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Chair

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi

Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)): Committee members, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are still studying the economic stimulus package, and we have witnesses before us.

From Treasury Board Secretariat, we have Madame Michelle d'Auray, secretary to the Treasury Board, and Alister Smith. From Infrastructure Canada we have....

[Translation]

Silence, please. Thank you.

[English]

We have Madame Baltacioglu, deputy minister, and Mr. Forster.

I believe you have opening remarks, Madame d'Auray.

Yes, Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think most of us had planned to come to this committee meeting this afternoon with the expectation that the Parliamentary Budget Officer would be attending. We saw a change of meeting this morning, which just had no clarification or reasoning as to why he was not appearing. I'm wondering if you could give us an update as to what's gone on and what exactly—

The Chair: The Parliamentary Budget Officer had indicated that he would be able to come, but then he had a change in plans. The government was supplying him with information, and he advised us that he would like to come to another meeting where he can give us proper analysis of the figures the government is providing him through a progress report.

I guess Madam Hall Findlay was the one who really wanted him to come. We agreed that if he did not have the relevant information and he felt he would not be adding value, he could come back, if he wants, as soon as he has the information from the government.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Chair, there was no dialogue with other committee members. This raises the point that I think committee members have had and expressed to you as chair in terms of making determinations about where and when the committee will undertake certain discussions with witnesses. Considering the fact that this is our last planned meeting on this issue, and we won't have an opportunity to hear from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, I, for one, would like to hear what

he has to say. I'm wondering if we could postpone this meeting for another date when he would be available so that he might be able to bring forward his testimony alongside the witnesses we had planned for this meeting.

The Chair: You have a very valid point, Mr. Warkentin, the issue being that he had nothing to add. The report that was given to him, the 4,500 pages that came to him—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Chair, we don't allow witnesses—

The Chair: Let me finish. I'm sorry, I gave you the opportunity to finish, so bear with me.

He was given the information by pages, boxes, until we brought in a motion, and then he got a 4,500-page electronic version that he has looked at. He has not been able to analyze it; he claims it's administrative. In fact, he telephoned last night and wanted to know what he could do, because he really didn't have much information to go by. He suggested that since we have very senior people here who know what they are talking about, he be excused. And we agreed. I had to make a decision immediately that if we wanted him to be excused, we could. We said, fair enough, we have senior people who have information. I understand Madame Baltacioglu might be able to fulfill our requirements and maybe we might not need the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Chair, in no committee that I've attended have we ever let the witnesses being requested or called determine whether or not they would be of use to our committee. It's always been the determination of committee members, in consultation with one another, as to who we would like to call and which dates we will call them for.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Warkentin. I don't want any further discussion on it.

He's proposing that we postpone this meeting, and I'd like to take a vote on it and proceed with our witnesses.

Those in favour of Mr. Warkentin's suggestion that we postpone the meeting and let the witnesses come back the next time when the Parliamentary Budget Officer can come back again and give us the information that the very able deputy ministers can give us....

Yes, Madam Hall Findlay?

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.): I would like to respond to Mr. Warkentin. We had actually expected at this point to have the information that was given to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, with which we could ask him specific questions. As Mr. Warkentin knows, that has been denied due to concerns about translation, even though we said we would be more than welcome to take the document in its form. Having not been able to look at that also hampers our ability to ask effective questions of the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

We have four excellent witnesses here today who I am sure have come ready to answer our questions. We would be more than happy to have another meeting, because today was not effective with the Parliamentary Budget Officer...to have him, but I feel very strongly that we have imposed on these people and they have information to provide us today. I would very much like to make sure we have that opportunity, and I would encourage a further meeting with the Parliamentary Budget Officer when he in fact has effective information for us.

• (1535)

The Chair: Thank you.

I do not want any further discussion because Madame d'Auray has to leave in an hour. I will now come to what Mr. Warkentin has suggested.

Does the committee wish this committee to adjourn, to postpone for another day when the witnesses who are here may not be able to come, and wait for the Parliamentary Budget Officer, whose work was delayed by the government? Then the work was delayed by this committee not allowing its members to review what was given to the Parliamentary Budget Officer by the governing party, which claimed that we had to have it translated. Madame Baltacioglu has a reason for the translation that she would like to give as well.

I would like to take a vote and move. I do not want anybody delaying—

Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC): A point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: I have a vote and that is what I will go with.

Yes, Mr. Holder.

Mr. Ed Holder: Thank you very much.

What I've always appreciated with chairs of committee is the balanced way they presume a question, and I can't help but think the way you've positioned the question to the committee, by virtue of their potential inaccessibility, presupposes a response that they would not be available.

We had a particularly strong fuss, it seems to me, by members opposite not so long ago when we had Transport officials present, including two ministers, and there was some question of timing. We got into some really ridiculous wrangling, quite frankly, but members opposite made it really clear at that time, Madam Chair, that they intended to hear specifically the people who they had anticipated they would hear. Now there just seems to be an inconsistency in the logic that I'm trying to understand.

Separately, it seems, Chair, through you, that you biased the question to the committee, the way you positioned it, by suggesting their unavailability. I would respectfully ask you, when you pose questions of this nature, to remove the bias out of that, if you would, please—respectfully.

The Chair: Actually, the deputy minister is extremely busy. Madame d'Auray has to go to a Treasury Board committee, and that is why I'm respecting their time availability and that's why I'm going to call the question to vote.

The people who wish this committee to be postponed and the witnesses called for another day when the budget officer may receive his information—because the budget officer has still not received the project update, according to him—and we get everyone back...those in favour of postponing the committee, please raise your hands. Those opposed.

I will break the tie and we will proceed.

Madame d'Auray, your opening remarks, please.

Ms. Michelle d'Auray (Secretary of the Treasury Board of Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat): Thank you, Madam Chair.

As you've indicated, and I believe my office has indicated to the clerk of the committee, my colleague and I will have to leave at 4:30. But as I also indicated to you, I will no doubt be back before the committee on December 3, when we appear before this committee with my minister on the supplementary estimates for the Treasury Board Secretariat. So if there are other issues or questions that cannot be addressed within this timeframe, I'd be happy to address them at that opportunity as well.

I understand that I'm here today as a follow-up to my November 3 appearance before this committee, when I appeared with the Clerk of the Privy Council.

Accompanying me today is Mr. Alister Smith, assistant secretary in the expenditure management sector of the Treasury Board Secretariat.

In addition, I would say further to my November 3 appearance, I believe the department forwarded to the clerk of the committee the information the committee had requested on the Government of Canada's communications and federal identity program policies, as well as related information to the expenditure action plan.

It is my understanding that members had additional questions about communications planning—particularly coordination of communications on initiatives that cut across more than one department—and that some of these questions arose as a result of Mr. Kennedy's appearance before the committee last week.

I thought it would be of interest to the committee if I did a brief recap of the roles and responsibilities under the Government of Canada's communications policy.

I'll start with the cabinet, which is supported by designated cabinet committees. It sets and monitors the government's strategic communications direction and provides day-to-day coordination for the implementation of the government's agenda. It ensures that emerging issues are managed effectively throughout the government and acts as the gatekeeper for policy and legislative proposals. The cabinet sets policy direction and funding allocations required for Treasury Board to release funds for advertising contracts based on the government advertising plan.

I'll turn now to ministers. Ministers, both individually and collectively as members of cabinet, are the principal spokespersons for the Government of Canada and its institutions. It is their role to provide leadership in establishing the priorities and overall themes of government communications.

Specifically, ministers determine—together with their respective deputy heads—their communication priorities, objectives, and requirements. They approve the corporate communications plans of the institutions they head; they define the responsibilities of ministerial staff with respect to communications; and they establish, together with their respective deputy heads, effective liaison between ministerial staff and institutional heads of communications to ensure that the communication of policy and operational initiatives is coordinated. Particular attention is paid to media relations and participation in public events and announcements.

The Privy Council Office—my colleagues who appeared with me before you on November 3 and subsequently—coordinates and manages government communications, as determined by the Prime Minister and the cabinet. It is responsible for advising the cabinet and its committees, as well as the Privy Council Office senior management and institutions across the government, on communication issues, themes, and strategies.

The Privy Council Office supports and monitors the implementation of cabinet decisions across government, particularly with respect to communications. It collects and analyzes information on the public environment in order to advise the Prime Minister, ministers, and institutions on the management of public issues. It coordinates and supports the planning of horizontal or government-wide communications by designating lead institutions and assigning special responsibilities. It develops and monitors the government advertising plan and recommends funding allocations under that plan to the cabinet or its designated committee.

For its part, the Treasury Board of Canada is responsible for approving and promulgating general administrative policy for the Government of Canada in accordance with the Financial Administration Act. The Government of Canada's communications policy is a good example of such administrative policy.

The secretariat advises and supports the board and its president in the development, management, and evaluation of those policies.

