vermaeten, senior assistant deputy minister, skills and employment branch, is going to deliver the remarks.

Mr. Frank Vermaeten (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Skills and Employment Branch, Department of Human Resources and Skills Development): *Monsieur le président* and members of the committee, I am pleased to be here before you today to talk about vote 35 and its implications for the supplementary estimates for 2009-10 for the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

As you heard, my name is Frank Vermaeten. I'm the new senior ADM—I emphasize the “new”—and I have a team with me here made up of Su Dazé, our acting chief financial officer; Joanne Lamothe, our assistant deputy minister of program operations; and Liliane Binette, our ADM of operations at Service Canada.

Last January the government introduced Canada's economic action plan to address the pressures facing Canada and Canadians during the global economic downturn. Many of the initiatives, programs, and services that were introduced and enhanced are being delivered by the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development. They are designed to support the unemployed, preserve jobs, and retrain workers for jobs of the future.

• (1130)

[Translation]

We are here today to discuss three HRSDC initiatives arising out of the Economic Action Plan. These did not appear in the main estimates of May 5th which came out just a few days after the announcement of the plan.

[English]

As a result, it was understood that adjustments to the main estimates would be required to ensure that new funding could flow quickly and in a timely fashion for the implementation of the

stimulus measures arising from the plan. The approach taken was to seek funding through supplementary estimates (A) for \$455 million as well as through Treasury Board vote 35 for \$269 million.

Treasury Board vote 35 was created to provide Treasury Board ministers with the authority to approve the direct allocation of funds to supplement departmental appropriations for expenditures required before the next opportunity to obtain parliamentary approval of increased appropriations.

What this means, Mr. Chair, is that departments like HRSDC could have access to additional funding to facilitate the implementation of the economic action plan. Access to vote 35 funds is considered bridge funding that will be included in subsequent supplementary estimates. It can be used only between April 1 and June 30, 2009. We have requested access to vote 35 funds for the following three measures: first, the strategic transition and training fund in the amount of \$250 million; second, \$15 million for the YMCA and YWCA grants for youth internship; and last, additional funding of \$4 million for the Canada summer jobs program.

Let me take a few moments to explain the specific reasons for each of these requests.

The Strategic Training and Transition Fund will provide new funding to support provincial and territorial programming to help meet the training needs of workers. The fund is worth \$500 million over the next two years and will be administered through existing labour market agreements with provinces and territories. The government currently has signed agreements with nine provinces to implement the Strategic Training and Transition Fund, and we expect to sign labour market agreements with Newfoundland and Labrador and the territories in the very near future. This new Strategic Training and Transition Fund is available to all employed and unemployed Canadians, both EI- and non-EI-eligible, with a particular focus on low-skilled workers and those in communities or sectors affected by the economic downturn. It is designed to provide provinces and territories with significant flexibility, to allow them to identify labour market priorities in their regions, and to develop programs tailored to their specific and respective needs.

[Translation]

This new strategic training and transition fund is available to all employed and unemployed Canadians, both EI and non-EI eligible, with a particular focus on low-skilled workers and those in communities or sectors affected by the economic downturn.

It is designed to provide provinces and territories with significant flexibility to allow them to identify labour market priorities in their region and to develop programming tailored to their specific and respective needs.

[English]

Each province and territory will receive an allocation based on their average share of unemployed, based on data from Statistics Canada from August 2008 to January 2009. Small jurisdictions, which include P.E.I. and the territories, will receive base funding plus their proportion of funding based on the average share of unemployed for that same period. Each province and territory's allocation will be updated in 2010-11, based on the average share of unemployed from August 2009 to January 2010, to reflect changes in the number of unemployed.

Provinces and territories will receive their funding in two instalments, the first in the spring and the second by September of this year. Given that the majority of agreements were signed in late May, we are working with provinces and territories to ensure that they receive their first installment by mid-June, so in the next several weeks.

Let me now turn to the YMCA and YWCA youth internship. Through Canada's economic action plan, the federal government announced a grant of \$15 million to the YMCA and YWCA to place unemployed youth in internship with not-for-profit and community service organizations with a focus on environmental projects. The internship will help young Canadians develop their skills and gain the work experience needed to secure employment. The full \$15 million was obtained from Treasury Board vote 35 to enable HRSDC to sign grant agreements.

While the department has a long-standing relationship with these organizations, particularly the YMCA, the grants for youth internship is a new program. Therefore, new authorities and program tools had to be developed.

[Translation]

While the department has a long-standing relationship with these organizations, particularly the YMCA, the Grants for Youth Internships is a new program. As such new authorities and program tools had to be developed.

• (1135)

[English]

These steps have been completed, and the department has been working very closely with the YM-YWCA to conclude these agreements. The agreements are expected to be in place by mid-June, after which funding will flow. Internships are expected to begin this July.

Access to Treasury Board vote 35 is being requested to allow this budget 2009 initiative to move forward prior to approval of supplementary estimates (A).

Lastly let me turn to Canada summer jobs program.

[Translation]

Canada Summer Jobs is a highly-valued and popular program that helps thousands of students in virtually every community across Canada to gain work experience, while also providing extra help to organizations that deliver important community services.

[English]

Under Canada's economic action plan, additional funding in the amount of \$10 per year in 2009 and 2010 was allocated to Canada summer jobs. This brings the total amount of funding for CSJ to \$107.5 million in 2009 and 2010.

Of the additional \$10 million, \$4 million was requested under the supplementary estimates. It is an addition to the existing funding and will be distributed across the country's 308 constituencies. All applications have now been assessed, the MP validation phase has been completed, and employers have been notified of the results. Hiring of students began in May 2009.

As the program sends advance payments to the organizations by late May and early June at the latest, we are seeking access to Treasury Board vote 35 funds.

I trust this explains our rationale for using vote 35. I'd be happy to answer your questions.

Thank you. *Merci*.

The Chair: Thank you to all the witnesses.

Are any other witnesses here today who wanted to make a statement or make a presentation? I don't think there are. If there are none, then we're good here on this end.

Putting this thing in context, there are quite a number of witnesses here today, quite a number of departments. Our focus at the committee has been to review the stimulus spending as outlined in the government's budget, from the point of view of speed in the execution of the spending of the money and rule compliance. If there is a recession out there, it demands quick response. We're not saying, hurry up and comply with the rules, but we are saying, hurry up, you must comply with the rules. And lastly, someone has to be doing an account of job creation, and I know many of you have made reference to those issues here today.

So I'm going to turn to colleagues for questions. Ms. Hall Findlay, for the first eight-minute round.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much, everybody. It's not normal that we get so many people, and all at the same time. It's going to be difficult for us to parse it.

I want to focus on vote 35. I want to focus on the fact that we supported the budget, and in particular vote 35, because of a recognition that in a recession we needed extra money, incremental money, out on the street, if you will.

We have heard announcements for a number of weeks now, we've heard allocations, we have heard reannouncements, but we remain concerned that there hasn't been much evidence of money that has been put out into the street that is incremental to what would otherwise be there. I say that understanding the bridging nature of vote 35. This may have allowed that bridging in terms of future timing, but we still have not had any, or very few, answers and examples of specific cheques being cut so that jobs are being created now that otherwise would not have been.

