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EVIDENCE

Thursday, November 25, 2010

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Chair

The Honourable John McKay

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•(0845)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): Ladies and gentlemen, I call meeting number 39 of the government operations committee to order.

We have a number of witnesses from Public Works, Treasury Board, and the Privy Council Office.

Before I ask the witnesses to speak, I want committee members to note that we have received a response from the OPP and it was received by the clerk in a timely fashion. It is in translation. I want to canvass the committee as to whether it could be, at this point, distributed in one language only. I can only do that with the consent of the committee, given that there is some time sensitivity with respect to this document. I'm seeking the consent of the committee to have it distributed in one language only at this point. Otherwise, it will be available by the end of the day.

Monsieur Vincent.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ): Unless I am mistaken, it will not be tabled in both official languages.

[English]

The Chair: Yes, it's in English only.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Vincent: I am opposed to its distribution. It has to be tabled in both official languages.

[English]

The Chair: Not seeing permission, we'll not be able to distribute it.

We'll go to the witnesses. I'll call you in the order in which you're listed on the orders of the day, starting with the Department of Public Works and Government Services, Mr. Alex Lakroni.

Mr. Lakroni, your presentation, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Alex Lakroni (Chief Financial Officer, Finance Branch, Department of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Chair, members of the committee, good morning.

My name is Alex Lakroni and I am the Chief Financial Officer at Public Works and Government Services Canada. With me is John McBain, Assistant Deputy Minister of Real Property Branch.

We are pleased to be here today as part of your review of the supplementary estimates (B) that were tabled on November 4.

[English]

Parliament approved the department's 2010-11 main estimates and supplementary estimates (A), which totalled \$3 billion. These supplementary estimates (B) request additional funding of \$153 million, including \$127 million in new funding requests, plus \$26 million in transfers from other government departments. This will result in a total appropriations of \$3.1 billion within PWGSC. This request of \$153 million is for items previously approved by Treasury Board.

I will briefly highlight the key items in order of magnitude.

As committee members know, PWGSC is responsible for, among other things, the accommodation needs of federal employees across Canada. Like last year, the greatest portion of the funds requested—\$88 million—addresses this aspect of the department's mandate, specially for accommodation and real property assets management. It includes non-discretionary expenses in the form of fit-up, maintenance, and temporary accommodation costs stemming from renovations to existing assets, as well as increases in municipal taxes, utility prices, and building maintenance costs.

Another \$14.4 million is needed to address the costs of office accommodations attributable to the renewal or growth of programs government-wide.

PWGSC's industrial security program plays an important role in support of the public safety and security of Canada, as well as contributing to Canada's anti-proliferation and global security priorities. It also supports the Canadian economy by helping Canadian industry prepare and participate in classified contracts domestically and abroad. The \$13.3 million required this year is to modernize and transform our security processes. On two occasions the Auditor General noted that stable funding had not been dedicated to enable PWGSC to meet its objectives.

We are experiencing additional demands for essential translation and interpretation services provided to Parliament. Another \$5.6 million is requested to meet that demand.

There is \$5.1 million being sought for urgent repairs and upgrades to data centre building systems, and to consolidate and modernize information technology. The Auditor General's report of spring 2010 confirmed that without sufficient and timely investments to modernize and replace aging computer systems, the ability of departments and agencies to serve Canadians is at risk.

The Canadian innovation commercialization program announced in budget 2010 aims to promote innovation and support the development of small and medium enterprises in Canada. The program requires \$3.8 million in start-up funding in order to fulfill its mandate of giving Canadian entrepreneurs a chance to grow and prosper. This will be accomplished by testing innovative products and services in the fields of environment, safety and security, and enabling technologies within the federal government before they test the rough waters of the marketplace.

● (0850)

[Translation]

In addition, \$3.7 million in funding is being sought for pre-construction activities associated with rebuilding the Grande Allée Armoury in Quebec City. Finally, the \$26 million in transfers from colleague departments consists of two parts. Fourteen million dollars pertains to funding related to accommodation charges for the Canada Revenue Agency and \$12 million is associated with remediation project work on contaminated sites to be carried out by the department.

[English]

There are other smaller adjustments to the appropriations, and we will be pleased to provide additional details on these if you wish.

Mr. Chair, these represent the key items on which PWGSC is requesting additional funding. We will be happy to answer your questions.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lakroni.