● (1540)

In that capacity, the secretariat has key responsibilities for the communications policy, which include developing and evaluating the policy itself; advising institutions on policy interpretation and application; monitoring policy implementation and compliance; advising on the allocation and management of funds for government

advertising, which the Privy Council Office coordinates, and assessing, advising on, and processing Treasury Board submissions from institutions to release funding for approved advertising initiatives; assessing performance results and ensuring effective resource and expenditure management related to the communications function; and directing, coordinating, and monitoring implementation of the federal identity program.

Deputy heads lead and are responsible for the overall management of communications and its integration with other key functions, particularly policy and program management, and they champion an institution's internal communications.

Deputy heads are accountable to their ministries for ensuring the government's communications priorities and requirements are met; to the Clerk of the Privy Council for ensuring that their institutions' communications fully reflect government-wide policies, themes, and priorities, and that the communications function is fully integrated into the planning, management, and evaluation of policies, programs, services, and initiatives; and to the Secretary of the Treasury Board for implementing this policy within their institutions and for carrying out related directives, instructions, or administrative procedures that the secretary may issue from time to time.

Deputy heads must ensure that any instructions issued by the Clerk of the Privy Council and all relevant cabinet decisions concerning communications priorities of the government are fully implemented.

Deputy heads must ensure that the requirements of the communications policy of the Government of Canada are fulfilled in all operations of the institutions they lead, both within Canada and abroad. This includes ensuring that institutions manage both internal and external communications according to the values and principles expressed in the policy.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

In my November 3rd testimony, in response to a question from Ms. Bourgeois about whether there is a government-wide planning process for communications, I said that, and I quote:

It is up to each department to establish a communications plan or a communications strategy. The Treasury Board does not have a communications plan, except for its own department. Most of the communications initiatives form an integral part of the initiatives of the programs of every department and agency.

This applies to the vast majority of communications initiatives in government. A certain level of coordination is usually put in place where an initiative cuts across more than one department and requires a coordinated approach from a communications perspective.

When I stated at that same meeting “that there is no pangovernmental planning”, I was referring to advertising in general. Communications planning for the economic action plan is an example of an initiative that cuts across multiple departments and as a result is coordinated, which my colleague from the Privy Council spoke to and showed you by way of the communication materials he referred to.

In his opening remarks at the November 3rd meeting of your committee, the Clerk of the Privy Council spoke on this issue. He stated that the Privy Council Office, and in particular, Mr. Simon Kennedy, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, Plans and Consultations, is “responsible for managing the overall communications of the economic action plan.” He went on to talk about two key elements of communications planning for the Economic Action Plan: the economic action plan website and advertising.

Madam Chair, I trust I have clarified the roles and responsibilities for communications planning in the Government of Canada for initiatives that are within a single organization, as well as for initiatives that cut across several departments.

I will be happy to respond to any questions you may have on this topic. Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now go to Madame Baltacioglu.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu (Deputy Minister, Infrastructure Canada): Good afternoon, Madam Chair and committee members. I have with me John Forster, who is our associate deputy minister of infrastructure.

[Translation]

We are pleased to be here today to update you on Infrastructure Canada's work in implementing the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan.

[English]

Last January, the government tabled its economic action plan. At that time, Infrastructure Canada was charged with two important responsibilities: first, to accelerate the government's Building Canada infrastructure plan; and second, to design and deliver five of the more than 20 new infrastructure initiatives in the budget, as approved by Parliament.

[Translation]

In the past 10 months, my department has been focused on delivering this challenging agenda for Canadians.

[English]

Today, I would like to spend a few moments to talk about our progress and the measures the department has put in place to ensure the accountable stewardship of taxpayers' funds. While appreciating that much of the focus has been on new funds, we cannot overlook the steps taken to accelerate our existing programs, specifically the Building Canada plan. This plan was originally designed to provide \$33 billion over seven years to 2014. In the past 10 months, Infrastructure Canada has announced funding for 88 major projects worth \$9.6 billion, transferred half a billion dollars to provinces and

territories for their core infrastructure projects, and approved the entire program for small communities, about \$1 billion for almost 800 projects in all 10 provinces.

[Translation]

Second, Infrastructure Canada has designed and launched new infrastructure funds announced in the budget.

[English]

For example, since January, Minister Baird has signed agreements with every province and territory that has committed matching funds of their own to infrastructure stimulus funds. He has committed more than \$3.3 billion of this \$4 billion fund, approved over 3,000 projects across the country, allowing work to begin, and approved a \$500 million top-up for small communities in 9 of 10 provinces. Through all this activity, the department's focus has been on effective and efficient program delivery. In other words, Infrastructure Canada's goal was to balance speed with accountability and stewardship.

Madam Chairman, while much work remains to be done, the department has made good progress in achieving this goal. The department has streamlined the administrative and approval processes to allow work to begin sooner.

• (1550)

[Translation]

The department developed an innovative online application form and review process.

[English]

The Government of Canada passed legislation and changed regulations to streamline environmental assessments to avoid duplication while protecting the environment. The department contributed to the government's overall efforts.

Infrastructure Canada has not done this alone. Infrastructure Canada has built a truly impressive national partnership with two other levels of government. Provinces, territories, and municipalities play a key role in this partnership. They provide matching funding to increase the number of projects that can be built. They review and approve the projects with us. They contract, manage, and oversee the construction of projects on the ground, and they provide additional accountability to their citizens and taxpayers.

The Government of Canada is responsible for reviewing and approving the projects with our partners as well, and our department monitors progress.

Infrastructure Canada pays its share of the costs as construction proceeds based on claims submitted by the provinces and territories. This is a very important point. Under our stimulus funds, the department reimburses the claims as construction proceeds.

Through signed contribution agreements, the department has provided advances to each province and territory. As construction on projects proceeds and milestones are reached, provinces and territories can submit claims and the federal government pays its share.

This is exactly what Canadians do when they are renovating their homes. They do not pay 100% up front before any work is done; they pay a deposit or an advance. Then, as the construction proceeds, they pay the money for the work that is done.

In some cases, this means the department may not see a claim for work that began this year until later this year or even next year. This is not a reflection of inactivity. Instead, it is simply how these programs work in our agreements signed with the provinces and municipalities.

It is also an important part of protecting taxpayers by ensuring that the Government of Canada is paying for results achieved and delivered. Once the department receives complete and accurate claims, we have financial controls in place to review it. Upon approval, Infrastructure pays the claims within 30 days.

[*Translation*]

There is one last thing I would like to touch on.

Infrastructure Canada was tasked with a very important mandate. The department takes this mandate very seriously. And it has put in place important measures to deliver on it.

[*English*]

Infrastructure Canada's management capacity has been strengthened by the appointment of my colleague, John Forster, as the dedicated associate deputy minister for Infrastructure Canada.

The department has created and staffed a separate team that is responsible for infrastructure stimulus fund administration.

The department has strengthened its audit team. Infrastructure Canada has created an external audit committee. It has started its operations and the committee has been briefed on all our programs, most importantly regarding the economic action plan.

Infrastructure Canada has bolstered its capacity on environmental assessments. The department has strengthened its human resources management team, and we have improved the monitoring of our staffing processes.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

And, Infrastructure Canada has built effective partnerships with other departments, such as the regional development agencies, who manage and deliver some of the department's infrastructure programs on the ground.

[*English*]

In the four months since I have become responsible for Infrastructure Canada, I have been very pleased with the dedication and level of effort in the department to deliver on the government's agenda. Much work remains to be done, and I will continue to seek ways to improve our implementation.

In closing, over the last 10 months, Infrastructure Canada has developed a national partnership that is leveraging billions of dollars in infrastructure funding, contributed to the start of thousands of important projects across the country, and, most importantly, put measures in place to ensure that the department could deliver quickly on the agenda while being accountable to Canadian taxpayers.

Thank you again, Madam Chair, for inviting us. We are very pleased to be here, and hopefully we'll answer all of your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll start with the first round of questions. You have eight minutes, Madam Hall Findlay.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you very much, everyone, for being here.

My questions are for Madame d'Auray first, because of the time constraints you have. I do appreciate your being here. I want to thank you also for your detailed description of who's responsible for what with the communications policy of the federal identity program. That's very helpful. So thank you for that.

I do have a couple of questions. I am being completely upfront. We have had some significant concerns about some of the advertising content looking and feeling a great deal like certain aspects of the Conservative Party. We've had examples of website colours, for example, not only being blue, but out of a million possible choices the exact same pigment as that used by the Conservative Party. We are worried about phrases such as "Harper government", which appears over 9,000 times in government websites. Having reviewed the communications policy and the FIP, there's nothing in there that suggests the name of the Prime Minister with "government" is a Canadian symbol the way "Government of Canada" is.

I have two questions. For things like that exact pigment of blue for the websites being exactly the same as that of the Conservative Party, the use of the phrase "Harper government", the decision to have photos galore of the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers—including playing the piano—those decisions, I take it from your description, would come either from cabinet or from cabinet with the approval or direction of the PCO. Is that correct?