I do want to commend Ms. Mortimer. In your piece you focus on some additional jobs that have been created; Mr. Robins from AECL as well; and Mr. Vermaeten, in particular the last piece on the summer jobs. But generally I think we have from Mr. Vermaeten an acknowledgement, which we've certainly understood, that this money has to be used between April 1 and June 30. I go back to "used". We want to know what money has gone out that's over and above what would have been out there, that has actively created jobs now and over the next few months that are incremental, that would not otherwise have been.

Perhaps I can pick Mr. Lindsey. I didn't hear so much from you. We had understood there was a fair bit, and certainly the allocations industry has a lot. Can you give me some specific examples of jobs that are being created now, that are incremental to what otherwise would have been, thanks to money that I'm hoping you can tell me has been spent so far?

• (1140)

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: Perhaps I could go back to the technical point with respect to vote 35, and then I'd be happy to talk about the jobs issue.

I believe I heard an understanding that the money from vote 35 actually had to be spent by the end of June; but in fact, the money must be allocated by Treasury Board by the end of June, and there is authority to spend that money right through the rest of the fiscal year.

With respect to the substance of your question, the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, as an example, has received their funding. It is a program that has existed, so it will constantly be in the process of reviewing proposals from young entrepreneurs and making those allocations. I can't quantify for you the number of loans or jobs that have been created as a result of this incremental money, because it has just flowed to them.

With respect to the marquee tourism events program, we have announced support for 10 events this summer season so far. We have no evidence of the incremental job creation that might be associated with our funding. In fact, the principal objective with respect to that program was to minimize the extent to which the economic situation would result in reduced attendance at those events. So the key there is to help those events maintain or increase attendance in spite of the economic situation.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: I'm sorry, can I clarify that? Did you say that the purpose of the marquee tourism money was not, in fact, to increase jobs but to increase attendance?

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: In increasing the attendance, there will be a jobs impact, clearly.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: How does that happen?

Let me back up. The purpose of our approval of this money was for additional jobs—either a reduction in the number of jobs that would otherwise be lost, or additional jobs. The whole point of this unusual vote 35 was that.

A couple of times you've suggested that we don't know, that we don't have the evidence of additional jobs, that we don't know what those are. But has that not at least been part of the mandate for the allocation of these funds?

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: I think the answer to your question lies in your first premise, which is that if we're not clearly creating new jobs, are we at least preventing the loss of existing jobs?

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: But we still need to know what those numbers are. If you say we don't have evidence of either, it sounds as though that's not even part of the mandate.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: Not at all. The issue with that program is that none of the events have actually occurred yet, so we don't know what the attendance will be, and we don't know what jobs are associated with the events. Once the events occur, we'll be able to quantify the impacts better, both with respect to the maintenance of jobs and the creation of new jobs, and the impact on attendance.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: I remain a little confused about the primary purpose being increasing attendance. But in any event, we are short of time, and I do want to ask the next question of Mr. Robins.

Needless to say, AECL has been in the news a little bit lately, and given what was learned in the last day or so, we do have a rather astounding number, the \$1.7 billion, that has been spent since 2006. Now, what I ask about is outside of vote 35, but given the events of the last day or so, I feel obliged to ask you about the amount of \$72 million allocated for decommissioning. We don't know where it is in the budget.

Can you speak to that? Where is that money supposed to be coming from?

• (1145)

Mr. Michael F. Robins: The \$72 million is part of the \$351 million appropriation, or one-time funding, that we've received. It's \$25 million related to the decommissioning of the dedicated isotope facilities and \$47 million related to the isotope supply reliability program.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Okay, so the \$72 million is actually part of the \$351 million?

Mr. Michael F. Robins: Yes, it is.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Mr. Vermaeten, with respect to the numbers that you had for the summer jobs program, can you tell us if allocations have to be done? The use of the word "use" means that the money has to be allocated before the end of June. I think Mr. Lindsey suggested that the money had to be spent in this fiscal year. A number of things you're talking about actually cover two fiscal years. Does it have to be spent in one fiscal year or can it cover two? Can you give me any other examples of actual jobs being created? The summer jobs program, as nice as it sounds—and I commend you on it—is really not much in the grand scheme of things, when you consider current job losses and the job creation that we need to see.

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: I think Mr. Lindsey articulated it much better than I could. Once the amount is allocated to our department, we have until the end of the year to spend it, and we certainly intend to do that in this fiscal year.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: In the first fiscal year?

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: That's our intention. With respect to our three measures and job creation and stimulus, I'll start with the largest one, the STTF, the Strategic Training and Transition Fund, which is the biggest one. It's \$500 million over two years, \$250 million for this year. I'm pleased that we have an agreement with nine of the provinces. We're expecting the rest to participate. If we look at the nine provinces right now, that's 95% of the money.

We have made the commitment. Because of that commitment, provinces have gone out and adjusted their plans for the training they're going to provide. They're starting to roll out that training now. In some cases, it's immediate. In other cases, it's going to be September before people are enrolled. These are fairly sizable numbers. We're talking about having approximately 25,000 people a year on training as result of that money. It is stimulus, but it is also a longer-term investment in these people. It will help them get better jobs in the future. Some will get jobs now. Others will upgrade their skills. There's a range of possibilities.

For Canada summer jobs, I'll turn to my colleague Joanne Lamothe. But the \$10 million is only an additional amount on a program that, for 2009, will be \$107.5 million in total. That's a sizable program. It's a program that was already important and popular, providing young men and women with experience throughout the summer. This just builds on that.

Finally, on internship, you're correct, it's not a large amount, but this is important for a limited number of people. This is going to be delivered this summer; there are going to be job experiences right there this summer.

The Chair: Madam Bourgeois.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sharing my time with my colleague, Mr. Roy.

Ladies, gentlemen, good morning.

Right away, I feel like saying: "phew"! You have given us an enormous amount of information in very little time. I would like to come back to the questions my colleague was asking, in order to see my way clear through all this.

First of all, I am addressing each of the spokespersons who took the floor here today. I would like for you to tell me if, before allocating money from the stimulus plan, you had enough time to develop an action plan including timelines—I imagine you did—but also performance indicators.

• (1150)

Mr. Daniel Watson: Thank you very much for your question.

As far as the Canada Business centres are concerned, the program has existed for a long time. It was therefore an issue of adding funding so that they could carry on, something which is all the more important during a recession, because we are well aware of the fact that small- and medium-sized businesses have a lot to do with creating the jobs that we will need in order to stimulate the economy. It was therefore something we were well aware of and we knew it was very important. Therefore we did allocate funds to them.

If I may, I will continue in English.

[*English*]

There are four conversations, and it sort of relates to the previous question, four stages of the program like this. We're very advanced in these four stages. The first stage in the program is—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: I'm sorry, I know these programs because I have done some research. All I was asking was if you had time to do some planning and to determine some performance indicators.

Mr. Daniel Watson: Absolutely, yes.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: I would ask the same question of Mr. Lindsey.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: Thank you, Ms. Bourgeois. The short answer is yes.

[*English*]

We have taken the necessary time, in our view, bearing in mind that we have literally billions of dollars at Industry Canada for which we are trying to design programs. We believe we have struck the balance necessary between being expeditious in getting the programs ready to deliver and building into them, at the same time, the necessary probity and safeguards to ensure that the investments are properly protected. Of course, that work is ongoing, and as the programs are delivered, as the money is spent, we will continue to exercise due diligence over the recipients to ensure that this money is safeguarded.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: That is excellent, because you have to understand that you have operating funds, but that there is also an added amount which is vote 35, which goes to the stimulus plan.

