



House of Commons  
CANADA

# **Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates**

---

OGGO • NUMBER 045 • 2nd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

---

**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, December 3, 2009**

—  
**Chair**

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi**



## Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

Thursday, December 3, 2009

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)):** Order, please.

If committee members would please take their places, I'd like to call the meeting to order.

Pursuant to Standing Order 81(5), we'll be reviewing the supplementary estimates (B) of 2009-2010, and we will be voting on those supplementary estimates after our witnesses have left.

What I am proposing, if committee members would agree, is that we question the witnesses from 3:30 to 4:20, and then from 4:20 to 4:30 we do approval of the vote numbers, if it's agreeable. If you don't want me to cut down the minister's time by 10 minutes, I'm at your disposal.

Can we see how it goes along? If we can stop at 4:20, I would like to, and then we have committee business to do.

Minister, do you have any opening remarks?

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board):** I do.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'm pleased to be here to discuss the 2009-2010 supplementary estimates (B) for my department.

With me today are Michelle d'Auray, the secretary of the Treasury Board, and Christine Walker, assistant secretary, corporate service sector and chief financial officer. Also with me is Alister Smith, assistant secretary, expenditure management sector, and Hélène Laurendeau, the assistant deputy minister, compensation and labour relations, of the office of the chief human resources officer.

As I said, I'm here to discuss the supplementary estimates. As you know, supplementary estimates are a part of the normal parliamentary approval process to ensure previously planned government initiatives receive the necessary funding to move forward.

The total funding requested in these supplementary estimates is \$760.5 million, of which \$713 million represents new appropriations. Most of this funding is to cover the costs of new collective agreements. I'm happy to say this has been a very busy and successful year in terms of collective bargaining in the federal government. These supplementary estimates request \$735.4 million to support more than 100 departments, agencies, and appropriation-dependent crown corporations in meeting the additional personnel costs that have resulted from new collective agreements and other compensation decisions.

These collective agreements and the resulting requirement for funds comply with the Expenditure Restraint Act, an important part of our commitment to responsible spending during one of the worst economic crises in living memory.

These estimates also complete the transfer of resources needed to create the office of the chief human resources officer, which is housed in Treasury Board Secretariat. This important change was announced by the Prime Minister in February 2009 and was part of our response to the recommendations made by the Prime Minister's advisory committee on the public service. The advisory committee called on the government to simplify the organizational structure for human resources management. We responded last year with an ambitious strategic review of the six organizations that have central responsibilities for human resources management. Through this review, over \$250 million in funding was put under the microscope. The end result is a new and leaner governance structure that reduces duplication and puts us in an even better position to continue renewing the public service. This new structure ensures that public servants have the support they need to continue providing sound policy advice to the government and high-quality services to Canadians.

I would like to take a moment to speak about Treasury Board's strategic review process as it applies government-wide.

As you know, we are in the third year of strategic reviews. Strategic reviews are a key pillar of our new expenditure management system, which was implemented in 2007 as part of an ongoing commitment to better manage government spending. Through the strategic review process, the government systematically assesses the relevance and performance of every program on a cyclical basis. Organizations review their direct program spending and the operating costs of their major statutory programs to assess how and whether these programs are effective and efficient, meet the priorities of Canadians, and are aligned with core federal responsibilities.

Federal organizations, including departments, agencies, and crown corporations, identify reallocation proposals that can be used to invest in other programs that meet the government's and Canadians' priorities. Recommendations come from the organization or agency undergoing a strategic review. The minister and the deputy head of the organization, as well as its senior financial officer, sign off on their respective reviews, and their recommendations are then considered as part of the government's annual budget planning process. This system ensures value for money for all government spending. This is important at all times. Our government is committed to ensuring that every tax dollar is aligned with the priorities of Canadians.

Madam Chair, in conclusion, 10 months ago our government brought forward the earliest budget in Canadian history. Moving at record speed, we cut red tape and we delivered the largest economic stimulus in Canadian history. Our plan is working for Canada, and I'm proud of the role my department played in this process.

• (1535)

These estimates reflect the progress that has been made and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to ensuring value for money. This is one of my department's top priorities, and I can assure you that together with my officials we will continue delivering strong accountable management, and we will ensure that resources are allocated to achieve results for Canadians.

I am happy to answer your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

We will start with the first round of questions.

Madam Hall Findlay, you have eight minutes, please.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Minister, and everyone else for giving us your time this afternoon. It's much appreciated.

I will focus on the estimates and the funding being requested for additional advertising. So far, \$50 million worth of advertising has been allocated for the economic action plan initiatives. In these estimates we're being asked to approve an additional \$13 million. On the \$50 million allocated, we believe that more has been spent on advertising, but probably through different departments. It's very difficult to make that determination. In any event, we are being asked to approve an additional \$13 million for the economic action plan work through the CRA finance and the Privy Council Office.

Minister, I would like you to acknowledge that as part of our job as parliamentarians it is appropriate, when asked to approve that kind of expenditure, that we ask how the money will be spent and assure ourselves that it will be spent according to the rules.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** You're certainly entitled to ask that.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Thank you.

I'm assuming that you respect our jobs and our roles as parliamentarians.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** As a fellow parliamentarian, I respect your role.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I appreciate that, Minister.

Could you please explain to me why a letter I sent to you and the other members of the Treasury Board on October 8, almost two full months ago, specifically about advertising has gone unanswered?

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Well you'll have to identify the letter. If you can bring it to my attention, I can see whether or not it has been answered.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I can tell you that it has not been answered, because if it had been answered to my office, I would have received it.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I don't know what letter you're talking about, so how can I answer what letter I didn't answer?

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** On the assumption that what I am telling you is correct—

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Maybe you could have the member provide the letter, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** I would like to bring it to your attention to please focus your questions on the estimates. You can submit that letter to me and I'll send it over.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** My point is very specifically related to estimates, because we are being asked to approve an additional \$13 million in advertising for the economic action plan.

Minister, it was a letter I sent to you and all the members of the Treasury Board specifically asking about compliance with Treasury Board Secretariat policies, under the Financial Administration Act, on Government of Canada advertising. It is entirely appropriate, given that I never got a response to that—

**The Chair:** Ms. Hall Findlay, I have to interrupt you.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Madam Chair, please.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

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

Our committee has requested that the minister appear to address the supplementary estimates. Clearly, that question goes against what Ms. Hall Findlay... Treasury Board Secretariat has already appeared twice to deal with that issue. The clerk of the Privy Council was also a witness. We obtained the same answers. All documents relating to the Economic Action Plan fully comply with the government's communications policy. I think that we should move on to other questions, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Madam Hall Findlay was justifying why she was asking the question, therefore your point of order is not in order.

Madam Hall Findlay, continue. But I think if the minister has not received the letter and has gone through various levels of bureaucrats and has not seen it, perhaps we'll give him the benefit of the doubt. If we could have that letter, perhaps we could send it over from the committee.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I will be more than happy to send a copy. But it went to the minister and all the members of Treasury Board. I find it hard to believe it didn't get received. Given that the minister acknowledged—

**Hon. Vic Toews:** If I may respond to that, if she has the letter there, please give it to me.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I have already acknowledged that I will give a copy of the letter to you. But in my job as a parliamentarian, two months ago I sent a letter asking very specific questions about compliance with Treasury Board policies on advertising.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Let me answer that specifically, then.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** As we are being asked to approve additional money, and you have acknowledged and have said that you have respect for our jobs as parliamentarians, I'm asking....

There was no letter of response. I did not even receive an acknowledgement of my letter. I am being asked to approve an additional \$13 million in advertising spending when I did not, in fact, even get the courtesy of an acknowledgement letter, let alone a response to very substantive questions I raised about the compliance of the advertising program with our federal government policies.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Let me respond to that. I'm certainly willing to answer that question and to see whether the letter has in fact arrived in my office. But I don't know what letter you're talking about. If you would have the courtesy, in carrying out your role as a parliamentarian, to properly put the letter before me so that I can look at the letter, I will then ask my officials to see where the letter is and whether there has been a response provided. And I will have that to you.

**The Chair:** Here is the letter. Would you like to see it?

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Absolutely. I'm sure it's in French and English so that everyone can see it.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I have a French copy here. I'll follow up with it. That may be the only English copy.

May I ask a different question, then?

**The Chair:** Yes, sure.

Yes, Mr. Brown.

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC):** Given that we're referencing this document, it would be helpful if copies could be made for everyone on the committee so we can understand what this mystery document is.

**The Chair:** Fair enough. It's a letter from Madam Hall Findlay to the minister, and it's in both official languages. Because the minister does not have the document....

I'm going to be fair to the minister. Ministers receive a lot of correspondence. He probably does not know which letter it is, so for his benefit I would like to have it in front of him so that when he goes back to his office and sees the letter, at least he knows what it is. Thank you.

Madam Hall Findlay, continue with another line of questioning.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** It is a different line of questioning, but again, it relates to our being asked to approve significant additional

spending on advertising. I want us to be assured, as parliamentarians, that the advertising is being done properly.

Under the Competition Act, the private sector is under very strict rules about misleading advertising. In fact, it is against the law to engage in false or misleading advertising in any material respect.