Ms. Michelle d'Auray: In many of those instances your answer is correct. There are no prescriptions or no elements with regard to which colour, which element. The only colour elements, if I can put it that way, are prescribed in terms of the federal identity program, with the official symbols, per se. It really is the choice of either ministers or cabinet with regard to what the elements are. It is not an element governed by or prescribed by or prevented by, if I can put it that way.... There are no prescriptions for or against the specific use of colours or phrases or elements.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: This is where I become a little bit confused, because in reading the policy and the FIP, it certainly seems to me that although it doesn't exclude certain things, by including certain things, without a catch-all saying "by the way, anything else will go"...there is a certain element of "not everything will go" in government advertising. By including reference to Government of Canada symbols and accepted symbols, there is a requirement, I think. There should be.

Ultimately, in terms of compliance, if decisions are made to have a certain branding element to advertising made by the PCO, by the PMO, in your description here you do have that the Treasury Board Secretariat does in fact have the responsibility of monitoring the policy implementation and compliance.

Can you tell me who in Treasury Board would look at those directions from the PMO, from cabinet, from the PCO, and determine, yes, you have complied with the communications policy, yes, we have decided that the use of X slogan or the use of X colour scheme or the use of X number of photos, for example...? Who in Treasury Board would actually say, yes, this complies with the communications policy? And what criteria would be used? But I'm really trying to focus in on who.

• (1600)

Ms. Michelle d'Auray: The reason I gave the roles and responsibilities was also to indicate that in the specific areas or in the programs or activities or communications activities, deputy heads are accountable for ensuring that they are compliant with the policy.

In the horizontal communications activities that are undertaken, the Privy Council Office and the Treasury Board Secretariat do engage in, I would say, a review of the materials inasmuch as there is a need to do so.

As I indicated in my previous appearance before this committee, in the materials with regard to the economic action plan, the advertising is fully compliant with the Government of Canada communications policy as well as with the components with regard to the specific advertising elements of the EAP.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: With respect, on the comment that just because something isn't excluded means it can be included, our view is that if the communications policy allows that level of politicization of an advertising campaign, either the policy is not being complied with in requiring clear Government of Canada symbols—the communications policy and the FIP are not really being complied with—or they need a significant tightening up, because there seems to be a great deal of this transfer of the Conservative Party look and feel into government advertising.

But thank you for that.

I have a quick question for Ms. Baltacioglu.

We understand that everybody at Infrastructure has had to do double and triple duties, so we appreciate the workload you're under. But since last spring we've been looking for the dollar numbers. I notice in your handout there's a figure for advances, and then another explanation that the government will pay claims once invoices are received. I have no argument with that, although the question of an advance is now new to us.

Can you please tell us what those numbers are so far in simple dollar figures?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Thank you for the question. I appreciate that the honourable member is seeking clarity, because it is somewhat complicated in the way the program runs.

Madam Chairman, the last time we appeared you asked us for a schematic. Do the members have that?

The Chair: Yes, thank you, we have it.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: So maybe I can walk through—

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: I hate to interrupt, but we are really short of time. I understand the schematic. We've actually had it described to us a number of times. My question is not how the process works; my question is what has the government paid out so far? I would like dollar figures for what advances have been made and what invoices have now been paid. I am only looking for the dollar amount so far, given that it is now November 25.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Thank you.

I was just going to point to the schematic and the advance column. We have provided \$230 million in advance payments to provinces and territories. This is important, because it was done very early in the process and was meant to kick-start the activity. We received the first batch of claims and status reports from most of the provinces in September, and we're getting another batch of claims and updates from the provinces now in November.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: If you only received them in September, then—

The Chair: Ms. Hall Findlay, your time is finished. I'm sorry.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: I don't want to take up too much of your time, but when the claims arrived in September—and my colleague John Forster can elaborate on it if you like—we had to make sure the claim data was accurate, because it was from online input. So it took us a while to look through that claims data. We have provided this information to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

However, our financial officials haven't gone through the data and we haven't made any payments on those claims received. We would be happy to provide them to the committee as we process them, because we don't want to give you numbers that will mislead you—or us. We have to make sure they make sense. We're going through them. Our chief financial officer has yet to go through them. The payments will be made the moment the claims are complete. So right now we're ensuring the completeness of the data.

The November data we've received is much better because it was the second time the claims came in, and people are used to how to file the documents, etc.

I'd like one second to make a very important point. Money being paid by the federal government does not fully reflect and is not the best indicator of economic activity. We have 2,500 projects under way, representing over \$8 billion of activity. A statistic you might find interesting is that out of the projects under way we have received no claims for about 500, and just looking through the initial data we have no claims yet for 50 of the completed projects. So the projects have been completed, but we don't have any claims to pay.

Later in the testimony my colleague John can tell you the whole story around how these programs run. It's a normal situation and reflects how governments work and how infrastructure is done.

Thank you.

•(1605)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to Monsieur Nadeau.

[Translation]

You have eight minutes.

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

Good afternoon to all of you.

We are involved in a process to better understand how money is being invested under the federal government's Economic Action Plan. That being said, I looked at the numbers prepared by the Library of Parliament with regard to projects which have been earmarked or, at the very least, which are currently being analyzed. Of 3,035 projects which are happening throughout Canada, over half are in Ontario.

Is there a particular reason for this? Ontario represents about a third of Canada, but over half of the projects currently underway have received federal funding—remarkable, isn't it?—in several areas of attribution and project categories.

On the face of it, can we conclude that Ontario is the big winner or will adjustments be made later on?

Mr. John Forster (Associate Deputy Minister, Infrastructure Canada): Thank you for your question. Regarding the Stimulus Fund, the funding is spread among the provinces on a per capita basis. Each province and each territory receives its share of the \$4 billion. In Quebec, several programs are in place to receive funding under the Stimulus Fund. For instance, we are sharing the cost of a PRECO program, which is managed by Quebec. The people responsible for the program fill out an application form, and after the applications have been reviewed, they provide the federal government with a list of projects which then receive approval. We also support the project. It's simply a matter of funding. It is managed somewhat differently in each province, but the funding is allocated on a per capita, or per person, basis.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: The funding is allocated on a per capita basis. This does not necessarily mean that the number of projects reflects the allocation, since some projects cost more than others, I suppose. Is that correct? Could you please clarify that for me?

•(1610)

Mr. John Forster: Exactly. It depends on each province's program. For example, in Newfoundland and Labrador, there are several fairly big projects involving water treatment plants. In another province, there may be more provincial projects. For instance, in Quebec, there are several highway projects which the province is responsible for organizing. They are not municipal projects, they are provincial ones. Generally speaking, those types of projects are bigger than smaller municipal ones. The number of projects simply reflects the fact that each province has its own program.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: You say that funding is allocated on a per capita basis, that is, on the number of citizens. Is that how you calculate the amounts?

Mr. John Forster: Yes, exactly.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Are these numbers final? Has the entire amount of \$4 billion been earmarked? I see that about three quarters of the \$4 billion have been set aside. Therefore, \$1 billion should still be available. Is that correct?

Mr. John Forster: It is not a matter of the money already being spent. Of the \$4 billion, \$3.3 billion have already been committed for projects. There are \$700 million left to complete and approve projects. For example, in Quebec, all of the PRECO programs have cost the federal government \$350 million, with Quebec contributing another \$350 million. Not all of the programs have been approved at this point. We are still reviewing and approving projects submitted by municipalities in Quebec.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: During the first phase, when a project is reviewed, when it is deemed eligible but not yet 100% approved, and when the province or the municipality is not able to invest its share based on a pre-established percentage, be it 50%, 25% or 33%, the funding becomes available again, if I understand correctly. Does the funding become available in the province where a project could unfortunately not go ahead, or does it become available for any other Canadian province?

[English]

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Funds are primarily available to the province where they aren't expended. For example, if in Quebec a project falls off for any reason, the money is available to be reallocated within Quebec. However, we're making every effort to commit all the money and get the projects all started and hopefully completed, because this is a time-limited program. Timely delivery of the programs is very important, and we count on our partners to make sure this is done.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Ms. d'Auray, I believe that, a little earlier, you talked about how the projects were being announced. The Privy Council, which is the Prime Minister's Office, submitted a request to us for an amount of \$4 million. The money was to explain how the funding available under the Economic Action Plan would be spent. However, you told us at the beginning of this meeting—and we have also received this information—that departments already have communications funds to explain to Canadians how the money was being spent. So we are a little confused and we are wondering why the Prime Minister's Office, and his department, namely the Privy Council, asked for another \$4 million.

Can you explain to us whether the department, which is a partner to this project, is also engaged in communication, advertising and broadcasting—

[English]

The Chair: Monsieur Nadeau, wrap it up, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Does the Prime Minister come next? Can you explain that to me, please?

Ms. Michelle d'Auray: As I explained, departments are responsible for their own communication activities regarding their initiatives. Radio or television activities, which are usually referred to as advertising, are coordinated in a manner whereby departments can spend money from an advertising fund with regard to specific initiatives.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, the Privy Council Office coordinates communication in the case of so-called horizontal activities. When there are initiatives which affect several departments, we have to make sure that communication is coordinated.