Mr. Robins, have you done your planning and have you established performance indicators?

[*English*]

Mr. Michael F. Robins: Yes, we have broken down our Project New Lease into many smaller projects, and we have scorecards that measure the operating performance against the plans. We report against that at the management team on a monthly basis, and at the board on a quarterly basis.

For the ACR, we run the advanced CANDU reactor program like a project with milestones, and we report against the milestones—the head count growth, the performance against each one of those milestones—on a monthly basis for the management and on a quarterly basis to our board.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Very well.

Mr. Vermaeten.

M. Frank Vermaeten: Thank you very much for your question, Madam.

[English]

In designing these three measures, I think we and the government were very conscious of trying to find the right balance between getting the money out quickly, creating jobs, and making sure there's proper planning in place, proper safeguards, etc.

When we look at the three measures, if we start with the Strategic Training and Transition Fund, this money was flowed through existing labour market agreements. There are all the planning safeguards and mechanisms in place, so that existing mechanism was used. The same thing can be said for Canada summer jobs, a well-established program that has been running for many years. One slightly different one is the grant for the YM-YWCA. This is a new program, but careful consideration was given to putting in place the checks and balances.

• (1155)

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: I will now give the floor to my colleague.

The Chair: Mr. Roy.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Vermaeten, I have a question for you. In the end, you are saying that you got an extra \$10 million in funding to increase the number of summer jobs in human resources development. I would answer you that at home, that does not do any good because it corresponds more or less to the indexation of minimum wage. It does not create any extra jobs as far as the \$107-million budget that you had is concerned, because it corresponds to approximately 10%, that is in the indexation of minimum wage. Therefore, we find ourselves with roughly the same number of jobs. Ten million dollars is 10% of \$100 million, which corresponds to the indexing of minimum wage compared with last year. I would therefore like to know if elsewhere, the \$10 million in question will create more jobs, because if that is not quite correct...

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: Thank you sir. Perhaps I could ask my colleague Joanne Lamothe to answer.

Ms. Joanne Lamothe (Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Programs Operation Branch, Department of Human Resources and Skills Development): Yes, the \$10 million will indeed create more jobs.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: How many?

Ms. Joanne Lamothe: We do not have the figures for now. We are in the process of negotiating agreements across the country and we hope to wrap that up within two weeks...

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but what I'm telling you is that in Quebec, the \$10 million corresponds roughly to the indexing of minimum wage. Therefore, if you do a comparison with last year—the \$107-million amount was based on last year's data—at home, this is not true. In my riding, the \$10 million does not create even one extra job; it indexes minimum wage and that is all.

Ms. Joanne Lamothe: But across Canada, we will create extra jobs.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Perhaps, but in our part of the world, the answer is no. That's what I'm telling you.

Ms. Joanne Lamothe: It also depends on whether we are dealing with the private sector or whether jobs are being created in the not-for-profit sector, because I can certainly tell you that when we deal with the not-for-profit sector [*Editor's Note: Inaudible*].

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: In our region, 99% of these jobs are in the not-for-profit sector, so that's not so; it creates zero additional employment. Are we on the same wavelength? And that's the case nearly everywhere in Quebec.

I would like to ask Mr. Watson the same question. How many additional jobs will the funding you asked for this year help create, in comparison with last year?

Mr. Daniel Watson: There are two sides to the coin. On one side, we have the Canada Business centres, which entrepreneurs will continue to visit, as they have been doing, and will continue to do what they do to create employment. We have been very familiar with their activities over the past 15 years or so.

On the other side of the coin, we have a model that is recognized worldwide and managed by Statistics Canada. Experts at Statistics Canada analyze the jobs created in a number of fields, particularly with regard to infrastructure issues, since we are mostly talking about the Recreational Infrastructure Canada Program. This field of endeavour is well recognized, and statisticians have been doing analysis in this field for a long time.

One of the very specific questions we asked on all the applications that we received was how many jobs would be created with these projects. So we have two ways of seeing this: on the one hand, we have the number that they are telling us, and on the other hand, we have the number from the check done by Statistics Canada using the statistical model that is recognized worldwide.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Fine. Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Brown, for eight minutes.

Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC): I am interested in some of the Industry Canada comments on how vote 35 assisted with a knowledge infrastructure program that had been expedited.

I had the pleasure of being in Simcoe County on Friday, where Minister Milloy from Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government, along with Minister Goodyear from the Canadian government, were there announcing a project for Georgian College that was substantial in size. It was a \$65 million project, of which the provincial and federal governments contributed \$20 million each.

They said at the time of the announcement that 181 construction jobs were created starting on July 1. When it actually opens a year and half from now, there would be 400 full-time and part-time jobs. I thought these job numbers were wonderful and spoke to a story that's not getting out there enough.

Do you have similar job numbers that you're hearing back from colleges involved in these programs? Are you hearing that there's going to be significant jobs created like that one, but across the country?

• (1200)

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: Thanks for the question.

In fact, we have announced agreements with six provinces and one of the territories so far. We expect that other announcements with respect to agreements with the provinces are imminent. At the end of the day, several hundred significant infrastructure projects will be undertaken at universities, colleges, and so forth across the country.

For the knowledge infrastructure program in particular, Industry Canada was allocated \$500 million from vote 35. That represents five-sixths of our normal annual contributions budget. Without that money, we would not have been able to make the commitments we have, and the further commitments we will make, to the provinces and to these institutions. We would not have been able to do that until supplementary estimates were approved. As a result of this \$500 million that we got through vote 35, together with the \$500 million that was approved through the Budget Implementation Act, the statutory authority, we are able to expand greatly the amount of activity that will be carried on this summer.

I don't have with me estimates of the aggregate number of jobs that will derive from all of these projects. We just don't have it yet. The agreements are coming out so quickly that I just don't have those numbers. The number of projects will be in the hundreds—they will be right across the country—and the expectation is that the job creation will be significant, both during the construction building and renovation phase, and in subsequent phases where in fact the facilities are new.

Mr. Patrick Brown: I would encourage you to gather that data, if it's possible. I realize everything's happening very quickly, but if other projects are as successful as this one, that's an incredible story for communities. It's a powerful boost to have 181 immediate jobs and 400 permanent ones. That's something special for a community.

I wanted to mention another thing that I heard at the announcement. As I said, the provincial Liberal minister, when he was working with Minister Goodyear, also praised something else, and I'd like to get your comment on it. He said that the pace was incredible. He said it was an eight-week pace, which is unheard of, from when this knowledge infrastructure program was signed with the Province of Ontario until the actual announcement.

Can you speak a little bit about the unusually quick pace?

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: I can certainly agree that the pace has been extraordinary. It took time to think about the design of the program, the kinds of projects that would be eligible, and the institutions that would be eligible. It took time to negotiate the agreements with the provinces. It took time to design the terms and conditions of the program. There was also the aspect of breadth; this is \$2 billion over two fiscal years, and that's three and a half times what our department would normally spend on all of its grants and contributions programs together. It's a staggering undertaking, so we continue to think about how we will carry out and implement the due diligence that will be required to ensure value for these investments that we're making.

Yes, the pace has been extraordinary, we think. To have announced on the timeline we did is quite extraordinary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: It's heartening to hear, and I know that for those looking for work out there, it's great to see the pace being so unparalleled compared to previous programs or attempts.