I note that there has been significant advertising about the creation of jobs. Could I ask the minister, please, what facts the government has in order that it can advertise that it has been creating jobs?

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I believe the Minister of Finance addressed that particular issue, in fact, as late as yesterday. I will get you the evidence on which he based his statements. I don't have that, other than anecdotal evidence I received, for example, from the Premier of Manitoba when we were making an announcement together in June. That would have been the former Premier of Manitoba, Premier Doer.

If you could just let me explain what....

• (1545)

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I'm not interested in anecdotal evidence, sir. I'm asking for hard evidence.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** This is hard evidence. If you can't take the word of an NDP premier, who can you take the word of? What the Premier of Manitoba told me was that the number of construction jobs in Manitoba—I assume this is on an annualized basis—was 38,000 as of June of this year, compared to 36,000 the previous year. He indicated to me that this was a result of the joint stimulus funding the federal, provincial, and municipal governments had been spending.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** That is a whopping 2,000 jobs.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Yes, and that's important to 2,000 people. If you don't think it's important—

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** It is, sir, but if I may remind you, you've made promises of, at one time, 190,000 jobs and at another of 210,000. You've been advertising that you've been creating jobs. I asked a simple question, and you've made a commitment. Can I have a timeframe during which you will provide the substantive evidence of the job creation you have been advertising? I would like a commitment. I would like a timeframe.

**The Chair:** Your time is up, Madam Hall Findlay.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I will take your question, and I'll ask the officials to check with Finance to see what information is available to you, and the information that is available to you will be provided to you.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** At what point in time?

**The Chair:** Madam Hall Findlay—

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I can't speak for the officials. Perhaps the officials could give you that timeframe.

**The Chair:** I just need clarification. Does advertising come as part of your estimates, or is it Finance? What's your role in this? Before I rule that a question is irrelevant, I need your clarification, and you can help me out here.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** It's a difficult question to answer, because advertising is in each department. So it depends on—

**The Chair:** Does Treasury Board advertise?

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Not that I'm aware of. I can find out whether we have been advertising, but I'm not aware of any advertising.

**The Chair:** Okay. When you feel that a question may not be relevant to the estimates, you can say so and then we will have a discussion.

Thanks.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I just didn't want to make it look like I was withholding evidence or anything.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you. We're trying to be fair here.

Madame Bourgeois, for eight minutes.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Minister, good afternoon and welcome to the committee.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to welcome you.

According to the supplementary estimates before us, your department has approximately \$27.8 million in funds available, and I quote: "[...] from savings identified as part of the government's ongoing strategic review of departmental spending."

Minister, could you indicate which programs Treasury Board Secretariat cut in order to come up with those \$27.8 million in savings?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** As I indicated, and I'll have the officials answer the specifics to the extent they can, the process is that each department that comes before strategic reviews brings forward a plan that indicates the 5% lowest performing programs within its mandate. It identifies the lowest 5%. That then comes to Treasury Board. Treasury Board then examines that, makes certain recommendations, and ultimately that goes into the budgetary process.

Perhaps I can have the secretary explain any further details.

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

[Translation]

Basically, as the minister indicated in his opening statement, we reviewed six organizations with responsibilities in the area of human resources. In doing so, we made savings by eliminating certain functions and redundancies. Essentially, the primary function was to recognize the specific role played by deputy ministers in human resources management and recognize that the Human Resources Management Agency would be amalgamated with Treasury Board Secretariat in order to reduce the number of officers responsible for issuing directives, and thus transferring those responsibilities to the deputy ministers.

• (1550)

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** I want to make sure I understand, Ms. d'Auray. That means that, after having reviewed six public

service organizations, and doing a few other things, you were able to save \$27.8 million?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** As the minister indicated, those six organizations accounted for some \$250 million in expenditures. Within those six organizations, we were able to make savings and reinvest amounts in other functions.

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** In order for us to understand those figures, where were those amounts reinvested?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Investments were made in training activities. Madam Chair, the supplementary estimates also show that funds were also reinvested into the Canada School of Public Service. Therefore, the amounts were basically reinvested to support training. Other amounts are also available for reinvestment. To date, not all funds have yet been reinvested.

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** So, if I am not mistaken, the reinvestments in the School of Public Service are for deputy ministers, staffing, and to allow senior public servants such as deputy ministers to receive more training. Is that so?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** In particular, the funds were for a leadership program. Other management programs will become available, and some are already offered for all levels of public servants. So this is not just for deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers, but rather—

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** You are saying that public servants in general will eventually be able to benefit from those training programs.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Mr. Minister, on page 1 of your opening statement, you talk about your commitment to responsible spending. Around this time last year, the committee was studying the issue of accrual accounting.

Do you believe that accrual accounting will eventually be used to produce the government's financial statements? That is a request that has repeatedly been made over the last decade. What is being done in that regard?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** That's a very good question and it is something the government is very concerned about accomplishing.

It's proven more difficult in certain departments than in others. But accrual accounting—and I'm speaking as a lay person in terms of accounting—is a much more effective mechanism for determining exactly what is spent in any one fiscal year. It in fact gives an honest and very clear answer as to how many dollars were actually expended in one fiscal year as opposed to simply, for example, buying a battleship in one year and putting all of the costs in that year and then not attributing it.

Mr. Smith can talk extensively about accrual accounting, more than I care to remember from time to time.

[Translation]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** I know what accrual accounting is. I want to know whether you have set a time for implementation.

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Yes.

[Translation]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Do you have an implementation plan.

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Yes.

[Translation]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** When will we be able to have it?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I should have been clear. That's what I was asking Mr. Smith to address.

**Mr. Alister Smith (Assistant Secretary, Expenditure Management Sector, Treasury Board Secretariat):** Thank you for the question.

We have engaged in a pilot project for the reports on priorities and planning to bring in full accrual statements over time. Those will mirror what we do now with the departmental performance reports. So in the next few years we will be able to look at both accrual statements at the beginning of the year and accrual statements at the end of the year for departments.

In addition, as you know, public accounts and the budget are on accrual, so the only remaining frontier and question is accrual appropriations, which is a much more complicated question and one where there is no international consensus yet. But we are doing our homework on that as well.

• (1555)

[Translation]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Do I still have some time left?

[English]

**The Chair:** You have 20 seconds.

[Translation]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** If you cannot provide me with an answer to my last question today, could you send me a written response? I would like to come back to my colleague's question. An enormous amount of money was spent to promote Canada's economic stimulus plan. You indicated that almost all departments had their own promotional programs. The amounts varied from \$8 million to \$10 million or \$12 million, depending on the department. We have also noted that millions of dollars were added to your own department's budget to promote—

[English]

**The Chair:** Madame Bourgeois, wrap up.

[Translation]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Likewise, at the Privy Council Office, there is an action plan with funding intended to promote the plan.

Could you give me the total cost for promoting the government's Economic Action Plan?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** If my officials don't have that answer with them now, I can look to see whether that information is available and get back to you.

[Translation]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We now go to Monsieur Gourde, for eight minutes.

*Merci.*

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Minister, for being here today. I would also like to thank the witnesses from Treasury Board Secretariat.

Mr. Minister, could you tell me what Treasury Board Secretariat has done over the years to ensure that Parliament has all the information it needs to scrutinize the government's expenses?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I'm going to let some of the officials answer that, but I want to say that it is the constant preoccupation of Treasury Board to ensure that dollars being spent are being spent properly.

One of the largest undertakings that we made was in fact the strategic review that was referred to both in my speech and in one of the questions. In that, essentially we examine one-quarter of the government's so-called discretionary spending each year and ask the departments within that envelope to come and identify for us the 5% lowest-performing programs within their department. Those are then examined by Treasury Board to see whether or not these dollars are still being spent effectively and efficiently and whether they still meet with the priorities of Canada and Canadians.

Simply because a dollar is being spent efficiently on a program doesn't mean the program is still relevant in the 21st century. That's part of the overall responsibilities we have at Treasury Board.

Perhaps I'll allow the secretary or one of the others to respond to that as they see fit.

**Mr. Alister Smith:** Thank you for the question.

We do, of course, keep very close tabs on government spending through the whole estimates process. Through these supplementary estimates and main estimates you see all the requests for new resources.

In addition, as the minister said, we look at the so-called A-base budgets of departments through strategic reviews. We review one-quarter of government spending every year. Over a four-year cycle we will have covered 100% of direct program spending.

Also, through the economic action plan and quarterly reports, there's very close scrutiny, as you can see, of all the initiatives in the economic action plan.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Mr. Minister, budget documents are known to be complex. In recent years, we have seen a number of changes made in order to simplify those documents and make them easier to read and understand.

Could you tell us exactly what changes were made and what other changes you plan on making in the future?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Again, Mr. Smith can answer that.

Thank you for the question.

**Mr. Alister Smith:** Thank you again for the question.

They are complex. We have tried, however, to make them more readable and digestible for members. For example, in these supplementary estimates, we've tagged everything that is a Budget 2009 initiative. You can follow those requests right through the document.

We also grouped together all the horizontal requests. Whenever there is a request for more than one department, we have a listing of all those requests. We also identify all the allocations from Treasury Board central votes—for example, Treasury Board vote 5, or vote 15 with all the compensation adjustments. We lay those out separately so that members can get them in one place.