When my colleague Mr. Kennedy appeared with me in November, I believe we discussed the website. The Privy Council Office designed a site which integrates all the available information, including where activities take place and the projects themselves. This way, information is not repeated by each department.

The Privy Council Office makes money available for communication coordination activities, but not for advertising, as well as for the coordination of those communication activities. In other words, the funding is for the coordination and integration of communication activities, especially concerning electronic broadcasting and websites.

•(1615)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to Monsieur Gourde for eight minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

My question is for Ms. d'Auray.

You talked about the communications plan which applies to many departments, the Privy Council and the government. Is the objective to present a uniform and global vision? Is this done to prevent, for example, a department from using a different logo from those of other departments within the same communication strategy? Is it to maintain a certain degree of consistency?

Ms. Michelle d'Auray: There are several reasons why the Privy Council Office engages in coordination activities involving several departments. Sometimes it is to reduce overlap. As I explained, the Privy Council Office has designed a website in which all the information is integrated. This way, it is not spread over many websites, which makes it more difficult to find. Consequently, any Canadian, an entrepreneur or an association would not have to look through the website of many departments to find out which program or project could be useful under the economic action plan.

Further, everything is coordinated to make it easier for Canadians to access information more quickly. Indeed, we wanted there to be two main aspects to coordination, namely to ensure that projects and initiatives are launched quickly and to ensure that Canadians are informed about these initiatives.

As you mentioned, there is a third mechanism, which consists in ensuring that the presentation and identity of the federal image is respected within all of the communication activities. In the case of

initiatives which span all of government, this coordination is the responsibility of the Privy Council Office, more specifically the Treasury Board Secretariat. We want to make sure that the use of official symbols is respected.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: If I understand correctly, you can tell some departments to change the way they present their information to make sure that everything is consistent.

Ms. Michelle d'Auray: Yes. The projects were designed quickly and we wanted people to focus on delivering the services, for services themselves and their implementation. Therefore, we had to coordinate communication activities. As my colleague Mr. Kennedy told you, I believe, the guide on the presentation of the material, among other things, was designed to make the communication material available more quickly. Indeed, given the economic situation, it was in our interest to focus our efforts on the implementation of the projects and to make sure that the information was clearly communicated to everyone.

•(1620)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you very much. I would now like to talk about the life cycle of the projects.

In Quebec, we work closely with the Government of Quebec. When a municipality or a promoter applies for funding, it does so with the Government of Quebec. Could you explain how the process unfolds after that?

Mr. John Forster: It would be my pleasure to do so.

There are two ways to submit projects in Quebec. First, as I mentioned, you can do so under the PRECO program, which involves putting in new waterlines in municipalities. This is a \$700 million program, for which we assume half the costs and Quebec the other half.

The applications are sent to the Government of Quebec, which reviews them and approves the projects. Then, it sends the paperwork to the federal government, which accepts or rejects them. Quebec then manages the program, in Quebec. It signs agreements with the municipalities, provides the necessary funding for the projects and conducts follow-up with the municipalities.

Further, there is the Stimulus Fund. Quebec itself can propose projects. There are basically three categories: transportation projects, which basically involve infrastructure in Quebec, such as highways, cultural projects, and municipal projects which do not involve water treatment.

Quebec provides the application forms. As I indicated, they are available online and are only one page long. The federal government then quickly reviews the applications. If the federal and Quebec governments support a project, it becomes part of the agreement between the federal government and Quebec. The province of Quebec is responsible for the implementation of these projects.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: To whom do the promoters or municipalities send their first invoices, when a project has been underway for 30 days and when the foundations have been laid? Do they send them to the Government of Quebec, which in turn sends them to Ottawa? Do they send them to the two levels of government? What is the process?

Mr. John Forster: The municipalities send their invoices to the Government of Quebec, which reviews them. Within the framework of the Stimulus Fund, Quebec and the other provinces make progress reports within a system that is part of the program. They provide updates, indicate how much money has been spent and how much funding has been requested from the federal government. Over 95% of projects are conducted under agreements with the provinces. Most of the funding is given to the provinces by the federal government.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Fine. So the federal government sends the money to the province, and the province in turn sends it to the promoters and municipalities. Do they have to produce a report every 30 days if a project lasts between six and eight months, or do they only have to produce one two or three times?

Mr. John Forster: Yes, that's right.

[English]

We had the first round of claims in September. Because it was a new program, a new system, when people did their reports and claims, it took some back and forth. We would say that they might have made a mistake here, or they would have the project starting date but would have the tender after that date. We've been going through that. It's understandable with a new program and a new system.

We've worked very closely with all the provinces and territories to process that first report that was made in September. We now have the second round coming in just now, and we'll process that. Once we have a clean report and claim, we'll process the funds to the province within 30 days.

• (1625)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Martin for eight minutes.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Thank you, Chair, and thank you, guests, for being here.

I guess the reason you're here, and not the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who we expected to be here, is that he's now said that he's been given a bunch more information that he has to process and digest before he can bring back any meaningful report to our committee.

I want to talk a bit about the way the Parliamentary Budget Officer is getting the information about the infrastructure. As the deputy minister for infrastructure, has anybody ever spoken to you from cabinet or the government about how and when you would release information to the budget officer and what form it might take?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: No, but I would like this opportunity to explain what the Parliamentary Budget Officer has received and why he received what he received at the time we gave it to him.

Mr. Pat Martin: I'd like to hear that too. But in the context of answering, can you explain who thought it would be a good idea, when he asked for information, to give him 4,700 loose pages, when it was available electronically? I'd like you to explain why you would have thought that would be helpful and not mischief.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Madam Chairman, the Parliamentary Budget Officer asked for data on 3,000 projects. If you assume that each project is one page, that adds up to 3,000 pages. It turned out

that it was more than that. So we have provided him with the paper copy, on the understanding that we treat him the same way we've been directed for the parliamentary returns we get from Parliament. We provide written copies of this documentation to Parliament. When the Parliamentary Budget Officer asked us, we provided a paper copy.

Then we were told by the budget officer that he wanted the electronic documents. Our staff worked for three days—I'm not exactly sure I can explain the electronic arrangement—to put the information into CD format, and we delivered it to him within three days. It took us three days to put the documentation on CD.

Mr. Pat Martin: Does your office always work in both official languages?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Yes. It depends. We work in the language of work.

Mr. Pat Martin: Why is the language of work English in all of these contracts?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: The information we received, Madam Chairman, was application data. We inputted the application data in the language that it came in. If the applicants, the province, provide the data in English, it is entered into the database in English. If it is provided in French, it is entered into the database in French. We work in both languages.

Mr. Pat Martin: The reason I ask is that getting the electronic copy in one language only caused us a great deal of inconvenience. The result was that none of us could in fact look at it. We couldn't circulate it. It did us no good at all. It has been part of the frustration of this committee that we can't seem to get the information we want when we want it.

I understand that if you're saying it's entered into the database in the language in which you receive it, then that document, I guess, can be in either language, but it's not translated. Every piece is not in both languages. I understand that.

I have to move on because I'm—

The Chair: I'm not taking your time.

I would like Madame Baltacioglu to explain to us what translation would cost—and I'm not taking your time at all. If she can explain that, then you can continue with your line of questioning. That way, we have cleared the air on it.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The committee clerk contacted us after we provided the documents. And the honourable member is correct, some are in French and some are in English, because that is the language in which they were received. The clerk asked us whether we could translate this and what the costs would be. We contacted Public Works and Government Services and we have an estimate of \$230,000 and it would take two to three months to translate 500,000 words. These are the numbers we were given. We transmitted this information to the committee clerk, but we haven't heard back from him as to whether the committee actually would like us to translate this documentation.

We looked at more efficient ways of doing it, such as dividing up the pieces and contracting them all at once, but then we would have to make sure there's consistency in language. So that's what we have done, and we're awaiting direction from the committee. Should the committee ask us to translate it, we would be tendering this contract of a quarter of a million dollars.

Thank you.

•(1630)

The Chair: You can continue your line of questioning, Mr. Martin.

Mr. Pat Martin: Okay, thank you.

I doubt we'll ask you to do that. It sounds crazy.

I notice that a lot of the infrastructure.... Well, I think I know why there's a lot more road infrastructure. There's a kind of Huey Long mentality: the more projects you have, the more signs you can put up, and filling potholes is a very popular thing to do.

I see that the province of Ontario has a lot of projects. I know the dollar figure is on a per capita basis. But there are a lot of small projects—1,721 projects in total. And I understand that, because you get to put a sign up on each one. I think that's the reasoning.

My question, though, is in terms of the federal contribution and the provincial contribution. In most provinces they're almost equal, almost exactly the same. In Ontario, the federal contribution is \$200 million higher than the provincial contribution. I'm going to leave that as a question that I hope you can answer at the end of my comments.