Another thing I wanted to touch upon was the recreational infrastructure investment, the RInC funding. I always like to look at things through the lens of my own riding. I know that on Monday night our council passed a motion putting an application in for RInC, and I want to know if you're seeing numerous municipalities around the country putting those applications in. Is there a lot of intake on this program, given that it requires participation of other levels of government?

• (1205)

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: On RInC, the department received an allocation of about \$47 million from vote 35. That allocation was necessary in order for us to make any commitments over this construction season to that program. Just because of the aggregate magnitude of the incremental programming, we simply could not absorb it within our reference level.

In fact, vote 35 was necessary for all these initiatives, but with respect to RInC in particular, the program was announced on May 11, and we closed the window to applications on May 29, simply on the volume that we had received. The program, or our part of it, is significantly oversubscribed, so we will spend the coming time evaluating projects with a view to making allocation decisions.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The other thing I wanted to touch upon is tourism funding. I come from a region of Ontario that's a popular tourist destination. Specifically, the Muskokas are north of my riding. I understand that vote 35 expedited some of the tourism funding, and I wanted to know if expedited funds would be able to market Canada as early as this summer. Can any of those tourism dollars allocated in vote 35 actually be utilized this summer to promote our tourism sector and create jobs in Canada through additional tourism?

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: In total, the marquee tourism events program was allocated \$100 million over two years. It will receive \$50 million this year and \$50 million next year. With respect to this year, the department sought and received an allocation from vote 35 for \$30 million of the \$50 million. Of the \$30 million we've received from vote 35, about \$29.5 million has been committed, so as those events begin to unfold and incur costs, that money will begin to be spent. Again, we would not have been able to do that were it not for the vote 35 allocation.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

In the context of touring, Mr. Martin, you're always welcome in Chalk River, of course—the town of Chalk River.

You have eight minutes.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Chair, you must have read my mind.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here.

I suppose the difficulty a lot of us are having is trying to understand why these specific allocations were chosen to go under Treasury Board vote 35. Hearing your presentations, I'm still confused. If we're to accept the economists' view that we're in this very urgent situation and the money has to get into circulation really quickly, we were asked to take a great leap of faith on very sketchy, hypothetical models. That is why we called you in here, to try to put some substance to it.

We're supposed to be the estimates committee. We're supposed to assess whether spending is a good idea or a bad idea before it happens, not study it after it happens and say whether it was good or bad. Really, what we've seen here for actually getting money into people's hands on the street, as Martha said, is pretty lame, through no fault of your own. These were not your choices.

I'm still confused as to why we get this fairly substantial brief from you, Mr. Robins, saying that nuclear technology is a proven and reliable source of clean energy. Well, some of us think, no, it's not; it's dirty, it's risky, and it's notoriously unreliable. Yet under vote 35 we get \$222 million to maintain the safe and reliable operations at Chalk River.

Given what's happening there, I kind of resent this money finding its way into a package that's supposed to put money in the pockets of working people so that they can spend it and stimulate the marketplace. I don't think it belongs there. We don't have time to debate the relative merits of nuclear energy or the catastrophic events at Chalk River right now, but I don't get why it was under vote 35 at all, except that it became sort of a wish list to fast-track certain priorities for the government that go beyond any notion of stimulus.

Getting back to HRSD, the only real direct money that will really create jobs immediately is this paltry \$10 million that you've added to an existing program. I've been signing off on the summer job program for 12 years, since I've been an MP. That's not new. You've tweaked it \$10 million over the whole country. That doesn't even show up on the scale.

I remember, when I was a kid, OFY grants and LIP grants. Half the executive directors of non-profits in the country started out on these big, bold initiatives: opportunities for youth and local initiative programs. That put the country to work and put a generation of kids to work. It was bold, it was creative, and there's none of that in this array of things that we're asked to look at here today.

Can you tell me perhaps how the training initiative even fits under immediate stimulation of the economy? Training, by its very nature, is for the future, right? It's virtuous, but why is that under vote 35, and what does it have to do directly with stimulating the economy and putting money in the pockets of unemployed people?

• (1210)

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: Thank you for that question.

I think if you take the economic action plan as a whole, there's a whole range of measures out there, some that involve directly—

Mr. Pat Martin: Yes, but most of it's incomprehensible gobbledygook, frankly. We still want to know: This \$3 billion buys how many jobs, and how soon can they start work? Can they show up tomorrow morning? The shovel-in-the-ground projects I understand. Some of this other program tweaking is just more of the same.

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: HRSDC's primary area was part of the Canada skills and transition strategy, which was essentially \$8.3 billion over two years. Yes, we've talked here about vote 35 and to get the appropriations of \$250 million for training, as well as two additional measures: the Canada summer jobs program and the YM-YWCA internship. That's only part of that strategy. The biggest part of the funding from our department actually came through the EI account and the EI measures.

So you need to look at the totality of it when you're thinking about how many jobs it created, how many jobs it preserved, and how much financial support it provided to Canadians. If you look at that, you have to look at the totality here.

Through the EI account, we've provided the additional five weeks of employment insurance, which is—

Mr. Pat Martin: You didn't do anything about eligibility. If you don't qualify for EI, an extra five weeks at the other end doesn't do you any good; plus that's not your money. EI is not your money. You don't pay one nickel into the EI fund. That's our money. That's working people's money.

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: It's taxpayers' money, yes, absolutely.

Mr. Pat Martin: It's not taxpayers' money. It's not your—

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: Both CRF money and the EI account money is taxpayers' money, so you have the EI account and you have the five weeks. You have the career transition assistance that is about to be launched, which allows people to be on training and provides part I benefit support for up to 104 weeks. You have work sharing, and there are over 100,000 participants in Canada, and that's saving jobs right now. You have the labour market development agreements. It's \$500 million a year of additional money for training, so when you put all that together it's very substantial in terms of money that's ending up in the pockets of Canadians, and in terms of benefits, and in terms of training support.

Some of that is direct stimulus. Some of that is indirect stimulus—

Mr. Pat Martin: And a lot of it is out of the EI fund, which has nothing to do the Government of Canada's coffers. You didn't have to come to us to ask for money to spend out of the EI fund. It's not vote 35. It's not even in the budget.

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: It's part of the EI account, which has its own processes for authorizing that funding and is paid for by the Canadian taxpayers.

Mr. Pat Martin: Let's not get that mixed up with what the government is paying to stimulate the economy, because that money is solely contributions from the employees and their employers. The Government of Canada stopped paying into it in 1986. That \$50 billion surplus would be coming in pretty handy right now if we actually put it to income maintenance instead of you guys hiving it off to use it for general revenue.

I say "you guys", not you guys there.

•(1215)

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): It wasn't them.

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: Perhaps I could just add one small clarification on that. It is important to recognize that the government froze the EI rate at \$1.73 for 2009 and 2010, so that means this is providing a direct stimulus because the rates aren't going up, and that's a significant saving to both employers and employees.

Mr. Pat Martin: You can sympathize with our situation in trying to see where the stimulus money is really creating direct jobs. Again, we were asked to buy a pig in a poke. We were asked to sign a blank cheque essentially with this vote 35 and its almost unprecedented urgency. The House leaders were called together for a late night meeting, an all-party emergency meeting. The minister, the President of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Finance's people were there, and the PMO, PCO. This had to happen because we had to get dollars on the streets and money in people's pockets.