Most importantly, at the level of department and ministry where they've made a request, we break down the nature of the request. If you look through the summaries here you can see the exact reason for the request and what vote it applies to. We try to break this down to make it a little more digestible for members.

Of course, we would welcome any other suggestions you might have to improve the documents.

• (1600)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** You have two minutes remaining.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Minister, why is Treasury Board Secretariat requesting so much money under vote 15?

[English]

**Ms. Hélène Laurendeau (Assistant Deputy Minister, Compensation and Labour Relations, Treasury Board Secretariat):** We had many collective agreements.

[Translation]

Moreover, a number of decisions were made regarding compensation over the last year or during the forecast period. It is necessary to extend beyond the financial framework and transfer the necessary funding to various departments in order to be able to top up the salaries affected by the entire decision-making process. The transfer of those funds can be found under vote 15.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Thank you.

How did the strategic review of vote 20, as announced in the budget, affect Treasury Board Secretariat's ability to manage and deliver the public service's benefits?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Thank you.

Treasury Board Secretariat reviewed its approach to managing employee and pensioner benefits with a view to increasing cost-effectiveness and enhancing accountability, and as a result of this review, changes were made to reduce the costs of managing and administering benefit programs and to better align benefit programs to employee and pensioner needs. As a result of this review, benefit plans will be aligned with industry standards, they will be more cost-effective, they will be balanced and effective, and they will support, I believe, the renewal of the public service.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Mr. Minister, could you tell us the amount that was needed to establish the recently created office of the chief human resources officer?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Madam Chair, the office of the chief human resources officer, which I had the pleasure of leading when it was first established, was created by merging HRSDC functions with some of the human resources management functions of Treasury Board Secretariat. The consolidation generated cost-effectiveness. The activities are now integrated within Treasury Board Secretariat. We have avoided redundancies and reduced related program spending in order to increase effectiveness and, in so doing, we have recognized the leading role played by deputy ministers in human resources management.

We acknowledged and followed up on the recommendations of the working group of the advisory committee on the public service, which was established by the Prime Minister.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We now go to Mr. Martin for eight minutes.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, I'd like to begin where Madam Hall Findlay left off, or at least ask one supplementary question along those lines.

If the finance minister is correct that 97% of all the stimulus funding has been committed and only 3% hasn't been spoken for, why is there any need to do any additional advertising, much less the \$13 million that Madam Hall Findlay seems to have identified in the supplementary estimates? What are we advertising?

• (1605)

**Hon. Vic Toews:** You'll have to speak to the Minister of Finance as to that need. I believe he can answer that question.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** But the President of the Treasury Board is asking permission of Parliament to spend that money.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** That's correct. But if you want to look at the specific reasons why there should be advertising on any particular program, he'd be in the best position to answer that.

I don't know if my staff has any additional comments to make.



**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** If I may, Madam Chair, only an additional \$5 million has been requested for advertising in the supplementary estimates, and it is for the activities related to the home renovation tax credit program, and that is still going on because that can go on—

**Mr. Pat Martin:** We had you guys in here earlier, your counterparts, on the home renovation tax credit program. How many millions was it? I think they're hanging three million of those door hangers on three million homes. That became an issue. I don't know how much more you could advertise that program with the timeframe running out. There are only a couple of months left for people to avail themselves of that tax credit. They've already carpet bombed Canada with advertising regarding the home tax credit, and it's been very popular and the pickup has been enormous. You do have to wonder why we should approve another \$5 million that may just be blowing the government's horn more than informing Canadians about a program they're already well aware of.

I don't think you're going to comment on that, Minister, so I will leave that.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Ms. d'Auray will.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** If I may, one component of that advertising reminds Canadians to keep their receipts for filing, which is a very important point.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** It's a very expensive point, but that's what those bags are, the three million door hangers. I went and got one. It's an envelope to put your receipts in.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I agree.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Well, it's a dandy idea. I am just wondering whether it is necessary to spend even more money. We're supposed to be tightening our belts here, not having money flying out the door promoting the government more than promoting programs. That's what we're concerned about here, Minister.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I think this is promoting jobs, Mr. Martin, and especially jobs in an area of the economy that you know a lot about, being head of the carpenters' union. I speak to carpenters and people in the home renovation business. They're really excited about this program. There still are people who may not know everything to do about either the details of the program itself or what to do.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** You'd have to be living in a cave, Minister, to have missed the advertising blitz associated with the home renovation tax credit.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Then your dollar has been put to good use so far, and we hope to make sure that everyone, even those living in caves, has more than a cave to live in.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Maybe they could insulate their cave, that's right.

I notice that vote 15, or the bulk of what you have to come to ask for approval for today, is wages. I'm interested in this. Again as a former union leader, I'm glad to see that we're still paying out wage increases, even though we are going into a near-record deficit. We should all be mindful of how the previous Liberal government dealt with their deficit. They froze the wages of the public service for seven years, and then they harvested, if you will, the \$30 billion surplus in the Public Service Pension Plan and put it to paying down

the debt, instead of divvying it up amongst the pensioners—the beneficiaries of the plan, who thought it was money being held for them. The former President of the Treasury Board, Marcel Massé, in his last act as president—I won't use the word “stole”—took that \$30 billion without sharing or any kind of negotiations, such as that maybe it should be 50-50 between employer and employee. They took it all.

I caution you that we are watching very carefully how the government is going to deal with the staggering deficit they have created and will have to deal with, come next year. We certainly hope and we serve notice that we expect the government to find some more creative way than taking it off the backs of their employees or out of the pension benefits from the beneficiaries of the Public Service Pension Plan.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Thank you for those remarks, Mr. Martin. I take my responsibilities very seriously in this role, as does the Minister of Finance. I certainly know what it meant during the 1990s, as a member of a provincial government, to be faced with the cuts in transfers to the provinces in health and education that we faced—in Manitoba specifically, and I know it happened in other provinces.

To date, we have been very careful to ensure that any economic action is not on the backs of the provinces. We've been partners in this, and we want to continue to work in a partnering relationship with the provinces.

● (1610)

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I notice as well that the second-biggest ticket item you have is the \$45.8 million being transferred to the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency for the amalgamation of the agency and the secretariat. Could you explain why this transfer shows up as a request for more money on the estimates at all, if it is simply a reallocation or a transfer of jurisdiction of duties?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Mr. Smith wants to take that question.

**Mr. Alister Smith:** I can answer the first part of the question on the transfers.

We seek approval for transfers as well as for increases in funding in the supplementary estimates. That's why it's listed as a transfer.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** That answers my question.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** It is, strictly speaking, a transfer, because it is the amalgamation of the two organizations. For the funds to be reflected in Treasury Board Secretariat vote 1, operating funds, we have to demonstrate the transfer from CPSA vote 1 to Treasury Board vote 1 as the approval process from a parliamentary appropriations perspective. It is not new money; it literally is a transfer.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I'd ask, then, in the context of this transfer, is there anything changing in the duties or the functions that used to be performed by the agency? Is there anything being sacrificed within this merger?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Madam Chair, there are some changes, and they were pronounced when the organizational changes were made by the Prime Minister in February 2009 and the office of the chief human resources officer was created. I was the first to hold that position, as of March 2.

The main components of the change were to recognize the role of the deputy ministers in managing and being responsible for the management of people in their organizations. As a result, the roles and responsibilities of the new organization were to assist and support deputy ministers in those functions rather than prescribe ways in which things should be done. It's more of an overarching policy direction, if I can put it that way, than a prescription, and that requires a different approach and way of doing things.

**The Chair:** Thank you. I have to give others time.

Madam Coady, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Minister and officials, for being here this afternoon.

I'd like to first turn to the departmental performance report on the estimates regarding the Public Appointments Commission Secretariat. There were moneys allocated for that secretariat. You've made 876 appointments in the last year. I'm wondering whether the secretariat is now fully functional and whether those 876 positions or appointments were vetted through this process.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Yes, that's the function of the PCO, and they can provide that information to you.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** You certainly have an oversight function on this particular secretariat, and I'm sure you have some role or mechanisms or means of knowing whether or not the secretariat is up and functional. It comes under some of your—

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I'm advised that we don't have an overview function in relation to it.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Okay. That's unbelievable, but thank you.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I don't know whether perhaps some of the officials.... If I could be corrected on that, I'd be happy to be corrected.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Madam Chair, no, the Treasury Board Secretariat does not have an oversight function over the Privy Council Office in this particular area or any other area.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Hmm. It's interesting that your task is to ensure that taxpayers are receiving value for their money. I just thought you'd have something to contribute there.

Hearing not, I'll move on to the supplementary estimates and the \$713 million you're looking for in new appropriations.

You talk here about new collective agreements, and of course you note the Expenditure Restraint Act and cite "responsible spending during one of the worst economic crises in living memory". I'm just going to use your words in that particular instance.

Of course, we know that under the Expenditure Restraint Act you reopened a signed collective agreement and basically legislated a wage settlement for the Public Service Alliance of Canada. I wonder

what you think are going to be the impacts. Do you have specific data or analysis that you've done on how these cuts to the Public Service Alliance are going to affect service levels?