I now turn to the Privy Council Office and Marilyn MacPherson.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilyn MacPherson (Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services Branch, Privy Council Office): Good morning, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to meet with the members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. I am accompanied by Jean-Philippe Caron, Director of Security Operations. My introductory comments pertain to the 2010-2011 supplementary estimates (B) for the Privy Council Office. As we have several distinct items, I will speak to these without further preamble.

PCO is requesting a net amount of \$1.4 million which is comprised of five specific items. The first request in the amount of \$2.9 million is to enhance security to focus exclusively on the highest priority elements directly related to the security of the department, particularly the Langevin Block, which houses the office of the PCO and the Prime Minister's Office.

The purpose of the proposed funding is to upgrade the current security infrastructure relative to the safety and protection of personnel, information and assets.

● (0855)

[English]

The second and third requests, in the amount of \$0.8 million, are for the completion of activities of the commission of inquiry into the investigation of the bombing of Air India Flight 182, which represents \$0.6 million; and the commission of inquiry into certain allegations respecting business and financial dealings between Karlheinz Schreiber and the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, which represents \$0.2 million. The funds have been reprofiled or transferred from 2009-10, since expenses from the production of the final report, which were originally planned and funded for in 2009-10, were deferred to 2010-11. The funding comes from the commission's 2009-10 surpluses.

The fourth item is a permanent budget reduction of \$1.6 million. On the recommendation of the Prime Minister, the Treasury Board approved amendments to the budgets for the offices of ministers and ministers of state, effective April 1, 2010, and for future years. The budgets were reduced accordingly for the President of the Queen's Privy Council and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the leader of the government in the House of Commons, the leader of the government in the Senate, the minister of state for democratic reform, and the minister of state and chief government whip. The total ongoing reduction in PCO's reference levels is \$1.6 million.

[Translation]

The last item is also a budget reduction of \$0.7 million in PCO's reference levels due to measures announced in Budget 2010. In order to control the size and operations of the federal government, departments are not funded for the 2010-2011 salary increases resulting from collective agreements. Since PCO had already received funding for wage and salary increases for 2010-2011 which were included in the 2010-2011 main estimates, Treasury Board has established a frozen allotment to reduce PCO's reference levels.

[English]

In closing, I would like to thank you for giving me this time to inform you of the ongoing initiatives in the 2010-11 supplementary estimates (B). We will be pleased to respond to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. MacPherson.

Our third witness is Christine Walker, from Treasury Board Secretariat. I assume you'll introduce Mr. Trotter.

Ms. Christine Walker (Assistant Secretary and Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Services, Treasury Board Secretariat): Good morning, Mr. Chair.

My name is Christine Walker. I am the assistant secretary of the corporate services sector, and the chief financial officer of the Treasury Board Secretariat.

I have with me today a departmental colleague who will assist in answering questions. Mr. Carl Trottier is the executive director, strategic compensation management, for the compensation and labour relations sector within the office of the chief human resources officer.

[Translation]

We are here today to answer any questions you may have on the supplementary estimates (B) 2010-2011, specifically votes 1 and 15 for the Treasury Board Secretariat.

[English]

Through these supplementary estimates, we are seeking \$138.6 million. The majority of this request is \$137 million to fund departments and agencies for the increased costs associated with signing collective agreements with public servants. These amounts relate to retroactive adjustments prior to the period of April 1, 2010, when the cost containment measures took effect.

Smaller increases are also sought to support the implementation of several programs. These programs, which have been approved by the Treasury Board, include \$1.7 million for the management of the classification program for the core public administration, \$900,000 for Treasury Board's role in the implementation of Canada's cyber security strategy, and \$800,000 for administering the Government of Canada's public service readiness plan.

These estimates also reflect the impact of the budget 2010 cost containment measures.

The secretariat will be absorbing \$1.4 million related to increases governed by compensation agreements with its own personnel.

Another government-wide measure has resulted in a reduction in the amount of \$800,000 for the office of the President of the Treasury Board and minister for the Asia-Pacific gateway.

We would be pleased to address any questions the committee may have on these estimates today and will provide any further detailed information the committee may require to complete its review and analysis.

Thank you.

● (0900)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Walker.

Ms. Coady, you have eight minutes.

[English]

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

We certainly appreciate all of you being here today. This is a very important part of the work we do. Your information, advice, and comments are very much appreciated. Thank you for attending.