My last question is this. From a communications point of view, is there any consideration of contracting out a new wordmark for the Government of Canada in terms of the federal identification? I ask this because the wordmark that we're all used to has been compromised to the extent that people don't see a great nation when they see that wordmark now. They see the sponsorship scandal. They see Chuck Guité. They see Buryl Wiseman. They see all these sleazy characters ruining the good name of our country. Is it part of the plan to design a new wordmark for Canada as the main label, the main logo, for the country?

Those two questions probably use up my time.

The Chair: I think Madame d'Auray has to leave.

Ms. Michelle d'Auray: Perhaps I can answer the second question.

There is no intent to redo or rethink the Canada wordmark. The Canada brand is known around the world.

Yes, there were some incidents in the sponsorship area, but by and large the Government of Canada and the Canada brand is a very solid brand. The wordmark is the name "Canada", with a flag on top. It's very hard to rebrand a country by changing the name of the country and the flag. So I would say the wordmark is here to stay.

The Chair: Do you have a question for Madame Baltacioglu?

Ms. Michelle d'Auray: My apologies.

The Chair: Thank you very much for being here, and we'll see you next time with the minister.

Mr. Pat Martin: The other question regarding the disproportionate....

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Just for clarification, do I understand that you're asking why in Ontario the provincial contribution is less than the federal contribution, the \$200 million?

Mr. Pat Martin: Two hundred million dollars less.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: We have a contribution agreement with the City of Toronto. The agreement is between the federal government and the city, so it counts towards Ontario's share; however, it's not cost-shared with the province. If you would like, my colleague can give you a little bit of elaboration on that.

The Chair: Do you want the elaboration? You have the time.

Mr. Pat Martin: Actually, no, I think I can understand that.

My last question would be, then, that there's a bunch of projects you say that don't show up in the statistics yet. Maybe there have been no invoices. I thought I heard you say there are projects that are still to be reported. Is this the information you've given to the Parliamentary Budget Officer last night?

Mr. John Forster: The information you have, that we gave the committee, is the same information we gave the Parliament Budget Officer at the end of October. Because he asked for claims dated in September and we didn't have claims yet, we couldn't respond to his request, so at the end of October we gave him, as a first tranche, all the application data as of September 22. So this information here is information from the application of the approved projects under the stimulus fund as of September 22.

What we since have provided to the Parliamentary Budget Officer are two things. Last week we met with his office and gave him a very detailed technical briefing on the program, walked him through the whole program, how it works, and showed him how it operates. We've now provided him with the claims information he requested in September, which was the first round of claims information, and that covers about 1,750 projects.

That was information that was provided to us in late August and the middle of September. Some of it would have been collected early in July, the middle of July, so it represents the state of projects from, I'd say, July to about mid-August. That's the information we just gave him and that he will now go through, and that covers about 1,750 projects.

We now are getting to the second round of claims. Remember they have to do it quarterly. Before they would do it once a year; this program, it's every quarter. The next quarter was November, so we're now just going through the next round of reporting and claims from all the provinces.

•(1635)

The Chair: Is it possible for you to table that for the committee—that's the progress report that you're giving the Parliamentary Budget Officer—so that we can have a look at it? That's the crux of our study as to what moneys are really flowing out.

You explained to us the process; you've explained to us the advances. All we need to know is, yes, there are certain projects that have not put in their claims, but whoever has put in the claims, let's put it to rest and say, "Here is what money has gone out", so nobody starts quibbling over it. Okay?

Mr. John Forster: Yes. Again, there are two things to remember with that information.

It gives you a snapshot of projects in July and August.

The Chair: Fair enough.

Mr. John Forster: The second thing is, you have the same issue about language. Again, we're managing the program however the proponent has dealt with their application. So in Ontario, if we had French or English applications, that's the language of the claims and the reporting as well, so it won't be translated.

The Chair: If you could give it to us within a week, what we will do is what we did for the previous one. Instead of giving the whole report, we will just make a summary of it, translate it ourselves, and give it to the committee members.

Yes, Mr. Holder?

Mr. Ed Holder: If I may, could I ask, through you, the size of that report? I just want to kind of get a sense of that, please.

The Chair: Sure.

What's the size of the report, Mr. Forster?

Mr. John Forster: I don't know offhand. I'll find out and maybe I could come back to you on that.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Ed Holder: The reason I asked that, Madam Chair, is just simply that we are probably the most significantly well-read committee, I think, on the Hill, insofar as we ask for more reports than probably all others combined, and I'm somewhat mindful of that.

The Chair: You've come to your time. I have to go to—

Mr. Ed Holder: That's not a time question. That was just a comment.

The Chair: That's not even a point of order.

Ms. Foote.

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thank Ms. Baltacioglu and Mr. Forster for being here. I'm seeing some kind of a discrepancy. You're suggesting that Infrastructure Canada pays claims within 30 days. I'm looking at the schematic, which again says that final claims are paid within 30 days.

I want to ask you about a situation I'm aware of through the National Trails Coalition. I'm sure you're familiar with that program. Funding was approved in the vicinity of \$270,000 for bridge and culvert replacements, I think. The funding was to be given in instalments: 50%, then 20%, 20%, and 10%. This particular project is now completed, but they're being told the 10% is being held back until May of 2010. There was nothing in the application process to indicate they would have to wait until that timeframe for that 10% to be paid out. They assumed that once their project was completed and

when their invoices were submitted, they would be paid back. Now they're being told they have to wait until the entire country's projects are audited, so seven months from now.

That amounts to about \$16,000 for small contractors, which is a lot of money when you're talking rural Canada. Why is that 10% being held back until all these projects are completed?

• (1640)

Mr. John Forster: The National Trails Coalition program runs a bit differently than this schematic. It runs through one agreement with the coalition, so there's one contribution agreement. The coalition then goes out and selects the projects, approves the projects, and provides the funding to the local groups who are doing the work.

Under the National Trails Coalition program, we provided 50% of the funding for this. It's a \$25 million program, so we provided \$12.5 million to the coalition, I think it was in May or June. That allows them to get work going. You're referring to the 10% holdback on the program. We will still contribute to the coalition. This is not uncommon in most contribution programs. There's a holdback of 10%.

Once the coalition completes the program and files the necessary reports showing what projects were done with our money and closes the book on the program, we'll release the final 10%. I would have to check, but if they want to use the money we've been providing them all along to finish off projects, that's their call.

Ms. Judy Foote: Until they finish the entire program.

Mr. John Forster: That's right.

Ms. Judy Foote: So that means they can have projects completed, but until the projects are completed throughout the entire country, they won't get the outstanding amount.

Mr. John Forster: Yes. We can look at that and see if there's a way we can help them. Particularly with specific projects that have been finished, they can pay those off, even though at a program level we might be holding back a little bit.

Ms. Judy Foote: This one has been completed since October 20. If you're suggesting until May 2010, you're going to have small contractors who are out significant amounts of money.

Ms. Hall Findlay, if you have a question you would like to ask, I'll share.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Thank you very much.

You mentioned that 2,000 projects have been started. The information we've received from various municipal representatives is that only about 1,000 have been started, of over 3,000 that have been announced.

Can you please provide evidence to us of the ones that have been started? These are questions we've been asking, but we just don't get information. It's not on the website. We're only getting figures about what's been announced. We would really like some hard figures and examples of what is being started, if you can provide that to us.

In terms of timeframe, because we are running out of time, could you give me an idea of when you could provide that information?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Would you like us to give you a breakdown by province of what has started?

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Of projects that have been started.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Under way, by program.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Thank you. That would be great—in both languages, if that's possible.

We keep hearing that the Building Canada fund site has jobs, but the stimulus fund has no information about jobs being created. We have advertising saying that jobs are being created, but if you could provide us with the specific numbers of jobs created from the reports you've had from the municipalities and provinces, also within the same timeframe, that would be very helpful.

The Chair: Thank you.

Please give a very quick response.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: We were actually ready to give the honourable member a breakdown per fund or per program of what, as per our updates, is under way. We would be happy to do it right now.

The second thing is that in terms of jobs, I'm sure the committee is well aware that the government reports on jobs created on a macro level government-wide. The government has provided three updates in Parliament, and the next one is coming in December, where the job numbers will be presented. However, as projects are on the ground, we are getting information from some of the proponents as to how many jobs have been created. They are anecdotal. It's important to note that the Canadian Federation of Municipalities has said that with a \$1 billion injection into the economy, it creates 11,000 jobs. As well, our colleagues in Finance Canada run models in terms of job creation.

I do not wish to promise anything I can't give to the committee. We can give you anecdotes. We can give them to you right now as to what people report.

•(1645)

The Chair: The anecdotes we have received from the witnesses. What we would like, and what I think Madam Hall Findlay has asked for, is start-ups. So if you could give us start-ups, and I'm not going to take anybody else's time on that....

Thank you.

Monsieur Nadeau.

Mr. Pat Martin: I think they're ready to give us those right now.

The Chair: They have figures right now. Okay, so you don't mind taking.... I'll take everybody's time then. Okay. Merci.