• (1615)

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Let me say, first of all, that, as I understand it, there were no cuts in any wages per se. The wages of people earning a certain level of money were not cut.

There were certain agreements that had been entered into in which there was an increase above the 1.5%, and those increases were brought back to that 1.5%. We thought, in view of the tremendous economic recession and the fact that taxpayers in the private sector as well as the public sector were paying for the public sector, with many in the private sector losing their positions—certainly in southern Ontario in the manufacturing areas—that the 1.5% increase was a fair one, in view of the hardships that taxpayers themselves were suffering during this very difficult time.

I've been a public servant for most of my career. I spent some time in the private sector, but as a public servant, one of the things I believe most public servants believe is that their responsibility is to the taxpayer and is to deliver the level of service that the taxpayer requires of them. I don't believe this Expenditure Restraint Act will have a negative impact on the delivery of service by an individual public servant.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** You have no qualms about this whole situation. You've just asked us to approve \$13 million more for approximately 3% additional requirements under the stimulus package, yet you're able to hold back for the RCMP as well as for the Public Service Alliance. I'm pointing out that this is difficult to do when we're looking at this.

I'd like to ask you a second question, and this goes to our public service health care plan. Do the moneys you're appropriating go to all for the pay direct card? You committed to implementation in 2008; we're nearing the end of 2009. I'm wondering where that is. And is it under your appropriations as well?

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Before we leave any false impressions on the record, the Government of Canada, the taxpayer, is spending \$735 million more on collective agreements. So to leave the impression with taxpayers that there is less money going into collective agreements and wages is wrong.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** As you said in your remarks, you had an expenditure restraint act for responsible spending during the crisis—

**The Chair:** Ms. Coady, that's it.

Mr. Minister, you can respond briefly.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** All I would say is that I think this was a very balanced approach to dealing with the public service. My colleague Mr. Martin indicated what the prior government did with the public service in 1995, not to mention what they did to the provinces. We think we've taken a balanced approach.

Do I have any qualms? One always has qualms about dealing with people's livelihood or delivering services. These are difficult decisions, and Canadians expect us to make those difficult decisions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

*Monsieur Nadeau, cinq minutes, s'il vous plaît.*

[Translation]

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

Good afternoon to you, Mr. Minister, and to your colleagues.

There are two issues. First, there is the funding to increase the hiring of students within the public service. We know about the demographic situation, and the fact that the public service is being hit hard. It is not only the case with the federal public service, but also with other public services at provincial and municipal levels. Even in the private sector, head-hunters are actively searching for people to replace those who will be retiring.

We see \$7 million in one place, and \$4 million in another. However, overall, what efforts are currently being made in terms of recruitment? What kind of bridges are built between universities and the public service? What efforts are being made? Where are the funds being spent to recruit young people and create stable positions for them soon after having joined the public service?

•(1620)

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** I think you're asking a very good question. The Government of Canada recognizes that there are a lot of good, young, bright students out there. We want them to be interested in a career in the public service given that so many senior public servants are retiring.

When those senior public servants leave there will be all kinds of pressures on the public service, and we want to be in a position to respond to that. This is an issue that I've raised with my department, and my department is taking measures to ensure that we recruit some of these students on a more timely basis.

Perhaps Ms. d'Auray could respond to that.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Thank you, Minister.

[Translation]

Thank you for the question. In the budget measures, an additional \$20 million has been allocated to accelerate and increase the hiring of students within the public service. Those are the amounts you see here. Some departments may take more because this is an increase that goes beyond the number of students that these departments will normally hire. These amounts are allocated for that purpose.

We have launched several initiatives to facilitate the transition between university and the public service. We recruit on campuses. For instance, this year we held eight job and career fairs in universities. We do this in person and we also do a great deal electronically. We have transition programs, that is, we can have bridging and some programs allow for that. We also have programs with universities and with co-op programs so that students can come and work for us for four months and then bridge in after graduation if they are interested in working in the public service.

We are extremely aware of the situation. We have introduced and continue to introduce a number of measures to address this problem. As the minister has indicated, this is an issue that is a great concern to us. We want to ensure continuity in recruitment in order to take

into account those very demographic pressures that affect the public service, like all other sectors of activity.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Given that so many public servants will be retiring soon, is there any economy of scale when it comes to salaries that would enable us to have a larger number of recruits in the public service? In other words, when someone retires, they are theoretically at the top of the salary scale whereas a new recruit starts at a lower salary. Is this economy of scale dedicated to recruitment or is it allocated elsewhere in the budget?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Thank you.

Ms. Laurendeau.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laurendeau:** Yes, there is some marginal saving there, but it really is marginal when you look at the figures. Since this is a system based on positions, we calculate an average per-employee cost. So since there are more senior employees leaving their position and being replaced by younger ones, the savings at any point in time, so to speak, are not captured in real terms, since we operate on average salaries between the minimum and the maximum.

In reality, you are right, there is a marginal saving there, but it remains in the operating funds since our estimates are based on averages.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you. *Merci.*

Mr. Holder, you will be our last questioner.

**Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC):** I appreciate that you've saved the best for last, Madam Chair. Thank you. I'd also like to thank our guests for attending today.

In our most recent meeting, the procurement ombudsman stated that we parliamentarians don't always acknowledge the hard work of our public service. He stressed that, and I agree with him that the work of the public service is significant. I'd ask you officials to take back to your staff this committee's appreciation for the work you all do. I know I can speak for all members.

I was pleased to hear Mr. Martin, whom I'm growing quite fond of, acknowledging the success of the home renovation tax program. I was delighted to see that.

I wanted to clarify one thing. You suggested that there might be a couple of months left, Mr. Martin. Is it not considered spending until the end of February 2010? Am I wrong on that?

•(1625)

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** That's correct.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** So in fact—

**Hon. Vic Toews:** All winter.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** So spending goes right through until the end of February. This is key. I thought I heard you say, Ms. d'Auray, that people will then say to folks that they have to submit and that they shouldn't forget to do it. I think that's important.

I'm new to this committee, and I'm particularly interested in this whole process of strategic review. This is the third year of our four-year review. When this is done—presumably next year is the fourth year of our four-year review—will it happen again? Is the intention that we do this all over again? Is it an ongoing process to take a quarter of these various departmental programs and review them?

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Absolutely, Mr. Holder. It's not simply the \$100 billion that we will be reviewing over the four years—the one coming up and the one that we're now in.

We believe this is something that should occur on an ongoing basis, whether the economy is strong or not. This is important to assure Canadians that their tax dollars are being used appropriately and that the programs the Government of Canada administers on their behalf are still aligned with their priorities. It is important for this to be done on an ongoing basis.

In the course of these strategic reviews, I hear over and over again from departments that this has been a good exercise in re-examining what they do on behalf of the people of Canada. I have found the response to be positive. Public servants, like any other Canadians, want to ensure that the government is getting the best value for its dollar. I see this as a permanent, ongoing function that will produce not only tax savings but also better programs aligned to the changing priorities of Canadians.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** So in this spirit of continuous improvement, which is what I've heard you say, while you review, if I've understood, the 5% of the lowest performing programs, that has some broader impact among all departments, not just those bottom 5%, as I call them.

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Absolutely. Departments understand that while certain departments may be on the agenda in terms of those strategic reviews in any one given year, they are already looking at their own budgets to make sure they are ready for when strategic review comes to examine their books and their programs. So it's been very, very positive.

What I'm finding is that departments are making changes even before they come into strategic review, and that is a very encouraging sign, that the public servants themselves recognize the need to do this without being told on a top-down basis.

**The Chair:** Very brief.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** As I thank our guests for attending, I have just a last question tied into strategic review. How do you define the lowest performing programs so that you can take those and assess them? How is that determined by a department?

**Hon. Vic Toews:** It's not so much how I define it as how the departments define it. But there are certain criteria. For example, it includes why a program was initially established and if that purpose is still relevant in today's economy and today's society.

If we are assured that this is a program that still meets the goals of Canadian society, then we ask if we are spending the dollars effectively. So we look at these various criteria, and if it doesn't meet the goals of Canadians, if we're not doing it effectively, the departments then come to the conclusion themselves that this particular program is not working particularly well. They therefore bring it forward to strategic review. Treasury Board can then look at

it to see whether that money should be reallocated inside the department, whether it should go back to general revenue or what other action should be taken in that respect. So it's a very encouraging and productive process.

• (1630)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Madam Coady.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** A point of clarification or order.

I had asked about the pay direct card specifically to the minister and didn't get a response. I guess we ran out of time. I wonder if you could give information to this committee on that particular project.

**The Chair:** Minister, what I would suggest is that we will look at the blues—I think Madame Bourgeois had asked for something and Madam Hall Findlay had asked for something—and send you out a request for the information that is outstanding.

Madam Hall Findlay.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to make sure, though, that when we make the request we do have some timeframe associated with the receipt thereof.

Can I get a commitment from the folks here that there will be an appropriate timeframe? We do rise next week.

**The Chair:** I guess we normally give them a week or two weeks.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** If I may, the minister was referring to information that already exists, so it should be—

**The Chair:** If it exists, if we could have it at the earliest, we will make that request.

Thank you.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here. We will follow with the vote on all the items. If the minister wishes to stay, he can stay while we vote for it.