I'm going to ask some general questions first. I know that perhaps Treasury Board will be able to answer some of these, and then I'll get into some specific departmental matters.

Total estimates to date are \$266.6 billion, including \$261.6 billion in the main estimates, \$1.9 billion under supplementary estimates (A), and \$3.1 billion under supplementary estimates (B). After adjustments, total budgeted expenditures for 2010-2011 are \$280.5 billion, I believe.

Given that this is a time of fiscal restraint and that the government has promised to cut back on costs and to find savings, you're coming back asking for more funds. Could you address that concern I may have, just in a general sense, that we're looking at trying to be more fiscally prudent and yet are looking for more funds?

Ms. Christine Walker: Thank you for the question.

In my opening remarks I noted that we were here to answer questions on supplementary estimates (B) for the Treasury Board Secretariat votes 1 and 15. This question is outside the scope of votes 1 and 15. The secretary or the associate secretary would be happy to come to this committee and address any questions of that nature.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: We did ask for the minister to be here today. I guess he would have been able to answer that question from a general perspective. Perhaps that's the person we would need to have. I would like to reiterate that I would like to have the minister here.

I'm going to ask the Privy Council some questions specifically on their estimates. In the main estimates of 2009-10, you requested funding from Parliament of \$61 million for the Prime Minister and portfolio ministers for support and advice. It has risen to \$74 million in the main estimates for 2010-11. We've been told that the reason for that is because of the G-8 and G-20 and because of the Olympics and other reasons like that. Now, we don't have those coming up in the next year. So my question, originally to the minister, is why we continue to have this massive increase.

Specifically on supplementary estimates (B), are you asking for any increases for the Prime Minister for support and advice?

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: We are looking for a net amount of \$1.4 million. In that amount, there's \$2.9 million for security. That is for security for the entirety of the organization. So anything we're doing with respect to initiatives covers both the Prime Minister and all of his staff.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Yes, you did point that out in your opening remarks.

I'm specifically asking whether you are increasing any of the amounts for the Prime Minister or portfolio ministers for support and advice. I'm not asking about amounts for security. I'm asking if there are any increases being requested under supplementary estimates (B).

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: No. In fact there is a decrease. The reduction for the ministers' budgets will directly affect program activity one, which is what you were referring to, and that will go down by \$1.6 million as well as by a portion of the salary reduction, which will also be applied to them. I think the total amount will be \$1.7 million that will be reduced from the support to the Prime Minister.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: How many employees work for the Privy Council Office and how many work for the Prime Minister's Office? Can you just tell me the change in the number of employees over the last couple of years?

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: Up until last year the Prime Minister's Office had a budget of 85 FTEs, and last year, as you will recall, we came in to get funding for some chronic pressures. Part of that affected the Prime Minister's Office, and they are now at 114 staff.

With respect to the Privy Council Office, we vary considerably, because we also have commissions of inquiry. We have the Afghanistan task force, so it does fluctuate. On FTEs in 2009-10 we had authority to use 1,068 and we used 1,051, and going into 2010-11 we have authority for 1,040. But that does include the Prime Minister's Office and all of the other time-limited initiatives.

• (0905)

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I note that you've come back asking for \$0.8 million for the completion of activities. Is it normally out of your budget, all the commission activities, for example, the commission of inquiry on Air India as well as the Karlheinz Schreiber and the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney's investigations?

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: That is correct. Under the Inquiries Act, if there is a commission of inquiry that is struck under the prerogative of the Prime Minister, then it is the Privy Council Office that is responsible for the commission of inquiry.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Okay, thank you very much.

I do want to turn my attention to some other issues under the supplementary estimates (B) 2010-2011. This is under the introduction of the supplementary estimates, on page 11:

As a result of accounting changes due to the Jobs and Economic Growth Act, public debt charge forecasts from the Federal Budget are no longer a reasonable estimate of cash-basis expenditures for reporting in Estimates. This revised forecast is based on a change in methodology and better reflects the amounts to be charged to the statutory authority in 2010-11.

Can you explain the nature and rationale of the accounting changes that have been put in place? And do you believe that the accounting change with a fiscal impact of \$2.9 billion can be more clearly explained than what you've just indicated? And did you speak to the Auditor General concerning the same?