I don't want you complaining you didn't get your time to ask questions.

Do you have a hard copy?

Mr. John Forster: No, but we can come back to you with something in writing.

Generally speaking, and again, remember that under the budget our two challenges were to speed up Building Canada and do the stimulus. So combined across all our programs, there are 2,500

projects under way across the country as of the reports we've received from provinces and territories. We can break those down by the program if you wish and provide that to you later.

To get back to the jobs question, we do not track jobs by project because the data you get is very inconsistent and unreliable and you have no way of verifying it. I think if you look at some of the examples in the U.S. where they're doing self-reporting of jobs created, it's causing a lot of difficulties and inconsistencies. You get one project where they bought nine boots and it created nine jobs. The value of the self-reporting of jobs—

The Chair: So the clarification that you can give us is that between the Building Canada fund and the stimulus infrastructure package, 2,500 projects have started. Is that what you are telling us?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Are under way.

The Chair: Okay. So they need a breakdown of the two programs, and that you would be able to supply to us?

Mr. John Forster: Sure.

The Chair: Is that okay, Mr. Martin? That's what they say—unless they have it right in front of them. Okay. They can read it for us then. Fair enough. That will save us a lot of time and effort.

Go ahead, read it for us.

Mr. John Forster: Under the infrastructure stimulus fund, and again, this is as reported by provinces and territories earlier this fall—

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: Reading out the numbers doesn't actually help us. We wanted a list of the—

The Chair: They will provide it to us visually as well. They will give it to us. They're just letting us have the figures now.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: We'll read and then we'll provide the documents.

Mr. John Forster: We're in your hands. However you would like it, we'll provide it.

The Chair: Good. I think the committee would like to hear the figures and then the committee would like the hard copy. Thank you.

Mr. John Forster: So approximately 2,500 projects are under way. For stimulus, it's around 1,250; major infrastructure, Building Canada, about 20. The community component of Building Canada—remember this is for the small communities of under 100,000 people. Between that and the top-up money—remember the budget added \$500 million to that program—we have about 900 projects under way. On the National Trails Coalition, over 360 projects are under way across the country.

So together that adds up to over 2,500. But we will provide it, if you wish, in writing.

The Chair: Good. Thank you.

Monsieur Nadeau, s'il vous plaît. Vous avez cinq minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Based on the criteria, has infrastructure funding in Canada always been based on a per capita amount?

Mr. John Forster: I'm sorry, could you please repeat the question?

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Yes. My question is about investment on a per capita basis. Have we always done things this way in Canada? I was just wondering about the principle of the matter.

Mr. John Forster: Generally speaking, that is true. There are some exceptions. For example, there are base funds. In the 2007 budget, the majority of the Building Canada Fund was divided per capita, that is, per person. In the plan, there was a fund of \$25 million per year over a seven-year period. Each province or territory received exactly the same amount. This is a kind of base funding that can provide assistance to the smaller provinces and the north—a minimum. In general, it is per capita.

• (1650)

Mr. Richard Nadeau: That said, the figures we have correspond to projects underway, projects that have begun. Ultimately, we want to invest in projects, in society.

With regard to employment, will this renewal or this commendable attempt at renewal ensure that we can effectively or efficiently fight to return people to work who have been laid off or who have lost their jobs?

[English]

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Jobs for Canadians and jobs for those who are unemployed are absolutely critical. Economists and governments around the world believe one of the best ways to actually stimulate the economy and create employment activity is through infrastructure projects. As I mentioned before, the overall job numbers are reported to Parliament on a macro level, on all the economic stimulus package, not only on infrastructure.

However, as we're going through, our partners are giving us numbers in terms of job creation. You asked about Quebec. In the Lac-Saint-Jean area, with the Véloroute des Bleuets, the province is reporting that it created 160 jobs working on that particular project. So we are getting anecdotal information around the jobs, but the job numbers overall are reported across the whole economy.

We're hoping that these investments are helping people on the ground and employing many Canadians. Again, these numbers are supported by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Okay.

Let us consider the correlation between the money invested in projects and the jobs created. Is the main goal jobs or the number of projects created? Or is one independent of the other, depending on the criteria?

Mr. John Forster: For our part, the number of jobs is not a program requirement. The goal of the program is to start construction projects throughout Canada. So, there are ways, economically speaking, to do an analysis and develop models to estimate the number of jobs that will be created by investing in construction.

For our part, the purpose of the program is to start construction projects, and the stimulus comes with those construction projects.

[English]

The Chair: Merci.

Monsieur Holder, for five minutes.

Mr. Ed Holder: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank our guests for their dedication and commitment. As I reflect on the kind of effort that has been required to make all these projects work, and the organization, basically from the ground up—from a zero base—what you've done has been absolutely unprecedented. I think all of us on the committee need to acknowledge the tremendous effort of your department, and we'd like to say thank you for that.

Reflecting on the comment I was making, not as a point of order but about when you were asked for a further report...if I were a guest of this committee, I would have some fear and trepidation, because the significant amount of work that has come out of this after the fact is quite staggering in terms of reporting. While we have a great need to know, and I respect our need to know, you have to get on with your work as well. I would simply ask that you never be shy. If there's a simpler way to do it, I know we would accept that accordingly.

I have a few brief questions. Much has been asked about the issue of the per capita funding as a dollar amount. I just heard it most recently in terms of jobs, and I appreciate your response. But is the per capita funding based on a dollar amount, or is it based on the number of projects when they're allocated per province?

• (1655)

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: It's a dollar amount.

Mr. Ed Holder: Okay, that makes sense. So there's certainly a fairness about it across all provinces.

Did any of the provinces turn any of the dollars down?

Mr. John Forster: Not so far. We still have some work to do, though.

Mr. Ed Holder: Okay. I thought I heard that if there are projects that are not completed—and please confirm that is correct—the provinces get to reinvest in their province, so no province is disadvantaged as a result of a project not being completed.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: It's not the government's intention to disadvantage any province.

Mr. Ed Holder: Thank you.

I don't want to feel like I'm besmirching any party, but in broad terms, I heard my colleague from the NDP talk about the Huey Long approach to things. I thought that was a curious term; I'd rather Canadianize terms. I didn't get a sense that he was supporting road work, but I don't care which party...I don't think there are bad projects per se.

I want to come back to the approval process. Was it the federal government alone who chose the projects? I'm not being silly when I ask the question; I'm trying to make a point. Was it just the federal government that made decisions with respect to which projects were determined?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: No. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, and we have been stressing this very important point, it is the federal government along with our partners, the provinces, the municipalities. This is important, for a number of reasons. It allows for joint decision-making, but it is also important that the money will go to the projects on the ground where the need is. Municipalities and provinces identify where the need is, and we work with them to finalize these projects.

John, do you want to add any more on the process?

Mr. John Forster: I think you've hit the main points. These projects may be provincial or municipal. If they're municipal, they're approved by their city council or mayor. If they're provincial, they're approved by the provincial government. They're jointly funded by all three levels of government. We are all putting money into this.

The reality is, and pardon me for saying this, if we had looked back in February and said, gee, do you think by August we could get 13 jurisdictions to sign contribution agreements with the federal government, agree to match dollar for dollar, and in some cases two dollars for one, that the federal government is putting in, and collectively, between three levels of government, sit down and approve over 3,000 projects in about seven months, I think people would have laughed at us.

Mr. Ed Holder: I have a very quick last question. Is there anything in your recollection or knowledge of Canadian history—and I can take this right back to 1867—where that level of cooperation, with that kind of unprecedented spending, the number of projects that have been asked for or undertaken, would suggest these unprecedented projects...?

Mr. John Forster: I'll bow to your expertise on history, but certainly in terms of our recent and modern-day infrastructure programs, there isn't a similar example that I can think of.

Mr. Ed Holder: Thank you for your hard work.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will now go to Madam Foote for five minutes.

Ms. Judy Foote: Thank you.

I've noticed, when I've looked at the projects that have been approved, that a significant number of them are what you would call renewal projects versus new construction. I wonder if you could elaborate on that for me.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Yes, absolutely. Because we have a two-year timeframe for this program, a lot of renewal applications did come in, because they can actually be physically finished within one construction season or even less. For example, road resurfacing is very fast to do. It is very much needed, but it is a much easier project to do. If something is from scratch, like a completely new building or an addition to a building, those are more onerous projects, so probably there are less of them because they are dependent on construction.

• (1700)

Ms. Judy Foote: Okay. That would have been a topic for discussion with the provinces and municipalities, then, in terms of timeframe. Obviously concerns have been expressed by the federation of municipalities with respect to the deadline of March 31, 2011.

In fact, there is some concern in the smaller municipalities that if it hasn't already been in the mix, they may not get the project finished by the deadline that's been stipulated. The fear now, of course, is that there are going to be municipalities that may have benefited from this program but will now not go forward, because the understanding is that if it's not completed by the deadline, then the municipality has to absorb the total cost of their project on a go-forward basis—that is, the cost for what's left to be finished. Obviously that is an issue for municipalities.