We will suspend for a minute.

• \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_  
•

**The Chair:** We will now resume with the votes.

CANADIAN HERITAGE  
Public Service Commission  
Vote 95b—Program expenditures.....\$15,188

(Vote 95b agreed to on division)

GOVERNOR GENERAL  
Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$36,525

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

PRIVY COUNCIL  
Department  
Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$17,170,875

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES  
Vote 1b—Operating expenditures.....\$152,616,855  
Vote 5b—Capital expenditures.....\$15,438,934

Vote 7b—Government Telecommunications and Informatics Common Services  
Revolving Fund.....\$1

**The Chair:** Vote 7b is a \$1 amount and it is just to give the authority.

(Votes 1b, 5b and 7b agreed to)

TREASURY BOARD

Secretariat

Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$1

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Again, this is the authority to utilize, so it's \$1, not \$713 million.

(Vote 1b agreed to)

**Mr. Pat Martin:** It's a big difference.

**The Chair:** It's a difference.

TREASURY BOARD

Secretariat

Vote 15b—Compensation Adjustments.....\$713,291,362

(Vote 15b agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** Shall the chair report the supplementary estimates (B) 2009-2010 to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Now we go to committee business, and we have the motion—

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I would like to move it.

**The Chair:** Madam Hall Findlay, the floor is yours.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to move the motion. Do committee members require me to read it out loud? Everyone has a copy of it.

**The Chair:** If you wish. *Expliquez.*

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I can explain it. There is already a bit of an explanation in the preamble. There are contribution agreements between the provinces and the municipalities under which the municipalities are required to provide a report about the jobs created by the Stimulus Fund every quarter. All the agreements are part of a broader agreement between the Government of Canada and the provinces.

I have a copy here. I can explain it further. Every three months, the municipalities must provide a report specifically about the number of jobs created. We ask for that information. The Government of Canada can receive that information. We request information about the jobs being created. We have not received anything up until now. That is why we are introducing this motion.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Given the numerous questions raised by Ms. Findlay in her motion, and given that we will be hearing from the deputy minister, Mr. John Foster, later on, the deputy ministers may be able to respond to Ms. Hall Findlay's concerns.

If you have other questions later that, you could present your motion later. You may get all the information you need.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** The problem is that they are coming here at 5:10 p.m. and will only be staying until 5:30 p.m. I do not know whether or not we will have enough time. In all honesty, I would prefer that we go ahead and vote on my motion first. If they provide us with information later on and this information turns out to be the information I am asking for in the motion, so much the better. Otherwise, I would prefer that we vote on my motion first.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** I would prefer to vote on the motion later, because it would be more appropriate.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Madame Bourgeois.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Personally, I have no objection to this motion, provided that it respects Quebec's jurisdiction.

In Quebec, unlike the rest of Canada, municipalities are the creatures of the Government of Quebec. Agreements are made between the Government of Quebec and its municipalities.

Ms. Hall Findlay, would you agree to an addition to the motion? We would add that this must be done in keeping with Quebec's jurisdiction.

I will vote in favour of this motion, providing that we specify that you are just curious that it must respect Quebec's jurisdiction.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Absolutely, Ms. Bourgeois, I just want to ensure that there is some equality...

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Ms. Findlay, it is not true that Quebec is equal to the rest of Canada.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I am simply asking if it would be appropriate to change the motion by adding « respecting the jurisdictions of the provinces ».

**Mr. Richard Nadeau:** Yes.

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Yes, that would suit me. We could insert that phrase somewhere, so that...

Madam Chair, do you understand? You seem to have some questions.

[*English*]

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** We're just saying that somewhere in the motion we could add that Infrastructure Canada be ordered to provide the committee all of the above, respecting the jurisdictions of the provinces.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** That is good.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** That's "all of the above, respecting the jurisdictions of the provinces."

[Translation]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Let me explain, Madam Chair. The Government of Quebec receives money from the federal government. The Government of Quebec then redistributes this money according to requests from the municipalities. I believe in some provinces, the Government of Canada can transfer this money directly to some municipalities. I simply want to ensure that Quebec's jurisdiction is respected.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I want to ensure that all provincial jurisdictions are respected.

[English]

**The Chair:** Can I just ask a question for clarification?

This is what I understand and why I'm getting a little concerned.

The federal government is a partner with the province. The province has the fiduciary responsibility to get the money out to the municipalities. The province is acting as a fiduciary agent for the federal government.

Are you telling me—and if I'm not hearing it right, tell me—that in some instances the federal government gives money directly to municipalities in other provinces?

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** It does in some.

**The Chair:** It does?

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** There are differences province to province.

**The Chair:** So that's what I'm hearing. Fair enough.

There were two hands up.

Mr. Brown and Mr. Holder.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My concern with the motion—although I think it's obviously helpful to have more information—is that I'm not sure you can set deadlines for when you can order the provinces and municipalities to provide you that job information.

I remember when I was on municipal council for five years in Barrie, we dealt with the province. If we pass this motion, the municipalities may or may not provide that information. I think we need to be respectful of the jurisdictions that exist in this country. I think this motion may fall a little bit to the wayside in that manner.

**The Chair:** Madam Findlay.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Mr. Brown raises a point, and a legitimate one, of wanting to make sure this is information that is in fact available. We can't ask for information that's not available, but I will point out that in the contribution agreements between the provinces and municipalities there is a specific requirement, section 6.2, which specifically talks about an expenditure and job creation report, schedule H, which includes the Government of Canada logo as well as, in this case, the Province of Ontario logo. It specifically requires that there be information on job creation provided on a particular timeframe to the provinces, which is information the Government of Canada is entitled to.

If you look at the motion, it specifically says:

a copy of all of the quarterly Expenditure and Job Creation Reports

—language taken directly from the contribution agreement—

that such department is entitled to receive or has received as of the date hereof, and (ii) by the third calendar day after the date upon which each of the forthcoming quarterly Expenditure and Job Creation Reports is to be submitted to the Government of Canada and/or the government of a province or a territory

This is part of a requirement that has already been placed on the municipalities. There is a timeframe according to them, and the Government of Canada and we as a committee are entitled to have that information.

I would volunteer that, given that this information is required, if it does not become available, it's a different question. If it does become available, I would question why we would be denied that.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** Mr. Holder, you had a question.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

I have a couple of points. I'm trying to understand the motion in its entirety.

A department may be entitled to receive certain information, but this seems to compel them to report information if they're entitled to receive, and it seems to me they're compelled to report even if they don't receive. I am confused by that, because if they don't have it, how can they report it?

**The Chair:** Yes, Madam Hall Findlay.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Help me to understand that, please.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** One of our concerns is that we had departmental officials just the other day actually say they are not tracking job numbers. That had us very concerned, because in fact the Government of Canada is entitled to receive these reports. If they are not received, then we would expect that the jurisdiction, whether it's the province at the time or the government, in fact insist on receiving something they are legally obliged to.

We are concerned that if this is not insisted upon...if we have departmental officials who are not apparently following job creation reports, we would want to make sure that they do.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Can I just carry on? I'm really trying to understand this.

**The Chair:** Sure.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** If I have something to give you and I'm compelled to give it to you, I'll give it to you if I've got it, but if I don't have it, for whatever reason, this seems to say I have to give it to you anyway, even if I don't have it.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** It's actually putting a positive obligation on the governmental levels to get the information they're entitled to, because we are also entitled to see that information, and if it's not being followed up on, we want to make sure that it is followed up on.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** On the entitlement basis—

**The Chair:** May I help you?

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Let me ask the question and then you can help me.

**The Chair:** This is the accountant in me trying to figure out what it is we're really doing.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** But you see, here's the other implication, I suppose, in terms of it following its logical solution or conclusion. That is, if for some reason there is an entitlement but it's not fulfilled, then that, by its nature, implies a penalty, and I don't know what that penalty is—

**The Chair:** Is there a penalty?

**Mr. Ed Holder:** It's implicit in the negative. I'm not trying to get weird on this, but it just strikes me that we're saying you have to give it to us, but if you don't have it to give to us, then somehow there has to be some retribution, I would presume, if the party doesn't comply. I know you're trying to put a positive spin on it, but all of a sudden that becomes a negative because they say, what if we don't have the information, or for whatever reason it may not be there? I'm really trying to get my head around what you're trying to accomplish with that.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Mr. Holder, can I—

**The Chair:** Can the clerk help out to clarify the power of who has the right to receive documents and who can enforce? I'll let the clerk explain.

[Translation]

You can provide your explanations in French or English.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard):** Madam Chair, I was simply saying that the power of committees to order the production of documents generally applies to cases where the documents are already in existence. In this particular case, the motion is referring to documents that will be coming, which will eventually be produced. So, it is a little bit...

• (1650)

[English]

**Mr. Ed Holder:** It was kind of cut off. What was the last part?

**The Clerk:** I'm still trying to find the right words. It's a bit of a stretch, you know, compelling production of documents that would be produced in the future.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I'll volunteer a solution, if I can.

We are concerned about the government making sure it requests the information it's entitled to, because we're entitled to that, and we're at the mercy of the government to make sure it follows up.