Ms. Christine Walker: Mr. Chair, this question is outside the scope of the supplementary estimates (B) vote 1 and vote 15. As I have stated earlier, the secretary of the Treasury Board or the associate secretary would be happy to appear before the committee to answer these questions.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Mr. Chair, I think that's an indication that we do need to have the minister before committee.

Thank you very much. It is an indication, I guess, that some of the questions we have can't be answered here this morning.

Budget 2010 also announced three measures to curb government spending: a freeze on increases in departmental spending and travel, hospitality, and conferences, originally introduced in budget 2009, was maintained at 2008-2009 levels; departments and agencies would be required to reallocate internally to fund planned wage

increases; and the third was that in the two subsequent years, operating budgets of departments would be frozen.

Could you elaborate, each of you, on what measures you've taken and how you've been able to take them to accommodate those cost savings and the curbing of the government spending?

The Chair: Very briefly, please.

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: I will start.

With respect to the cap on travel conferences and hospitality, we invoked inside of PCO a very rigorous process whereby we have been soliciting input from all of our secretariats and allocating within. We have managed to stay below the cap, and we do intend to continue to try to do that going forward.

With respect to the salary increases, it is 1.5%. The managers in this fiscal year are expected to manage that within their current budgets. Next year we will be entering a period when the reductions with respect to strategic review will take place, and during the course of this year we will be looking at the budgets across the organization.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Coady.

Thank you, Ms. MacPherson.

I'm assuming if you want a further elaboration on that question, you'll come back in another round.

[Translation]

Ms. Bourgeois, you have eight minutes.

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

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming.

My first questions will of course be for Public Works and Government Services Canada. As you probably guessed, my questions pertain to the supplementary estimates. PWGSC is requesting \$3.7 million for pre-construction activities associated with the rebuilding of the Grande Allée Armoury in Quebec City.

What are the timelines for this project? What are the total cost estimates associated with this project?

[English]

Mr. John McBain (Assistant Deputy Minister, Real Property Branch, Department of Public Works and Government Services): Thank you for the question.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased to speak to those elements. The total amount of the funding set aside for this part of the work on the *manège militaire* is \$5 million. The supplementary estimates request the access of \$3.6 million of that \$5 million.

This fiscal year a further \$1 million is being spent from the economic action plan on the project. The work that is being carried out by the department includes the cleaning of the building interiors, removal of contamination, installation of a temporary heating and ventilation system, and investigation of the masonry walls in terms of speaking to their solidity and appropriateness for re-use.

We're preparing some preliminary cost evaluations and preparing the functional and operational programs for the future use of the site. In addition, there is an opportunity posted on the electronic tendering process, MERX, right now, which seeks proponents to propose solutions for the long-term reconstruction and use of the site.

That MERX posting will close on December 6, the evaluation will follow, and then the selected proponents will be asked to come forward and propose solutions in 2011. At that point the department will seek the approval of government for a long-term solution.

• (0910)

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Thank you very much.

I am surprised to see that you have requested \$88 million for increased expenditures associated with state-owned buildings and leased offices. I am told that these are mandatory expenditures. This surprises me. Considering that we have talked about the condition of federal government buildings for several years, why were these expenditures not forecasted? You knew about this. It seems to me that we have studied the issue of buildings in an in-depth manner for the past two years. Why are you looking for an additional amount?

[English]

Mr. John McBain: Thank you for the question, and it is a very good question.

As you know, the department is charged with housing the Public Service of Canada. We hold in our inventory in excess of 7.1 million square feet of office space, which we deliver through crown-owned, leased, and lease-purchased facilities. We consider these costs to be quasi-statutory. They are non-discretionary, but they do fluctuate from year to year.

If I could draw a parallel to a homeowner, these would be your heating, electricity, insurance, and tax costs. You know they are coming, you just don't know exactly what they are. The quasi-statutory request in these supplementary estimates is a practice that we have established with central agencies and it has been in place since 1991. They reflect our calculation of the actual costs.

So I would suggest, Mr. Chair, that these are costs, which we know are coming, through supplementary estimates we are able to adjust to the precise figures that are required in any given year. They cover our costs for operating and maintenance contracts, which fluctuate with labour costs, utility costs, payments in lieu of taxes, and costs associated with renovation, which change depending on which projects fall in any given year.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: I want to really understand. Initially, you're asking for \$88 million for an increase in statutory expenditures. These are expenditures that were not accounted for in the budget initially. If they are statutory, why not include them in the regular PWGSC budgets?