So was part of the thinking that went into the stimulus package that we would focus on renewal projects versus new builds?

Mr. John Forster: Yes, definitely. The other thing is that you have to remember you're to look at stimulus in the context of the whole suite of programs we offer. The Building Canada programs, for example, strictly focus on new construction. We don't do rehabilitation/repair work.

So for stimulus, again, as Yaprak mentioned, because it's a very short-term program, allowing rehabilitation and repair work made sense, not just for the timeframe for the funding we have, but also because it makes good asset management sense. I'm investing in repairing and rehabilitation of my asset and I am prolonging the life of that asset, so maybe I don't need to replace my building or my bridge for another 20 years by doing that work now.

We certainly encourage the repair and rehabilitation, but the program was open if you had a new building or a new arena and you could still build it in the two-year timeframe. In every application, the proponents attested to the fact they believed this project could be built. Now we'll monitor them as we go.

Ms. Judy Foote: In looking at the expenditures, the project costs, and the amounts that have been totalled here, I'm assuming that's what you anticipate spending by the end of March 31, 2011. If some of these projects can't be completed, then that funding will lapse, obviously.

Mr. John Forster: At the moment, the funding runs until March 31, 2011, so we'll pay all our share of all the costs incurred right up to 11:59 on March 31, 2011. In our agreements with the provinces and municipalities, everyone has agreed that if it's not finished, they will finish the project and cover the costs that are left in order to do so, but we'll certainly be paying everyone our share.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: May I, Madam Chair, have 10 seconds?

The Chair: You have 40 seconds.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: I understand that under the contribution agreements we're supposed to get quarterly progress reports specifically on job creation from municipalities and provinces. That's what we understand. If you have received none so far.... You're both shaking your heads, so you haven't received any?

Mr. John Forster: Right. On our claims and reports we are not requiring them to post the job creation numbers by project. It is not what they report on. They report on tender date, contract date, when they started construction, costs incurred to date, and what our share of those costs is.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay: But isn't it part of the contribution agreement that there's a specific—

Mr. John Forster: To report on jobs? No. I gave an example of some of the problems you have with the self-reporting of jobs. The data you get can be quite challenging.

The Chair: Thank you. That is a question you can put down.

Mr. Brown.

Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

One of the parts of the infrastructure program that some may find challenging is the deadline. A lot of the programs have to have their projects done by March 31, 2011. What type of feedback are you getting on that? What are you doing to speed up approvals to make that finish date more realistic?

• (1705)

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: The government has been clear about the March 2011 deadline. That is the deadline we're working towards. The quarterly reports we're getting from the provinces serve as assessment tools. We are going to check on the status of each project to see if there is anything we, our provincial partners, or the municipalities can do to speed the work up.

It is one by one, and that's what we're doing. We hope that by the time the next winter report comes in we will have a good sense of where the problem areas might be. We will go through each project to make sure we are doing our best to get everything expedited. Bear in mind, however, that infrastructure projects are dependent on our partners. Our partner municipalities and the provinces are responsible for making things happen on the ground.

Mr. Patrick Brown: There have been some suggestions that infrastructure stimulus funding favours government ridings. I thought it might be helpful for you to tell us where the project suggestions originate. From what level of government do most of the submissions come? Has there been any political interference in the process?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: I cannot comment on a political question. However, we can explain to you how the process runs.

The project applications come from various proponents. It could be through the province or a municipality, and municipalities can get it from various proponents. There's a long list of applications. Then it is reviewed by federal and provincial officials. At the federal level, we have different types of controls. An ADM-level committee reviews them. Then the recommendations are made. We ensure that no project gets put forward that doesn't meet the terms and conditions of the program.

Mr. Patrick Brown: I think it's fair to say that a lot of the submissions for these projects are coming from municipal governments. How do you mark the progress of these projects? Do you have performance indicators? How often are we getting updates from municipal governments on the status of these projects?

Mr. John Forster: We have agreements with each province and territory. They're required, at a minimum, to report quarterly. In our previous programs, they'd do it once a year. In this program, because of the time sensitivity, they're reporting every quarter on all the projects. They tell us whether the project is under way and give us the tender date and the contract date. We monitor this against the start date in their application. If projects are slipping, we'll sit down with the province and ask whether they want to keep it going and how we can make sure it gets done.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The agreement with the provinces is for quarterly reports. Do municipalities have to abide by that expectation of quarterly reports?

Mr. John Forster: Our reports come through the province. Our money goes to the province, which distributes it to municipal governments. The province has its own agreement with the municipalities. The province may have requested more frequent reporting from certain municipalities. But provinces and territories report to the federal government on a quarterly basis.

The Chair: Thank you.

I was requested by Mr. Martin to get a quick question in. The Conservative time is up, the Liberal time is next, but we are not taking any time. Mr. Martin would like a minute. Would the committee give Mr. Martin a minute?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Martin, a quick question.

Mr. Pat Martin: Thank you to the committee for that permission.

I have one very brief and specific question. Given that the federal government doesn't distribute funding until invoices are received, as I understand the explanation, how many invoices has the federal government received, and what is the total dollar figure to date?

• (1710)

Mr. John Forster: As I mentioned, the first round of that reporting was in August and September, and that's what we're just processing and finishing off now, so I can't give you a dollar figure to it. But when you print out the claims and reports, it's over 1,700 projects that haven't been reported on. That would have been information as of July and August. We've just had the November—

Mr. Pat Martin: But are they actually invoices paid?

Mr. John Forster: Yes, it's an online system, so you go in at each project and you complete for each one of the projects the start dates, the tender dates, all that information, costs incurred to date, and the federal share and the provincial share. So on each project, they report on that, if they wish to. We have tons of projects that have started, and we have some that have even finished where we don't have claims yet. So I may not get a claim for something that was finished in September until February. They'll file a claim when they're ready to.

We have at least 500 projects, for example, that we know are under way and well advanced where we don't have a claim for costs yet. But once they bill us, we'll be happy to pay for it.

The Chair: Mr. Forster, I think the question was very clear: how many invoices have you received? I understand from you that there were 50 projects that were completed, but you haven't received any invoices. So if you haven't received invoices, take a look at it, and perhaps you could respond to the committee, because I think that's a concern of the committee.

Mr. John Forster: I'd be happy to, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Baltacioglu?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: Sorry, Madam Chairman. I want to make sure that we don't promise something we can't deliver in the timeframe. It's very important for us to provide the committee with accurate information. We can't provide you with draft numbers or the data with problems. What we will do is look through everything we gave to the Parliamentary Budget Officer and try to summarize it in a way so that it would be helpful to the committee, because I think that's also many pages—

The Chair: If it takes too long to summarize, the analyst tells me they'll be able to summarize it for us.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: I'd rather provide it. I just would like some flexibility in terms of timing and when we could provide you all of these things, because I'm not exactly sure.... I have to check with our team.

The Chair: Okay. So the progress report that you've given to the budget officer has numbers or dollar amounts in it that you are not comfortable with. Is that what you're trying to tell me?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: No. The actual applications came from the provinces, and it was the first time they were using the electronic method. We found there were issues with the data that was inputted. There were discrepancies, so we had to make sure we cleaned it up with the provinces.

We did provide the Parliamentary Budget Officer with what we have, but our chief financial officer hasn't gone through them yet. We are doing internal verification, which is important for us to do. While we would be happy to provide anything the committee wishes, we also have to run this program and make sure that all of the Financial Administration Act requirements are adhered to. So that's what we are doing.

If you would like, we could provide you with what we provided to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or a version of it.

The Chair: Yes, with a disclaimer saying these figures have not been verified, and therefore we will know what we are doing.... We have to be responsible and we know what you have been doing.

Will we be able to have it within a week, because you've already supplied it to the Parliamentary Budget Officer? Yes?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: If it's exactly the same package, sure.

The Chair: Yes, sure.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: You'll run into the same language problems.

The Chair: There was a clarification that we wanted to figure out. On the 50 projects that have been completed, do they belong to the Building Canada fund or to the stimulus package? You can give me the answer later, but just make a note of it and supply us with the information that you've given.

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: We have the information.

The Chair: You have it.

The second one is this. I am advised that in schedule H of the agreement, section 6.2 states that job creation is part of the municipalities' responsibility. It's my understanding that that's the case. If it is not the case, clarify.

● (1715)

Mr. John Forster: It is not the case in Canada's agreement with the province. Ontario goes out and signs its deals with all the municipalities. They may have put that in their agreement—

The Chair: But the federal one doesn't have it. Thank you for that clarification.

Mr. John Forster: No. In terms of the projects that we know are completed—without having any claims information—there are about 47. Most of those are in the stimulus fund.

The Chair: And how much of the \$33 billion that was there has been utilized, if you can give us that information? Over the seven years, it was supposed to be \$4.7 billion per annum. If it has been utilized or drawn down, that would help us as well.

Do you have any closing remarks to make?

Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu: No, thank you.