I have to look at the language, and we can work on that, but just in principle, Mr. Holder, if there is a possibility to say that if the document the government is entitled to has not been received according to the timeframe in which it was supposed to be delivered, it would then provide us with that information and say why not.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Madam Chair, through you, if I may, it seems to me there's some wordsmithing around what Ms. Hall Findlay is talking about. It ties into what Madame Bourgeois has said, that she's looking for some specific clarity around Quebec. I'm not sure I have my head around that either as yet. It seems to me there are a lot of well-intended pieces to this.

Could I ask that this come back in another form that's tighter and cleaner so that I can understand it, please? I'm not trying to be obstructionist, but it would be useful for us to have this correct. I refer back to the clerk's comments.

Madam Chair, what are your thoughts on that?

**The Chair:** If you don't mind, Mr. Brown and Mr. Anders, I'm just going to let Madam Hall Findlay know what he has indicated regarding documentation and how you cannot receive documents that do not exist. We'll need to be careful of number two. We have to go back to what the original agreements were and what schedule H said. Was schedule H signed by all provinces with all municipalities? If that's the case, then we need to figure out whether they were given a deadline.

I think it all comes back to the creation of jobs, which was put in the advertising. I think Madam Hall Findlay has concerns about that. If jobs were created or were supposed to be created, the municipalities were supposed to track it. If they didn't track it, and provinces may allow municipalities to track or they may not—

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** No.

**The Chair:** Am I wrong?

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** It's a positive obligation, Madam Chair. It is a legal agreement and it is a positive obligation. There is an agency relationship between the provinces and the Government of Canada with regard to this agreement. The Government of Canada is entitled to receive the information that the municipalities are obliged to provide on a regular basis.

**The Chair:** It's entitled to it, but what happens if it does not receive it? Then what?

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** That is why I was going to suggest some minor changes to the language to refer to information "received by the government, but if not received by the government according to its entitlements, then information provided to explain why".

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Madam Chair, may I suggest—

**The Chair:** I'll have to ask Mr. Brown and Mr. Anders if you can take over their time.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Could I just finish very quickly, to extend my logic on this?

I think we're all trying to do the right thing here in trying to get information that's appropriate and meaningful, but I come back to the clerk's comment about trying to do something that doesn't exist as yet.

Ms. Hall Findlay can come back and address some of the concerns, not just from Madame Bourgeois, but also some of the things we've expressed, because I think it's more important to do it right than to do it quickly. That would be my comment to you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Brown.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Similar to what Mr. Holder was saying, I think maybe the happy medium would be to take out the date. I think by putting a date in, you're ordering the provinces to provide information. There's nothing in the agreements, from what I've heard, that says the federal government can order the provinces to provide information by an arbitrary date.

Ms. Hall Findlay has picked December 8. Can that information be provided that quickly from the provinces? Have they made that request to the municipalities? Have job creation numbers flowed from all municipalities in each province? I understand that the agreement with each province is different. December 8 is an arbitrary date.

Maybe the motion will be more successful and less demanding of the provinces, given that there are various different agreements, if you just remove the date. It would be more reasonable, and hopefully the information can flow when it's reasonable to flow.

• (1655)

**The Chair:** I am going to take a few comments from Mr. Anders and Mr. Martin. Then, Madam Hall Findlay, you can respond to specific questions Mr. Brown has raised regarding December 8, 2009.

Mr. Anders.

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC):** You know, sometimes I sit around here and wonder where this is all going, and I'm just going to pose it in a bit of a macro question to my colleagues. Let's assume we're thinking about the ballot question for the next federal election. If indeed the official opposition wants to make this economy the ballot question of the next federal election, being that Canada is in the best position of the G-7, I don't think that necessarily is the wisest course of action for the Liberal Party of Canada.

Let's look at what they've done. Originally, last year, they asked for a stimulus report, and they wanted to have quarterly stimulus reports. Then, of course, our government generated all sorts of advertising to report on the stimulus package and the job creation package, and then, of course, the official opposition realized they didn't like that so much because actually it was getting out our success relative to the other G-7 economies and how Canada was doing. Then they complained about the money in the advertising and they thought it was too much.

So now we have the official opposition, the Liberal Party of Canada, asking for job creation reports. So now they're going to beg the question about whether or not the Government of Canada should go ahead and take a lot of money to advertise to the Canadian public just how many jobs have been created and how well Canada's doing relative to other G-7 countries.

Sometimes I think the official opposition has to think *very* carefully over what they're doing and why.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Martin, and then Ms. Coady.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I think we're making this way more complicated than it is, maybe partly because it's written in quite a complicated way. It's real legalese. All it's asking is that whatever job creation reports the government has been given to our committee by the eighth of this month, and if future reports come in, within three days of their coming into the government, they be given to this committee. Nobody's asking the provinces to do anything; nobody's asking the municipalities to do anything, because that would be beyond our jurisdiction.

I think Madam Hall Findlay has done us all a great service by carefully reading the contribution agreements and seeing that there are mandatory reports right in the contribution agreements, so therefore the federal government is getting or should be getting job creation reports, and we are entitled to that information. I think we should vote on that. I don't think we should debate it any further, and we'll see if we agree.

**The Chair:** Are you calling the question?

**Mr. Pat Martin:** I can't call the question, I don't believe. I would if I could.

**The Chair:** No. I have Mr. Mayes, and then Madame Coady and Mr. Holder.

Mr. Holder, just on what Mr. Martin has said, I had a review of schedule H. It is a requirement: as part of the Government of Canada's agreements, schedule H has to be filled out quarterly. It is an agreement. So if it is an agreement, Infrastructure Canada should be collecting the information or is collecting the information. All we are asking, very simply—maybe the language was a little complicated—is to give it to us because you have it, you have the job creation, and that's the only thing.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Madam Chair, all I was asking you before, and maybe I should have asked you to rule on this component, if I might—and not to be rude about it. And even to Mr. Martin's comment, it felt complicated to me as well, and there were questions. I was just trying to simplify it; that's all I was trying to do.

**The Chair:** Fair enough.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** On the dates thing, to get to the clerk's point, trying to compel someone, a group, to do something on this committee's generated timeline, this may not be consistent with whatever agreements the provinces and the feds have done—that's all. I'm not trying to be obnoxious; I'm just trying to understand it better.

**The Chair:** Mr. Mayes.

**Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Actually, Madam Chair—

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Madam Chair, may I respond to that?

**The Chair:** Sure, you can respond.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Can I actually call or move to have the motion voted on?

**The Chair:** No, according to—

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I have a friendly amendment from Madame Bourgeois. My understanding is that we can just call the question.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** You can't call the question. Only the chair can call the question.

Madam Chair—

**The Chair:** I'm just going by procedural issues.

Mr. Mayes.



• (1700)

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** Madam Chair, the committee I normally sit on, and I was there yesterday, is the committee on transportation, infrastructure and communities, and this same question came up at that committee. It was brought forward by Gerard Kennedy. The fact is that schedule H is an agreement between the municipalities and the provinces. There is no mandatory reporting between the provinces and the Government of Canada in the contribution agreements. There is no direct request or implied reporting of job creation in the contribution agreements with the provinces. That's exactly what the ministry reported yesterday.

There seems to be an assumption, and I'd like to know where the wording is that actually says the provinces shall report to the Government of Canada. I'd like to hear that exact—

**The Chair:** Mr. Mayes, the problem, the confusion, arises because there is a schedule H attached.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** A schedule H is between the municipalities and the provinces. As I understand, it doesn't imply—

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, they have the Government of Canada logo on it.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** —that the reporting be given to the Government of Canada.

**The Chair:** They have the Government of Canada logo on it, and that's confusing everybody. That's the problem.

Madam Coady—

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** I would say just one thing on the logo.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** The Government of Ontario put that on their agreements without asking the Government of Canada. It was a mistake by the Ontario government, and that has been confirmed by the minister, so just because the logo is there—

**The Chair:** Who was that?

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** That was Minister Baird, at the committee I sit on. That exact question was asked of the minister yesterday. The logo was put on that document by the Government of Ontario without the permission of the Government of Canada and the ministry.

Madam Hall Findlay thinks because the logo is there it is implied that—

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** It's more than that.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** Well then find the words that say the province has to do mandatory reporting to the Government of Canada. They are not there.

**The Chair:** Madam Hall Findlay.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Mayes, for that information. I expect the minister is going to try to say the same thing to us, or at least have departmental officials say that.

The contribution agreement specifically says in the preamble—and I say this after some 25 years of practising law—that this agreement defines the terms and conditions of a financial

contribution from the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to assist with projects. There is an overarching agreement between the Government of Canada and the provinces. I would be very interested to know whether that particular agreement in fact permits the provinces not to disclose this information. Because of the laws of agency and the laws applicable to incorporating documents by reference and parties by reference, there is absolutely, in my view, an entitlement on behalf of the Government of Canada to obtain the job creation reports, and I will also say that it is the Government of Canada that is spending millions of dollars advertising that it apparently is creating jobs and has no information to substantiate that.

I will also add that it was very troubling that departmental officials volunteered that they weren't tracking jobs.