If you would just change the eligibility rules for EI, a lot more people would qualify and a lot of people would at least be spending money that they currently don't have.

I don't see the concrete measures here. I see lots of very virtuous, long-range human resources planning, but that is no consolation for the hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs that are being lost, etc., nor does it get money spent and re-spent. We would have been better off just handing everybody a \$1,000 bill. Well, no, it's only Karlheinz Schreiber who uses \$1,000 bills, but even George Bush just sent everybody a cheque for \$600, right? That would in fact get money into the economy and be spent a lot faster than through a lot of the plans that you're bringing to us here today.

The Chair: Thank you.

That concludes the eight-minute rounds.

I now turn to Mr. Dhaliwal of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Newton—North Delta, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to thank all the panel members here for coming to talk to us.

My first question is for Mr. Watson.

I was travelling in western Canada. We talked about the recreation fund, and I was amazed how little knowledge the councillors had about this recreation fund. What kind of communication strategy do you have to communicate between the two orders of the government?

Mr. Daniel Watson: Thank you for the question.

One of the things about this program is that it is very similar to a number of others that we actually run because we do operate a number of infrastructure programs on a regular basis.

Many of the projects that we expect to see applications from, and in fact have seen applications from, are from many of the players we dealt with in the past who are quite familiar with the general approach of the program.

What we have done is this. The program was announced on May 11, so it's now just about three weeks ago that the program was announced. We've held information sessions throughout many different provinces. Obviously there are only so many that you can hold in a three-week period, but we've held dozens of those sessions. We've been in direct contact with many different municipalities—certainly not all of them; there are hundreds, of course, across western Canada. But we've been in touch with a great number of them, and we've had conversations with provincial governments on many of these issues as well, because as you will know about the program, we will fund a certain proportion and others will have to come up with other shares of the funding. So in many cases, one of the best avenues for disseminating some of this information is our contacts with the provincial governments.

We've worked with individual proponents. We've worked with municipalities. We've worked with provinces. We have our own communications materials. In fact, on our website you can do everything from finding the application form to finding a bunch of the background.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: When I look at this timeline between May 11 and May 30, it's a two-week timeframe. You are saying you had these communications towards the end, and then they had to fill in the application. I personally found that a lot of councillors out there—I don't know who you or your department were talking to—weren't aware.

When you say you had communications with these orders of government—provincial and local governments—did you ask them how many new jobs they were going to create when you gave them these funds?

Mr. Daniel Watson: Yes, and we made them put that in writing too. On the application form they have to put that information in writing for us. We will assess that to see if we think those are the right numbers.

If I can speak a little bit about the communications on this, I think by the end of day on budget day back in January, we were receiving our first calls about how people could get access to this money, and it hasn't let up since then. Since May 11—we've been tracking our calls—we've had just about 2,000 calls by this point in time. Even in that timeframe we've had just under 800 applications given to us from across western Canada, so it's had a very significant uptake.

If you were to add up all of the numbers of the total value of the projects that people have proposed, it would be a number that would be far in excess even of the amounts that we imagined we would get in. While there may certainly be people who would want and perhaps need some further information, as I say, we've had over 2,000 contacts specific to the program, which we've tracked, and we have just under 800 applications.

•(1220)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: When you say that you've already had dialogue with them about how many new jobs they would create, can you tell me the number of new jobs that would be created in western Canada, given this funding?

Mr. Daniel Watson: When you get the application, you see how many jobs people are proposing to create. There are two ways of going about this. As I mentioned earlier, Statistics Canada has an internationally recognized model done by statisticians—so it's not done by program people like me but by people who are professionals in the area of statistical analysis and tracking econometric data—who have been able to demonstrate over the years, through practical experience, that infrastructure expenditures of a particular type will be able to produce a particular number of jobs, so that's one way we look at it.

The other way of looking at it is again to look at the projects themselves, because different types of projects require a higher or lower number of employees, depending on the nature of the project itself.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: You're passing the buck to Statistics Canada. Certainly they will give us those numbers later on, but immediately, when we say due diligence, had you, or your department, or the government done the due diligence to make sure that a certain number of jobs would be created? That number should be easy. You're telling me there are 1,200 or 800 applications that you have received. It should simply say, this many applications will create that many jobs.

I'm a numbers guy. I come from an engineering background. To me, in all these details, all I am interested in are the numbers. Are there new jobs, and how many are there? You haven't answered that question.

Mr. Daniel Watson: No, we received them last Friday. Today is Thursday. We're still going through the 800 applications. Certainly each and every one of them, in order to be accepted, is going to have to tell us exactly how many jobs they propose to create. Our due diligence process will assess whether or not we think they're being accurate, and that's the process we're in right now. As I say, we've been at it for six days, looking at these 800 applications.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Bourgeois, you have five minutes.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Ladies and gentlemen, I must admit that I'm a bit disappointed. Perhaps I was dreaming, but I was expecting much more definitive answers from you. I asked you a specific question about the planning of the time and performance indicators that you should have done or that you did do. I was expecting you to tell me that you had prepared such plans and that you were expecting a certain number of jobs to be created in the next month or within three months. When a department draws up plans with additional funding, officials can expect 100 jobs, for example, will be created by a particular date. At that time, the department was heading in that direction.

But this morning, I am not satisfied with the answers I have heard, and I think that several of us are not satisfied in this particular case.

We understand that you cannot tell us how many jobs will be created and that you find yourself in a vicious circle. We are putting you up against the wall, and clearly you are not able to answer our questions. We know that you do good work, that you have to wait for the applications and that the applications have to be approved. In any event, this is how I am reacting to the situation.

Mr. Lindsey, in response to a question from my colleague about tourism, you said that you were primarily looking for events that would attract people. You want events that will attract many people, but will not necessarily create employment. The *Classique internationale de Blainville* takes place in my riding. I have been asked to create summer jobs for this competition, and the town of Blainville is also creating jobs for this event. We are expecting 25,000 people to attend the competition. If 50,000 or 60,000 people come and we do not have any money to create jobs, what are we to do?

•(1225)

[English]

The Chair: I think that's directed to Industry Canada and Mr. Lindsey.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: My question is for Mr. Lindsey.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: I wasn't sure, Ms. Bourgeois, if you had finished or not. Pardon me.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Yes, I do talk a lot, but that's no big deal.

Go ahead, my time is running out!

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: I'll be brief.

The thinking is, given the economic climate, that there's a serious possibility that the number of tourists coming to Canada will go down. I think that's a legitimate concern. And to the extent that the concern materializes, events would hire fewer people, hotels would require fewer staff, and restaurants would require fewer staff. So we're trying to provide additional resources for those events to promote themselves so that they can try, as much as possible, to maintain attendance, and hopefully increase it, with a view to increasing the number of people who are employed directly in the event—in supporting the event and helping to carry it out—but also in the residual areas, such as the hospitality industry, the hotels, the motels, restaurants, and the incremental sales of gasoline.

There will certainly be an employment impact, but it's exceedingly difficult, particularly in advance of the events, to quantify. But certainly the expectation is that there will be an employment impact. You create employment in this world by getting people to the events.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Mr. Lindsey, did you reach an agreement with the Government of Quebec regarding the Recreational Infrastructure Canada Program and the infamous \$500 million for arenas, pools and other recreational facilities?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: First of all, with respect to that program,

[Translation]

This is a program that we share responsibility for with other federal partners.