The Chair: I thank you very much. It has been gruelling trying to get you here and getting all this information, but I thank you for the information you have provided, and we look forward to working with you in solving this issue. Thank you very much.

The meeting is suspended.

● (1715)

(Pause)

● (1715)

The Chair: Committee members, we have some committee business. The first thing is the motion by Mr. Anders.

I'm sorry, I was told the steering committee report is first.

Item 6 of the steering committee report stated “That the Clerk be authorized to distribute to the Committee members, in one or the other official languages”. Madame Baltacioglu explained to us the cost of \$230,000 for translation and two to three months. I would like to ask the committee if they still want the information translated, and if they do, it will take two to three months and the information will be irrelevant by that time.

So, committee members, do you wish that information be distributed to the committee without translation?

No, you do not? That's fine.

Oui?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): The position of the Bloc Québécois is that we accept that the documents be tabled for practical purposes, because, in three months, they will no longer be useful. If we wait three months, they will not be of any use whatsoever, correct?

[*English*]

The Chair: Let me give just a little history.

The 4,500 pages that Infrastructure Canada gave to the Parliamentary Budget Officer—and Mr. Martin was right in asking the question—should have been given electronically. When we spoke to Infrastructure Canada, and we had a motion before committee, they submitted to us the electronic version and gave the same to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Anyone who wants to access the information can always access it via the Parliamentary Budget Officer if they want to. It's full, complete. So if we sit here as a committee and think that this information is not being distributed without translation, we are absolutely incorrect. You can get it; the information is available.

What happened was the steering committee wanted it to be put forward to the committee. The translation—it's 5,000 lines—costs \$230,000. It's a really onerous cost, and it will take the department two to three months. Now we would have an option. We could ask the clerk to find out an alternate translation. If that's the case, we could. We wouldn't have to wait two to three months. We will have to figure out how long it takes. If you wish for me to report back at the next meeting, I could do that.

Monsieur Plamondon.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: The position of the Bloc Québécois is that we will make an exception and we will agree that the documents be provided solely in English or in the language in which they were written, so that we can do our jobs and see to some extent how useful these tables are.

The Chair: Mr. Gourde.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Chair, I am quite shocked and disappointed in the proposal by the dean of the House of Commons. Bilingualism is a principle to which we subscribe, and it is important to me. This proves that our party is the only one to promote bilingualism, French and related values.

I see Mr. Plamondon laughing. I am extremely disappointed. I am serious. He clearly said that he would accept the documents in English, and he is saying this after having sat for more than 25 years in this House and defended the values of bilingualism. Madam Chair, this is unacceptable. It is truly unacceptable!

The Chair: What is the problem, Mr. Gourde?

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Madam Chair, I don't want us to debate it. My colleague's last statement is hypocritical. The Conservatives don't want us to look at the documents. That is why I agreed, because it is urgent that we do look at them. They don't want this and they are using bilingualism as an excuse. That is hypocritical. They have never been in favour of bilingualism. I was a Conservative and I know.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Point of order, Madam Chair. I cannot accept Mr. Plamondon's statements on hypocrisy. We have principles here. I demand an apology—

[*English*]

The Chair: Order.

That is not a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: That is hypocritical. He is an hypocrite and a demagogue. No, I will not apologize.

[*English*]

The Chair: Order.

Thank you.

Madam Foote.

Ms. Judy Foote: Madam Chair, I move that the documents be tabled in whatever format they've been tabled in for the committee.

The Chair: Thank you. It is in the steering committee report, and that is where I was asking the question.

Now, for committee members who really want it—and I can see that the government side does not want this report given to them in anything but the official languages—the information the department sent us was that they were not going to translate it for us, despite the fact that it is the department's job to translate. When I spoke to the deputy minister, she said they could translate it but it would cost \$230,000. You heard her. And she said it would take two to three months.

If the committee members wish to have the report individually, there is a way to get it. In terms of those who don't want to look at the report and probably have seen it already and think bilingualism is going to stop them, there are ways of accessing it and you can see me afterwards.

Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Chair, I know I am probably speaking about something that was maybe in camera, but there was an arrangement in our last meeting, if you recall, with regard to translation of this particular document. If you reference when we last met in camera, I would ask that you fulfill the commitment that was made by the chair in terms of distribution in one of the particular official languages.

The Chair: What commitment? We decided to have a compromise, and the information you received was the summary of information, rolled up and given to you. The second thing that was discussed in camera—which shouldn't be discussed here, but now it's open—was that the clerk go back to the department and ask them to provide us with translation. The department came back and told us—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: If you recall the last meeting, and if I have permission of committee members to speak about the translation issue that we spoke of when we last met in camera....

Do I have permission of committee members to reference material from the last meeting in camera?

Some hon. members: No.

● (1725)

The Chair: We'll check the minutes and we will get back to you. How about that? We will see whether there has been anything—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Let's maybe delay this until there has been a reference of those minutes.

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin, any committee member who wishes to access these 4,500 pages can access them whichever way they want, without this committee distributing it to them.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: There was a commitment in the last meeting, by you, Madam Chair, in terms of the translation of the Quebec portions of the documents, to be translated into English. There was consent from all sides.

The Chair: No, I'm sorry, there was not.

Ms. Judy Foote: Madam Chair, there's a motion already that I put forward suggesting that we accept the tabling of the documents as they've been presented.

The Chair: Sorry, Ms. Foote, that was my error.

The motion is that we table the 4,500-page document as was given to us by Infrastructure Canada.

A voice: And distribution to the committee members in one or the other official language?

Ms. Judy Foote: That's right, as tabled.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Anders.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Madam Chair, I believe Mr. Plamondon moved a motion and then Ms. Foote moved a motion. If you want to clear that up, I don't care which motion it is, but Mr. Plamondon—

The Chair: Madam Foote moves that the report that was submitted to us from Infrastructure Canada be distributed in the format it was given to the committee, in whatever language it was given. It's in both languages, actually, in terms of the Quebec portion.

Those in favour of the motion, please signify. Those against?

I will break the tie, voting in favour.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The next thing I'd like the committee to note is that Madame Bourgeois wanted the study of the large infrastructure projects and the procurement process. Mr. Minto has stated that....

Attention Monsieur Plamondon, s'il vous plaît!

Mr. Minto suggested that he has produced his report. He would like to be here with the committee for two hours. That means that Public Works and Government Services, who are coming on November 26, is going to attend to the large IT projects as well as estimates on that day. It's just a little switch around. This is for information purposes. On December 1, Mr. Minto is going to be here for two hours.

With that amendment, we concur with the report. Is anybody opposed to the report?

Are you opposed to the report?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Chair, you're making changes. I'd like to see that in written form so we can look at it. Maybe repeat it. I didn't quite catch it.

The Chair: I will repeat it.

On December 1, we have Mr. Minto coming in for the first hour, and Public Works and Government Services is coming for the second hour to verify that they were following the processes of Mr. Minto. But we also have Public Works and Government Services—if you have your copy of the fifth report—coming on November 26 anyway, to give us their analysis of how they are handling procurement of large IT projects. I'm sure this committee has been studying this for a long time.

Since Mr. Minto is the ombudsman and has released his report, he would like to be here for two hours. That's all I'm suggesting. Since Public Works is already here on November 26—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: You've had a lot of commentary in addition to that. What I'm looking for is the dates and the meetings.

The Chair: On November 26, Public Works and Government Services is going to be here. We are moving them away from December 1 to allow Mr. Minto two hours. That's the only change.

Is it agreed? Are we clear?

● (1730)

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I understand what you're saying; I'm not necessarily agreeing with the report.

The Chair: Ah, but the report is everything the steering committee did, and we are eliminating number 6 from the report.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: That may be the case.

The Chair: You can say you don't agree with the report.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I don't think I agree with the report, just because I think there are more pressing matters.

The Chair: Fair enough.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: That's fair enough. That's separate from my questions for clarification.

The Chair: The clerk tells me that since you are not agreeing with the report, I'll have to ask for a show of hands for people who would like to concur with the fifth report of the steering committee, with the changes that Mr. Minto, the ombudsman for procurement, stay for two hours on December 1 instead of one hour and that number 6 be eliminated. Number 6 is for translation, which is not going to happen.

Those who want to concur with the report, please raise your hands.

Those who do not wish the report to be concurred with, please raise your hands.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Now we go to a motion by Mr. Anders.

Mr. Rob Anders: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm just going to read the motion: "That the determination of the OGGO committee agenda be made by the entire committee during

regular meetings of the committee rather than in meetings of its Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure."

We've had a few different steering committee meetings, probably more than I'm used to. Sometimes they're on incredibly short notice, while at other times they get moved despite short notice. At other times, we've had members arrive very late.

It all has to come back to the full committee anyhow. I would prefer, in terms of committees I've served on previously, that it be dealt with on the public record rather than in camera, during the regular committee hours. It just saves us a third committee meeting, which was happening basically every week. I leave it at that.

The Chair: Does anybody want to speak or shall I just call the vote?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Is there any other business?

We are adjourned.

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