I would then ask if there is anyone who can tell me, based on all of this legal analysis, that the Government of Canada is not entitled to see those job reports. Why on earth are they not? On what basis do they have the gall to actually claim any job creation numbers?

I would actually ask the members opposite. I have offered some language to address the concern about information that has not been received. The last quarterly report under the contribution agreement was supposed to have been provided by the middle of last month, so to comply with the December 8 date should absolutely be possible.

I would ask that we look at those amendments, because they make it much simpler to address the concerns of my colleague Mr. Holder.

I would ask that, Madam Chair, you read out those changes and that we vote on the motion.

**The Chair:** I have Madam Coady who wishes to speak.

Madam Coady, then Mr. Holder.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** As a member of Parliament, I have a fiduciary and actually a legal responsibility to review this information. The Government of Canada has made this part of their stimulus package. It is incumbent upon me to review this.

Having said that, in appreciation of what's been said here today, I sit on the industry, science and technology committee. We had ACOA come before our committee. ACOA is responsible for the stimulus money in Atlantic Canada, and they did have the job numbers.

There are job numbers available. They are available. I think Mr. Martin may be correct. It may be a bit complex in terms of language, but certainly the intent is to ask for what information they have and if they could table it for us to review. That's the intent of the motion, if they're available.

• (1705)

**The Chair:** Mr. Mayes.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** Can I just read the exact answer that we received in our committee yesterday?

To be very clear, the Canada-Ontario infrastructure stimulus agreement does not have a schedule H.

Okay. It does not have a schedule H.

We do not collect the job level information. The schedule H the honourable member is referring to is in the Ontario and municipalities agreement. The federal government is not a signatory to that particular agreement

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I'll answer that very question by reading from the contribution agreement. It incorporates a reference to the Government of Canada assistance.

The really big question here is what on earth this government is trying to hide. If it does not have a positive obligation to get those job numbers, and it knows they exist and it is in fact entitled to them, why on earth is this government not getting those job numbers? As my colleague just said, apparently the government is getting job numbers.

It is our right and our duty as parliamentarians to hold this government to account, and in terms of announcements and claims being made, we need to know on what basis those claims are being made. To date we have no answer, and every time there is an attempt to block this information, more and more flags go up.

**The Chair:** Committee members, we all know our responsibilities. Whenever money is spent and the government decides it wishes to create jobs, etc., we wish to know. That's our job as members of this committee.

Madam Hall Findlay has made changes, which I will read, and then I'll ask you to reflect on it. Basically all we are asking is that if you have the information, provide it to us. We're not making any other request. We're not putting out any onerous request. We're not asking them to create numbers for us.

If we could calm down and listen to it very carefully—there's legalese in here, but we can try to simplify it.

Yes, Mr. Mayes.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** The request is unrealistic. If there isn't an obligation for the province to report to the federal government and all of a sudden we're asking for something when they haven't had an opportunity to gather that information, it's unrealistic to have it by December 8, as the motion says. It's absolutely not realistic.

**The Chair:** Madam Coady just said that they received that information in the industry committee.

It's getting very confusing. Somebody has information and somebody has to pass this information...or collate the information if it's part of a collection.

I will read the changes. It reads:

That Infrastructure Canada, or such other department of the Government of Canada as may be appropriate, be ordered to provide the Committee (i) by December 8, 2009, a copy of all of the quarterly Expenditure and Job Creation Reports that such department has received by the date thereof, and (ii) by the third calendar day after the date upon which each of the forthcoming quarterly Expenditure and Job Creation Reports is received by the government of Canada, a copy of each of these Reports; all of the above, respecting the jurisdictions of the provinces and territories.

The simple thing is that we're looking for job information that they have received.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Madam Chair, I don't see this as government trying to hide information.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** It was received.

With respect, we actually address the problem. If you don't—

**Mr. Ed Holder:** I thought I was talking, Madam Chair.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** If the government is not entitled to it and it hasn't received it, you don't provide it.

• (1710)

**Mr. Ed Holder:** This is my turn. Please—

**The Chair:** Madam Hall Findlay...

Okay, Mr. Holder.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** The point I am the most challenged by is the reference to this Monday. Most parliamentarians won't be here tomorrow. We're talking about Monday to have this information in hand.

Patrick Brown is not here; he had to slip away. He said he would be much more comfortable with this without the assignation of a date. I think you're putting an unrealistic date on there.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** It only refers to information that has already been received. It's a photocopy.

**The Chair:** Mr. Holder, can I ask a question?

**Mr. Ed Holder:** If it was going to a file—

**The Chair:** Can I ask a question?

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Yes, please.

**The Chair:** If the December 8 date were removed, would you vote in favour of this motion?

**Mr. Ed Holder:** If the December 8 date were removed, I wouldn't vote against it.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I'm sorry, but I'm insisting on December 8, and I would like to have the motion voted on.

**The Chair:** I have the witnesses here. What would you like to do?

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I would call the vote. Can we please vote on the motion as amended?

**The Chair:** Okay, is this clear for everyone?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

(Motion as amended agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** I now invite Madam Baltacioglu and Mr. Forster to come before the committee.

I'll give you a breather so you can settle down. We will start immediately with a round of questions, because I don't think there'll be any opening remarks.

You have five minutes maximum because of the time, or we'll have to bring you back again on Tuesday.

Do you have text for the translation?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu (Deputy Minister, Office of the Deputy Head, Infrastructure Canada):** No.

Good afternoon, Madam Chairman, and hello, members of the committee. We're very pleased to visit you again this week.

My colleague John Forster has some quick remarks basically relating to the questions the committee asked. We understand you have questions about the comments we made when we appeared last week. They're on job numbers and what we at Infrastructure track and don't track. I understand there was an issue around schedule H of a contribution agreement between Ontario and the municipalities and you would like some clarity.

Mr. Forster will quickly give you a sense of our elaborations on the issue. Then we'll be very happy to answer your questions.

**The Chair:** Mr. Forster.

**Mr. John Forster (Associate Deputy Minister, Associate Deputy Minister's Office, Infrastructure Canada):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

As the deputy said, we understand you had some additional questions regarding the kind of job creation information that's being collected through agreements under the infrastructure stimulus fund. Last week, in response to a question at this committee, we indicated that we did not collect such information on a project-by-project basis in each of the quarterly reports that we get from provinces and territories and other partners.

I believe the committee was seeking clarification of our comments in light of the fact that an annex, schedule H, to be specific, for an infrastructure stimulus fund agreement in Ontario was posted on the Internet that asked for job estimates from municipalities in Ontario. We just wanted to clarify for you how the program is run and what we do in that regard.

The schedule H that was posted and has been referred to is taken from an infrastructure stimulus fund contribution agreement between the Province of Ontario and its municipalities. The federal government is not a signatory to this agreement. Our agreement is between ourselves and the province. The Province of Ontario is then responsible to sign agreements with its municipalities to flow both the federal and provincial funding.

In our contribution agreement with the Province of Ontario on the infrastructure stimulus fund we do require a quarterly update on the status and progress of projects and money spent and how projects are proceeding. We do not require provinces to provide job creation estimates on a project-by-project basis.

Infrastructure Canada has not received any information in this regard from the Province of Ontario under the infrastructure stimulus fund, and I'm not sure to what degree they've collected it themselves from the municipalities. This was something they wanted to do in their agreements with the cities.

Finally, as we indicated to the committee last week, for the economic action plan the Department of Finance is responsible for conducting the economic analysis and the impact on employment across all of the economic action plan measures, infrastructure, or any other measures in the plan. This information is done by the Department of Finance and is summarized and provided in the progress reports provided to Parliament.

I would say, however, just so we're perfectly accurate, that we do, on an anecdotal example basis, when we're preparing profiles of specific projects under way for our website or communications

purposes, ask the proponent for estimates of jobs. This is done for a few examples of projects to illustrate the kinds of things the stimulus fund is doing.

The deputy and I provided the same information yesterday to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

We're happy to answer any questions.

• (1715)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

In light of a very short and tight time—we'll have to close at 5:30—I would request that we keep our questions to five minutes, to clarify, and if there is a need for both deputies to come back, then that's the committee's wish.

Madam Hall Findlay.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** We had asked for the two of you to come back. Thank you very much. Obviously, in 15 minutes that's not enough for what we had hoped to do, so I would like to request right off the bat that we ask you to come back.

First off, you have referred to the agreement between the federal government and the provinces. Can we have a copy of that?

**Mr. John Forster:** Yes, certainly.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** When can we have a copy of that, please?

**Mr. John Forster:** We can probably send it to the clerk tomorrow.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I'm assuming they are different for each of the provinces and territories.

**Mr. John Forster:** They're fairly similar; it's a template agreement.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** Did we confirm when? Tomorrow?

**The Chair:** Tomorrow they will send it to the chair—

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** We will send you the template, not the signature version.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** We'll use that. Thank you.

First, I'm astounded that the federal government does not ask for job reports, whereas the provinces apparently are much more on the ball and have insisted on job reports. Given that it is this federal government that is doing all the advertising about all the jobs that have been created, it is simply not enough for us, in doing our jobs, to rely, as you've admitted, on anecdotal numbers based on estimates. We're not interested in estimates anymore. We're not interested in announcements. We're interested in numbers.