[English]

The portion that Industry Canada will deliver is valued at about \$68 million and the applications for access to that program have just closed.

Now, Industry Canada doesn't deliver that program in Quebec. Industry Canada only delivers that program in the province of Ontario. In Quebec the program will be delivered by the economic development agency responsible for Quebec.

So I'm afraid I can't provide an answer to your question.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: ...through Economic Development Canada.

Are you telling me that the \$500 million have been allocated only to Ontario?

The Chairman: Thank you, thank you.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: No.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Pardon me, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

The Chair: We will now move to Mr. Gourde. You have five minutes.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. My first question is for the official from the National Research Council.

In its Economic Action Plan, our government announced a ceiling of \$200 million for the Industrial Research Assistance Program, which comes under the National Research Council. This amount includes \$30 million to help companies hire approximately 1,000 young post-secondary graduates.

Can you tell me when this funding will be provided to the companies and what will be the effects in terms of promoting innovation and encouraging economic growth?

• (1230)

[English]

Mrs. Pat Mortimer: Thank you.

The first question is, when are these funds available? They're available now. They're already being spent. There are 458 firms that have already received approved projects, and 1,700 jobs have been created as a result. Those are projects that are in progress and going on and jobs that are created.

For the graduate program, once again, the youth program is under way. There have been 175 youth projects approved, which means those are graduates who are now in the companies and working.

I'm sorry, I missed the second half of the question.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: You have answered my question for the most part. There are 175 projects for the 1,000 new graduates. So that means about four, five, six...

[English]

Mrs. Pat Mortimer: That's just what we've spent so far out of vote 35. We expect to create, over the two years, 1,000 jobs for youth. We have an actual target for that. It'll be about 330 this year.

In terms of the companies, we have set a target, with the new money, of 780 new firms that we will be working with, in addition to our existing group of firms that already would have been funded without the stimulus funding. So that is incremental to that.

The number of jobs will depend on the size of the projects, but it's easy for us to actually count jobs because we pay salaries. So we have the information available. We pay the salaries of the high technology workers they're hiring to do the research and development. And so we know that our money is going to create jobs.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: So you know exactly how many jobs will be created. Will they be throughout Canada or are they mostly in central Canada?

[English]

Mrs. Pat Mortimer: The companies are from right across Canada.

We have given a notional allocation of this new funding to each region. We deliver our program in a decentralized fashion in five regions. A notional proportion of the money was given to each region based on their estimate of what the demand would be. And we are monitoring the take-up within each region. We will also be monitoring the number of jobs in each region. Our goal is to move that money, and if it's slower in one region or another, we have the ability to move that across the country.

At the moment, all the regions are very active. If I can say something encouraging, we're very pleased with the amount of energy and the number of small businesses that are coming forward with very good projects. There's no shortage of good ideas for innovation in small business in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Will this initiative allow the young graduates to remain with these companies once they have finished their internship? Will the initiative help retain them longer? Will it really get their careers going?

[English]

Mrs. Pat Mortimer: We've evaluated this program and we've found that, on average, over 90% of the students are actually hired on by the firm afterwards. In many cases, for these very small firms, it's the first time they've had an engineer or a scientist. Once they have one, they realize how useful they can be. We have a retention rate of over 90%. So although it is a youth placement program, in essence what we are doing is creating new jobs and employment for those people.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you very much. Do I have any time left?

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Next we have Ms. Hall Findlay, for five minutes.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Mortimer, I want to follow up a little bit.

First, I appreciated the effort made for the SMEs in the work you're doing. I would like, if possible, to have a report. I don't know if there was anything written to outline the details that you've been providing us and that you've been providing in response to some of the questions, but if that could be provided to us in writing, that would be very helpful.

Mrs. Pat Mortimer: I can provide you immediately with copies of my remarks, if that's helpful. If there's any additional information that you want on the statistics, we'd be more than happy to provide that.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Terrific. Thank you very much.

I want to focus on Mr. Lindsey, but as a general comment, going back to my earlier question, the clarification of the word "used" was that the money from vote 35 needed to be used before the end of June 2009, that it actually meant being allocated, that the money then does have to be spent in this current fiscal year.

One comment is that it seems, in reaction to that, a focus on jobs. We talked a little bit about the summer jobs. In terms of stimulus, to the extent that there has been incremental job creation, we support that. That was one of the reasons for the stimulus. However, we're very concerned that when we're doing this kind of stimulus, we also need to make sure we are creating jobs that ultimately will contribute as well to Canada's productivity, long-term economic prosperity, and global competitiveness, hence some of our earlier focus on some of the rather desperately needed infrastructure in municipalities.

As a preamble, I now move to Mr. Lindsey. I want to ask about the rural broadband program as an example. I have a number of \$83 million-plus in the allocation so far. Can you do two things for me?

One, can you confirm that this is money that will actually be spent in this fiscal year? When it says, "making contributions", can you tell me not only that this money will be spent in this fiscal year but where it will be spent? In terms of infrastructure that we need, broadband is a great idea, so I will give credit where it's due. I particularly like seeing this kind of thing in the allocations. I just want to make sure it's going to happen. And how will it be spent? Will it be spent this fiscal year, and to whom will the money go? Will it be going to the private sector or will it be going just to government employees, and what exactly will it be spent on?

I'm a little worried about the language of developing and implementing a strategy to improve access. We've been talking about the expansion of broadband for many years, so I want something a little harder than that.

●(1235)

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: Let me have a go, and I think I can give you some comfort.

First, though, let me confirm the amount of the allocation. It was indeed \$84 million, from about \$35 million for this fiscal year. The total amount of money allocated to broadband was \$225 million for 2009-10 and 2010-11, with a vestigial amount going into 2011-12.

Broadband is a bit different from some of our other initiatives. Take, for example, the infrastructure program. We put out the terms and conditions. We announced the availability of the funding. A recipient with a known location and a known project applies, and we decide whether it's eligible or not. We know where it is.

One of the issues with respect to broadband is this. The undertaking is to connect remaining unserved and underserved Canadians. One of the ways we test that is through a technical test. What is the current rate of their service, if they have it at all? In other words, what is the bandwidth? It takes a while to map out the service, where service is provided, and the level of service across the country.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: I'm just going to interrupt, not because I'm not interested in this, but just because I recognize that in this other round we don't have very much time to answer. There were three parts to the question.

The private sector actually does have a lot of that information. They know who they're serving and who they're not.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: They do indeed.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: There have been a number of studies on this. We have had submissions from the private sector in terms of pushing this out. I am a little worried about the continuing review. If we can get to those three—

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: I don't want to waste your time. I understand.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: I'm not trying to be rude. We're all subject to the same time constraints, unfortunately.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: Sure. Here's one of the things that the private sector doesn't know. They don't know who they don't serve and we don't know who they don't serve. We're trying to find this out so that we take this limited amount of money for this project and make sure it gets spent in the right place.

This talks a bit to Madame Bourgeois' question about planning. Broadband is the last of our programs to be put up in the window. The reason for that is that we're taking the time to do the geographical and service level analysis to find out who is in fact unserved and underserved. We expect that the full \$84 million will be spent this year.

●(1240)

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: To whom? Is that going to consultants? Is that going to the private sector telecom companies that are already involved in that? That's a lot of money. Is that going out to the private sector?