Then you are seeking \$14.4 million for costs associated with additional office facility requirements. That brings us to just over \$100 million. That is a great deal of money that has not been accounted for in the budget.

[English]

Mr. John McBain: The supplementary estimates, the first number, the \$88 million, seek adjustments for expenses that occur this year. They will then be included in next year's base. It is an in-year adjustment.

The \$14 million that you speak about is a second category, and that is for us to provide accommodation for new programs that have been approved through a decision of the government. So there's—

• (0915)

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: All right. As for the \$14 million for the provision of accommodation, does this pertain to leased facilities or those that belong to the Government of Canada and require modification? What type of facility are you referring to?

[English]

Mr. John McBain: Regarding accommodation, this is a formula that is used in submissions that go before government. It is based on 13% of salary. So in terms of new programs or continuation of programs that had already been established but may have had a sunset date, 13% of the salary dollars associated with those proposals is set aside for the department to access to provide accommodation.

We will use a number of solutions to meet that need, depending on location, duration, and the nature of the programs to be accommodated. For example, it may be crown-owned in Moncton, New Brunswick, but it may be leased space in Toronto. It depends on who we are accommodating, where they are located, and for the duration of the program.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: I will turn to another subject. You are seeking an additional amount for the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises to enable it to promote Canadian products on the market.

What is the difference between the promotion done by Public Works and research and development?

The Chair: Very briefly, Mr. Lakroni.

Mr. Alex Lakroni: If I may, this is a new initiative, a pilot project that was approved in the federal budget to promote innovation and support small and medium enterprises. There are few components to this program. I can provide you with the background of the program, which is aimed at encouraging small and medium enterprises that have developed innovative products but are unable to test them on the market. The federal government wants to give them an opportunity to test out their products on the market.

The program has four priorities: the environment, health, security and enabling technologies.

[English]

To qualify the businesses must operate in Canada, must propose innovation with an 80% Canadian content, and must meet one of the four priority areas I talked about. They must not have sold their innovation commercially and have proposal costs less than \$500,000.

The Chair: Madame Bourgeois, on a point of order?

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Mr. Chair, I do understand that this is about market development for small and medium enterprises. However, I find it hard to distinguish between research and development and market development for small and medium enterprises. We are being asked to give a few million dollars to this program.

Could we request that a document be tabled with the committee clerk that describes exactly what is going to be done for small and medium enterprises? May I make such a request?

[English]

The Chair: That is not a point of order. It is a point of information.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: All right.

[English]

The Chair: Madame Bourgeois is requesting, if you will, an expansion of the information. Is that available?

Mr. Alex Lakroni: Mr. Chair, if you allow me the time, I have all the background. I can give you all the information right now. I have it.

There is a press release that's being made public that details the whole content, the criteria of the program. I think this is public knowledge and I will be happy to share that with you.

The Chair: Unfortunately, time is up for Madame Bourgeois. Possibly Mr. Warkentin will be generous with his time, and even share it with the Bloc.

Why don't we turn to Mr. Warkentin and we'll come back to that, if in fact it's not picked up by other questioners.

Mr. Warkentin.

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

I want to go forward on this issue, the kickstart program. It's something our committee has worked on. It is an initiative to help small and medium-sized businesses access government contracts, especially when they have innovative or leading-edge technology, or something they have found impossible to demonstrate in other venues, which they believe the federal government would benefit from.

Our committee heard last year that some businesses were having a difficult time accessing government contracts, because their product was so innovative that it didn't fit within the criteria the government had brought forward to solicit bids for replacement of existing materials. I'd like additional information on this, because I am concerned. I believe it's important that small and medium-sized businesses have access to federal government contracts. I see that there's \$3.8 million allocated for this. These are usually products that would be purchased anyway, initiatives that would be happening anyway. I'm wondering what the \$3.8 million is specifically intended to do. Is it to test them? What is the money being spent on?

● (0920)

Mr. Alex Lakroni: The program is designed to promote innovation and to support outreach. The activities have already started. We just closed the first of four calls for proposals on November 16. We will start procuring innovative goods and services before the end of this fiscal year. The program is for two years; this is the first of the two years. The program total is \$40 million, and it is a pilot.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Can I get some clarification? We heard testimony from a computer company that was designing a computer that they felt would do a better job than any other. They were light-years ahead of the pack, but they were finding it difficult to access federal government contracts. They wanted to go in and put their product up against the others on a general competitive basis, but they found that the RFP was outdated in relation to the technology they were proposing. Does this work to address some of that? Does it bring in prototypes independent of what other RFPs might be requesting?