When you talk about the federal government requiring quarterly updates and progress reports, with all due respect, the reason we agreed with the budget, because it included the stimulus measures, was to create jobs. We had the federal government promise at two different times 190,000 and 210,000 jobs. We want to know whether in fact the stimulus fund effort has been creating jobs as promised and as we expected when we approved this.

After 20 years of practising law, if I were advising the Government of Canada—and by reference, it refers to the Government of Canada's monetary assistance—I would say that to the extent the provinces under this agreement are entitled to progress reports that show jobs created, the federal government is absolutely entitled to see those numbers that are provided to the provinces under this agreement. I would ask that you do in fact ask the provinces for that information.

Is that something you're prepared to do?

• (1720)

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** Thank you very much for the statement as well as the question.

The only province we have seen that has a schedule along the lines you have pointed to, so far as we know, is Ontario. We did check with other provinces. Some provinces collect the job numbers; some provinces don't. There is no consistent job collection annex regarding the infrastructure stimulus fund. We can definitely check around and have a thorough conversation with all our provincial colleagues to see what they are collecting or what they choose to collect in their agreements.

However, I have to stress that this agreement you're referring to is an agreement of the Government of Ontario. The two ministers' signatures are on it, and the municipalities' signatures are on it. It is not an agreement we are part of. Our agreement is with—

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** But I will say again—

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** If I can—

**The Chair:** There is a point of order.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** This question actually would be better answered by the Department of Finance, because they're the ones that set out the reports that have the figures.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. That's not a point of order. You're bringing an argument.

Go ahead, Madam Hall Findlay.

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay:** I'm completely entitled to ask these questions.

I understand that this agreement is between the province and the municipality. It specifically refers to defining the terms and conditions of the financial contribution from the Government of Canada as well.

My question is whether you are prepared to ask for the number of jobs.

Second, this government is advertising that it is creating jobs, and it has promised significant jobs. Who is giving the information to whoever is planning the advertising so that they can actually say they're creating jobs?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** Regarding what we can ask from the provinces and what we're entitled to, I appreciate that the honourable member is giving a legal interpretation. Given that it's a cost-share agreement, your assumption is that we are entitled to anything the province asks for from its citizens. I have to check legal opinion from the Government of Canada. Based on that, I could give you an answer.

Second, I'm not exactly sure whether Ontario has received this information. We will definitely be happy to talk to them. However, we are caught in an uncomfortable situation, Madam Chairman. We cannot speak for another order of government. I can answer as to what we can promise to do, but I do not want to promise you things we can't deliver. For example, I don't know what the Government of Quebec is collecting and whether we are entitled to it. This becomes a jurisdictional issue. It's a little beyond, right now, the subject matter.

I am committing to you that we can get a legal opinion, and we will check the status of what our partners are collecting on the infrastructure stimulus fund.

**The Chair:** You'll have to wrap up.

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** It's an important issue, Madam Chairman.

When I talked about the Government of Canada, I was talking about the infrastructure stimulus fund that is administered by Infrastructure Canada. I cannot speak about the regional agencies, as one of the honourable members just said. I'm not exactly sure what they're collecting. I'm sure you can ask them. Overall government job numbers are calculated on a macro basis by the Department of Finance.

The decision was made by the government to not collect them project by project, consistent collection across, for Infrastructure, for obvious reasons. The United States, for example, is having a lot of issues with self-reporting and inaccuracies around that. In addition, direct job impact plus indirect job impact and induced jobs...the economic activity. According to our economists in the Department of Finance, macro models are better indicators. That kind of information is a better indicator than on a project-by-project basis.

I'm explaining what they have said—

**The Chair:** You will have to stop there because I have to get a few people on.

Madame Bourgeois.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** Madam Chair, I have no questions for our witnesses, but I would like to make a comment.

I am stunned. We have a recovery plan that has cost us millions of dollars to promote. Money has been spent on advertising. We are being told that this recovery plan will have created, in total, between 190,000 and 220,000 jobs, but no one can assure us that this is in fact the case. We are working with macro-models. I just do not get it.

This afternoon, I asked Minister Vic Toews how much money had been spent promoting this famous recovery plan, which is also being used to promote the current Conservative government. But he could not give me any figures.

I appreciate your frankness, sir, but I was expecting you to provide us with numbers. Unfortunately, once again our questions remain unanswered. Hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money will have been spent. In my view, this is terrible. I cannot wait to get out of this Canada!

Thank you, Madam Chair.

•(1725)

[English]

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** Madam Chairman, I appeal to you. We can give you what we have. We are not trying to not give you the information. We have provided the information we have to the committee. We do not have the information the committee seems to be requesting of us.

**The Chair:** I appreciate that.

We should come to a close, because there is some committee stuff that I need to discuss with the committee.

I know you're frustrated. We're frustrated. I accept Mr. Mayes' analysis that it is a macro tool. Somehow in the fourth report the infrastructure dollars have gone down. They are all fluctuating. This committee is trying to figure out what it should do with its report so it can give a fair analysis. That's all.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** The point being made here is that we should have the Department of Finance here to determine how they calculated these numbers. It's obvious that the agreement between the provinces did not request those—

**The Chair:** We will have them.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** Do you agree?

**The Chair:** Yes. We can make it job creation numbers and we can call Infrastructure Canada, ACOA, and Finance and figure out what's going on. Perhaps we'll get an answer.

Is that agreed by everybody?

I have one last thing. I received the report that was given to the Parliamentary Budget Officer that was promised by the department. It is unilingual again and the Quebec component is missing.

Will the committee give me the right to distribute it to members?

[Translation]

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois:** No.

[English]

**The Chair:** Fair enough. Then you don't get it.

We will come back to you requesting some clarification—

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** A point of order, Madam Chair. [*Inaudible—Editor*]...this ministry back here when you are already going to find out the information from Finance?

**The Chair:** We will try to call Finance. Tuesday the committee was going to look at reports, but the government has just released its fourth report, and we have to be fair. Nobody is trying to beat down the government. What we are trying to say is that stimulus is important.

We have to do a logical analysis of what has happened so far, so the report cannot be ready. The fourth report has data as of September 22, and more data will be released December 31. So 20 days after December 31 the updates will be given. If we could wait until we come back in January and look at the report in a logical way, that would help.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** It's Finance's report?

**The Chair:** No, our report that is being prepared. But we can call Finance on Tuesday.

Mr. Holder.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have two things.

I'd like to thank our officials for attending—

**The Chair:** I still have to give them some—

**Mr. Ed Holder:** I know you'll give them appropriate direction, but my concern is that we've had them back a couple of times...and I know they are servants of Parliament, to the extent they've been very accommodating, but we'll get them back as often as is appropriate. I think we want to respect their time as well.

**The Chair:** I appreciate that.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** I think we took so much time earlier today on a dialogue that could have been resolved either with some simplicity or some dialogue in advance of both sides having chatted. I can't tell you that, but that seemed to take too much time, and I'm disappointed.

Madam Chair, could I ask that from now on, when there's even modest time left, if there isn't sufficient time for all four parties—because I'm disappointed that Mr. Martin didn't have an opportunity to ask questions, and I must express some disappointment that we didn't as well—that it's either all or none?

•(1730)

**The Chair:** Fair enough.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** So we'll either get two minutes—

**The Chair:** That's why, when they told us they were tied up in other matters and they could only come at 5:10, which is what they did, and then they have opening remarks—5:15—and there's 15 minutes in which we get questions and answers—

**Mr. Ed Holder:** It's either 2 minutes, 30 seconds per, or none, because I don't think it's fair, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Fair enough.

Madam Baltacioglu, you had committed to provide the committee with information. Can we know within what timeframe you will be able to provide it? Can we have it in a couple of days? The agreement is tomorrow, but did you have some job numbers you were supposed to submit?

**Mr. John Forster:** No. We agreed to provide you with a copy of the contribution agreement between Canada and the province, which we can provide you tomorrow.

**The Chair:** We will check the blues, and if anything is remiss, we will let you know.

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** From the last meeting?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** This meeting we promised you we will give you the template for the Canada-Ontario infrastructure framework agreement. I think an honourable member asked for all templates for the provinces, so we promised that.

There might be some outstanding promises we made at the last committee. We're tracking it and getting them. But the biggest request you had was the CD, which we provided to the committee in the deadline you gave us.

**The Chair:** You say you will check to see. You were going to get a legal opinion and you were going to tell us what job numbers you have, if you have any. You will check around the province.

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** We will have to ask for a legal opinion. I can't tell you when I'm going to get this legal opinion.

**The Chair:** Fair enough. We'll send you an e-mail and then let's have it done.

Thank you very much, members of the committee. Thank you to the witnesses.

The meeting is adjourned.

---









**MAIL  POSTE**

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

**Lettermail**

**Poste-lettre**

**1782711  
Ottawa**

*If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:*  
Publishing and Depository Services  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,  
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*  
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt  
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

### **SPEAKER'S PERMISSION**

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and  
Depository Services  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5  
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943  
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757  
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca  
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the  
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

### **PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT**

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les  
Éditions et Services de dépôt  
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5  
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943  
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757  
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca  
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à  
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>