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: It will be a mix. There will be consultants. We need to get help to do the analysis we're doing now, but it's really a rather modest amount. Most of the money will be spent building out in partnership with the private sector. This is a cost-shared undertaking. Most of the money allocated to this program will be spent on building out and on job creation related to building out broadband to the rest of the unserved communities.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: In this fiscal year?

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: Yes.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: I'm talking about the \$83 million that is in this fiscal year.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: Of the \$84 million allocated to this year, our forecast is that the vast majority of that money will be going to building out or to activities that are necessary to build out, like engineering, surveying, and things like that.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: On your question on whether it was this year, question mark, did you answer that, Mr. Lindsey?

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Yes.

The Chair: You did. It was this year.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: The \$84 million is for this fiscal year, yes.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: The operative assumption right now is that this \$84 million will all be spent this year.

The Chair: The operative assumption. Good. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: It's a big country.

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin, for five minutes.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you to the representatives from Industry Canada who are undertaking this process to get broadband across rural communities across this country. Those of us who live in these areas know that you are on the ground and that you are utilizing that money even now to do those assessments. I shared an office building with somebody from Industry Canada, who was just down the hall, who has been working on this project over the last number of months and doing these assessments. For those of us in rural communities, we appreciate your endeavour and your efforts on this front.

In terms of the different allocations that were undertaken through vote 35, Industry Canada also received an amount for the Canadian Youth Business Foundation. You'll give me a better definition than I maybe have, but my understanding is that this organization allows for loans to be given to young entrepreneurs who are starting businesses and looking for ways to engage in the marketplace in their own communities. My understanding is that there has been a significant increase in the number of applications for this type of program this year.

There was \$10 million allocated. I'm wondering if you could give me a little bit of a breakdown of that program, the jobs that are expected to be created as a result of that, and what the uptake or current status of that funding is.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: Thank you.

Industry Canada did receive \$10 million for 2009-10 for the Canada Business Youth Foundation. The money did come from vote 35. The expectation is that this \$10 million will allow us to make something in the order of 450 new loans to young entrepreneurs, with a ceiling on the loan amount of \$15,000. We are uncertain now of the spin-off, of what total number of jobs created will be associated with those 450-odd loans, but the record of this program is really quite good, having created about 15,500 jobs since its inception.

I would say, too, that this program has about a 95% repayment rate.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: That's fantastic.

I know everyone has talked about getting the money out and the application process going for many of the different organizations, especially as it pertains to infrastructure funding. Mr. Watson, I think you have some experience in my own area as to the application process specifically for some of these infrastructure programs. RInC is the one that comes to mind. There has been some dialogue about whether jobs are created, if the money is not on the ground, in cases where applications are going forward. In my experience, there are already jobs being created, even during the application process, in these communities: engineers are being consulted, construction companies are being consulted, and there's already an exchange of money for the applicants, in this endeavouring.

Could you give me some information pertaining to how jobs are created even possibly before the cheque is cut from the federal government?

• (1245)

Mr. Daniel Watson: In the world of contribution programs generally, when you think of people looking for work who are maybe unemployed or underemployed, there are four key conversations that happen. The first one is "We'll see". That conversation started on January 27, when people had heard about this program and were asking themselves whether this could work for them. The question was "We'll see"; nobody knew the specific answer.

But as people were able to get more details about it, began to look at the criteria, and got further into the stage of applications, they got into another conversation, which is "Be ready". "Be ready" goes in part to the idea that if you're going to need to show people what you're going to do, you have to hire people to do blueprints, hire engineers, hire people to get ready with environmental assessments and to advise on those fronts.

The next conversation, though, is quite critical. It's one that we enter into, and it's the "I promise" conversation. That's where we say, "We've received your application, we've looked at it, and I promise that we will reimburse this share of costs." That's where vote 35 was critical for us, because I'm barred under the Financial Administration Act from promising to pay for something that Parliament hasn't given me the money to pay for. I can't say "I promise" unless Parliament says, "Here's the money to back that up."

The conversation that follows immediately after "I promise" is the fourth one, which we all look forward to and which is "You're hired".

So it's from "We'll see" to "Be ready" to "I promise" to "You're hired".

The final conversation, which is a three word-conversation, is "Here's your cheque." That happens months after the fact, because the way these programs are designed, for due diligence purposes we always pay after. We check their bills. We check whether they did what they said they were going to do. So they go out, they incur the costs, they get the credit that's required to do this—this is a standard practice across the federal government grant contribution world—and we pay if they did what they said.

The key one that was critical for us about vote 35 is that we would not have been able to say "I promise" had we not had the money out of vote 35 in relation to RInC, because we don't have that money available to us and so can't sign on the dotted line.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I appreciate this. It addresses two concerns that members around this committee have had pertaining to vote 35: first that the money is stimulating the economy, creating jobs now, but also that there's due diligence and so a holding back of the money until there's evidence that the project actually was undertaken. This addresses concerns that were brought up at this committee related to that.

Mr. Daniel Watson: I can put it differently: if there's no money, there will be no evidence, because I can't sign an agreement to create evidence if I don't have the money to back up the authority to sign it.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: We appreciate that.

Is my time up?

The Chair: Yes, it is. Thank you for allowing for that.

It's Madame Bourgeois next, for five minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Vermaeten, at the current time there is a major controversy regarding the waiting period and the additional five weeks of employment insurance benefits. Before the decision was made to provide an additional five weeks, I would imagine that your department did a study of the impact of such a change to determine exactly how much money it would cost to do away with the waiting period and add the additional five weeks. And I would imagine that you looked at the number of people who could benefit from the additional five weeks. Were any such impact studies done?

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: Thank you for your question.

[English]

In development of the economic action plan, a range of issues was considered, and certainly whether one eliminates the two-week waiting period or provides additional weeks at the end was assessed. We provided an estimate of how many people would be benefiting from the five weeks. We have that, and I can give you those numbers.

On the question of whether you get rid of the two-week waiting period, there are a number of issues. One is that, from an administrative point of view, it is just physically impossible for somebody to walk into the office and be given a cheque right away without our doing the necessary due diligence. There's always going

to be a certain waiting period for processing it. I think, secondly, that from a principled point of view, this is an employment insurance program; therefore, the two-week wait is equivalent to a co-payment, such as you would have with any other kind of insurance program—for dental or medical programs.

The government could have come along and, instead of providing five weeks at the end, which it does now, provided two weeks at the front and three weeks at the end for the same amount of money. But it would have been an administrative nightmare. You would have gotten rid of the deductible principle. You would have had many people coming in to make very short claims, and when they found a job three or four days later, they would have had a very small insurance cheque, with significant administrative costs.

To sum up, it's a question of how you want to supply these benefits. Is it up front, where it's extremely difficult to do, where it's extremely administratively burdensome, and where you're moving away from the insurance principle, or at the back end, where people are more likely to need this funding?

● (1250)

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: So could you provide this committee with figures on the number of people who get their job back right after losing it, which could cause you some administrative problems. I'm talking about the abolition of the waiting period. Could you also provide us with figures on the number of people who need the additional five weeks of employment insurance. I gather from your response that you decided to provide an additional five weeks so as to eliminate the administrative difficulties. I would like to get all the studies that you based your decision on, namely, the decision to offer an additional five weeks of employment insurance benefits rather than doing away with the waiting period.