Mr. Alex Lakroni: I'm not an expert in procurement, but I'll give you my perspective. This is basically a program to allow small and medium-sized enterprises to test innovative ideas, to give them a kickstart in commercializing their products. The government would procure those goods and services in compliance with the usual procurement process, with all fairness, openness, and transparency. We are targeting four areas, and there are specific criteria that these individuals or companies have to meet in order to qualify for the program.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Is this project being undertaken by OSME, the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises?

Mr. Alex Lakroni: It is being led by OSME.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: That's helpful information.

We as a committee some years ago became concerned about the state of the real property the government owned. There was some discussion that there had been an accumulated deficit in the infrastructure of federally owned properties. What is the current state of affairs? Obviously, the government and your department have been working hard, and we see continued funds being spent in this area. Are we getting ahead of the problem, or are we just putting band-aids on it?

Mr. John McBain: Thank you for the question. I'd like to answer it in two fashions: the nature of the funding for our program, and some of the specific initiatives that are addressed in the supplementary estimates.

First, I would note that Public Works and Government Services Canada owns 347 buildings. The federal government inventory exceeds 20,000. There are 22 federal custodians; we are but one. We are significant, though, in the size of our holdings of office space mandated by the PWGS act. We hold 23% of the inventory. We have a very small number of buildings but a significant amount of the floor space.

The funding that has been established for this program is set up in a special-purpose allotment, which protects the funding to be only used for those buildings, and it gives us price protection. That, in large part, is the majority of the funds that are being asked for today. The \$88 million we spoke about earlier is that price protection, to make sure we have the funds to properly maintain and operate that inventory. This is a unique fiscal structure that helps us ensure we don't rust out the inventory we hold.

The second part of my answer refers to another element of the supplementary estimates, which speaks to the economic action plan. Through the availability of that funding we were able to address previously identified requirements for our inventory, and in that respect it helps us prevent that backlog or that rust-out you were referring to.

• (0925)

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Are there any estimates as to what the infrastructure deficit might be within the department?

Mr. John McBain: Well, we have an identified requirement now—a continuing requirement—of \$1.4 billion over our forecasted assessments. We address that on a year-by-year basis with the appropriations we receive from Parliament.

These are requirements we've identified through long-term investigations and continual assessments, and it's something you would do as a prudent steward.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Right.

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin, one minute.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Thank you.

The whole issue of information technology, and upgrading and modernizing that equipment, has been something this committee has talked about at length, and in the past as well. I see that \$5.1 million has been allocated for that in this supplementary estimates (B).

I'm wondering if you could tell me where we are in terms of modernizing and moving forward on some of this, and what this \$5.1 million will purchase.

Mr. Alex Lakroni: The \$5.1 million is to implement urgent data centre upgrades, things like air conditioning, new emergency power units, electrical panels. This is basically to sustain the data centre operations and allow PWGSC to continue supporting the delivery of mission-critical programs for colleague departments. There are 48 departments that depend on the data centre, with major programs such as the Receiver General and the income security program. These upgrades are to implement remedies and improve the conditions and reliability of high-risk data centres in order to avoid additional maintenance and broken equipment.

I think I talked about the AG report from the spring 2010, which highlighted the risks related to aging technology and the need to invest to mitigate those risks.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lakroni. Thank you, Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Martin, for eight minutes.

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

I don't have any particular comments to make on the Treasury Board Secretariat's report today, other than to observe that you've

clearly been sent here with directions not to answer any questions outside of the very narrow scope of this document. I don't really think it's up to a witness to say which questions they will or will not answer.

That's just an observation. In the future, perhaps the secretariat should send somebody here who is able to answer the questions put to them.

I'd like to spend what little time I have on the Public Works report.

Mr. McBain, I know that you supervise or manage or direct.... Is it seven million square feet of floor space to house Public Works?

Mr. John McBain: Seven million square metres.

Mr. Pat Martin: Square metres. That's a staggering amount.

I think I've asked you these questions in previous estimates, but I'm still interested in and frustrated by the fact that we're not taking radical measures to reduce our operating costs in terms of energy use. I'm speaking specifically of the federal buildings initiative.