I am going to jump from one subject to another. In your brief, you mention the YMCA. You offer internships to youth allowing them to do environmental projects. Are these internships just in the field of the environment?

[English]

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: Let me please turn to my colleague to answer that question.

[Translation]

Ms. Joanne Lamothe: The internships are not just in the area of the environment. The YMCA and the YWCA will be issuing a call for tenders, so to speak, to not-for-profit organizations. Of course, environmental projects will come first, but other projects will be considered as well.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: I see. Do you have to reach an agreement with Quebec, or are you dealing directly with these organizations?

Ms. Joanne Lamothe: We are dealing directly with the YMCA and the YWCA, which have locations throughout the country and in Quebec.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: I see. Thank you.

I have one last question for Mr. Robins from AECL. In the conclusion of your speaking notes, you made the following statement: “Vote 35 funding has enabled AECL to invest in these important jobs, and to improve the safety of its nuclear infrastructure.” Why did you say “has enabled”? Have you created new important jobs, or did you just keep the people that you needed? I am also wondering about the phrase “improve the safety of its nuclear infrastructure.”

[English]

Mr. Michael F. Robins: Approximately 300 new jobs will be created as a result of vote 35 over the next six months within AECL, and approximately 150 new jobs will be created in the surrounding area.

• (1255)

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I want to move back to tourism for a moment. I'm not from an area that has a huge tourism industry, but I have learned a few things from the local tourist operators. In terms of the Canadian economy, I'm wondering if anybody has the statistics as it pertains to tourism, to the effect and the benefit that Canadians have as a result of the tourist industry, and to how it might relate to the GDP of other industries.

A recent statistic I heard recently is that tourism itself brings in as much money to the Canadian economy as forestry, agriculture, and something else combined. This was an interesting analysis or an interesting picture for me to understand the importance of tourism.

Mr. Lindsey, I'm wondering if you have that information available and at your fingertips.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: As it happens, I can confirm the 2%. Tourism represents about 2% of GDP.

I'm afraid I can't give you a comparison, say, with forestry or other sectors. I don't have that, but I can confirm that tourism represents about 2% of GDP.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Obviously, during the downturn, this is probably one of the industries that are initially hit. It's a common experience in all of our households. Those who are maybe even listening may relate to the fact that when our household budgets are reduced we quit travelling, and tourism is one of the things we cross off the shopping list first. Obviously we're going to take a hit, because a lot of our industry depends on international visitors. There are far fewer people looking to travel here in Canada, never mind internationally.

I'm wondering if you could paint a little bit of a picture in terms of the \$30 million. Originally, you said that at this point it's very difficult, almost impossible, to say how many jobs are going to be created or how many jobs are going to be maintained as a result of the marquee festival. Could give us an understanding of the anticipated reduction in tourist dollars over this coming year? Have

there been any assessments, either inside government or outside government, as it pertains to the industry?

I think it's important that we stress just how important these international festivals and the promotion of these festivals are to the industry. They have such an important role for many communities across the country.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: If that analysis has been done, I don't have the results of it. Can I undertake to see if that has been done and get back to you?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I appreciate that. It would be helpful for the committee. Maybe we'll have to wait to see the assessments of these investments until after the events have in fact taken place. I know that Industry has undertaken many programs. This is just one of the many that fall under the Industry bailiwick. We would be interested in ensuring that there was a positive result of our investment as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to ask a question. We're coming up to the close of the meeting time.

The government, in its economic stimulus package, apparently did not select any one particular minister to drive the overall policy. The responsibility for developing the programming and spending is disbursed among several ministers.

I'm going to ask this question to each of the witnesses from their own perspective. Who gave you the leadership or the exhortation to develop this spending under this economic stimulus program, this package? Where did you get the instructions, the guidance, and the leadership that brought you to provide special focus to this particular set of spending authorities? It might have been in a memo; it might have been at a meeting. I'm just going to ask you where it came from.

I'll go to Mr. Watson first.

Mr. Daniel Watson: Thank you.

Well, in the case of the Canada Business Network, it was laid out in the budget itself. It's a program we have been working with for quite some time, so it's simply a continuation of work we have been doing in the past, albeit with a new amount of money that was announced in the budget to continue the types of work we were doing in a different circumstance.

Similarly, what I can say with RInC—and I think it's a sort of theme as well—is that RInC is a type of program we have a lot of experience working with. Another type of similar project came to us, and it was developed very collaboratively, with all the regional development agencies being involved in it; with Transport Canada and Infrastructure Canada being involved in it, and also other departments.

•(1300)

The Chair: Okay, but with all due respect, that sounds very routine: “This is an area the department has all this experience with, and yeah, we’ll do it.” I’m asking you whether you’re delivering any new octane to this initiative, whether a minister or a deputy minister or.... Did anyone ever say, “Get the lead out and get back to me in 30 days”? Did anyone say, “Get the lead out and get this money into the pipeline”? You haven’t had that in your particular department yet?

Mr. Daniel Watson: We had that conversation, but the timeline was nowhere as long as 30 days. That would have been—

The Chair: Well, whatever, but who was it with?

Mr. Daniel Watson: It was very short, and yes, absolutely, this has been a pressing concern of my minister all along, and from the day after the budget we have been called to any number of meetings by my minister, by other departments. This has been a number one priority.

The Chair: Thank you. That’s what I wanted to hear.

Okay, Mr. Lindsey, what about your shop?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): On a point of order, after this is there any future business, or initiatives, and so on?

The Chair: Is that a point of order or is it a point of information?

I don’t think we have any future business. I’m not finished my questioning.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I have another meeting to run to, so I just wanted to—

The Chair: Thank you for informing us.

Mr. Lindsey.

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: We took our direction from the budget. Nothing for which we were allocated funds from vote 35 was not mentioned in chapter 3 of the budget. It said “government priorities” and made pretty clear that certain of those priorities were the responsibility of the Department of Industry or the ministry of industry to deliver. Has there been an imperative to act quickly? Absolutely there has. Has there been an equal imperative to act responsibly? Absolutely.

The Chair: And this guidance is coming from the ministers and DMs and ADMs?

Mr. Kevin Lindsey: In my case, it’s coming from my deputy minister directly.

The Chair: That’s great. Thank you.

Ms. Mortimer.

Mrs. Pat Mortimer: In our case, following the directions in the budget, we have met with both the minister’s office and the Deputy Minister of Industry, and we’ve been sending biweekly reports on how quickly we’re moving, two months before we got the money. So we have been getting directions on the importance.

The Chair: Okay, that’s good. Thank you.

Mr. Robins.

Mr. Michael F. Robins: I got a phone call from the deputy general in NRCan, who said, let’s get going.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Vermaeten.

Mr. Frank Vermaeten: The budget clearly spelled out the measures we were asked to implement, and under the guidance of the deputy minister we did so in a very diligent fashion.

The Chair: I accept that the EI program had its own potential built-in escalators too.

Okay, thank you for answering that question.

There were a couple of members who wanted to ask a couple of questions, but we don’t have enough time. On behalf of colleagues, I want to thank all of the witnesses for coming. Some of you had only about a week’s notice, and I appreciate the information you’ve brought to the committee. It has been useful to committee members and, I hope, the House. So thank you for attending.

I’ll just point out that we have received from the Public Service Commission a very apt and important report with respect to previous appearances. I hope you’ll have a chance to look at it before the next meeting with them.

I see no further business, so we can adjourn.

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