Our research shows we could harvest units of energy and reduce our operating costs out of the existing system by demand-side measures, by comprehensive energy retrofits of all this space you use, not only to reduce your operating costs but to serve as an example to the private sector of what can be done if we develop that expertise.

Can you give us any update on the efforts you've made? First of all, what is roughly the amount you spend per year on energy—heating, cooling, lighting, water, etc.—and what active steps have you taken to reduce those costs?

• (0930)

Mr. John McBain: I don't have the specifics on those numbers. We can provide them to the committee. With respect to the consumption, it would be through our crown-owned properties, through our lease payments, through a variety of places. But we can gather the numbers.

Mr. Pat Martin: Under the federal building initiative, you should have that—

Mr. John McBain: Yes.

Mr. Pat Martin:—collected in one place already, is that correct?

Mr. John McBain: With respect to our initiatives, we have some pilots that have been announced by the department. They will look at smart building technologies in order to make better use of the systems. They will look at retrofitting and installing new capacities. For example, rather than having to light the entire floor because one person is there past six o'clock, the lights would be directly linked to where that person works as she enters and leaves her site. The same technology could be applied to the heating and ventilation.

Mr. Pat Martin: That's good.

Mr. John McBain: We are also using community heating and cooling capacities. There's a large plant infrastructure in the national capital, and we are examining options on the renovation of that capacity to drive—

Mr. Pat Martin: Look, I've been asking these questions since 1997, and I keep getting the same answers. I keep hearing that they're starting some pilot projects to pick the low-hanging fruit, to change the lightbulbs, and so on. I'm talking about comprehensive building envelope renovations. We know there are 40% efficiencies. The largest source of energy in Canada is the wasted energy that goes up smokestacks unnecessarily. We think the federal government should be leading the way, showing the rest of the country how to save energy. I think we could be saving over a billion dollars a year. In the 22,000 federal government buildings, we think the energy cost is \$2 billion to \$3 billion a year. A 40% saving could save us a billion dollars. It's frustrating to me. You're reducing greenhouse gas emissions, you're creating jobs through energy retrofit, you're reducing your operating costs by 40%. I don't know why the government isn't jumping on this as something to be really proud of. The federal building initiative does only about 100 buildings a year. Even then, they only get the low-hanging fruit. At this rate, it would take us 100 years to energy-retrofit the 22,000 buildings in the federal government's domain.

Mr. John McBain: I can speak for our inventory. We are driving hard to reduce our costs and find efficiencies. We are working with our colleagues at NRCan, which is the centre for the federal buildings initiative. In fact, one of our pilots is situated in their buildings. It is designed to drive more efficient use and better operability of systems. Our recent building in Prince Edward Island, the Jean Canfield Building, takes advantage of a community centre and has virtually no carbon emissions, because it uses the community centre's heating and cooling supply.

Mr. Pat Martin: That's excellent.

Mr. John McBain: As we drive the renewal of our inventory, we are targeting those specific initiatives.

Mr. Pat Martin: One of the frustrations we have is that often, when we do a comprehensive energy retrofit, we sell the building. Suddenly the building is commercially desirable. This happened with the Harry Hays Building in Calgary. We spent hundreds of millions to retrofit it in the most state-of-the-art environmental retrofits, only to put it on the market and sell it.

We're not satisfied. I'm going to continue to raise this every year that you come in asking for supplementary increases to the estimates. I don't think you've harvested what you can out of the existing system. It's tentative, it's timid, it's always a little pilot project. We should announce 5,000 buildings a year. Imagine the expertise we could develop. We could be global leaders in energy retrofit if we took it seriously and used our own federally owned buildings as an example to the world. I'm not critical of you, but I'm frustrated that we haven't gone further.

Do I have time left?

• (0935)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Chris Warkentin): Yes.

Mr. Pat Martin: I want to talk about the parliamentary precinct. I see \$754,000 for an east tunnel linkage to the central plant. That's all well and good. But the Auditor General, the Speaker, and a blue ribbon commission that has commented on the renovations of the parliamentary precinct have all been calling for taking it out of the hands of Public Works altogether and putting it back in the hands of

Parliament. We're only tenants in our own building. They all say that it's such a complex arrangement to oversee the parliamentary precinct, that there are too many cooks in the kitchen, and that we'd be better off with one umbrella group overseeing the parliamentary precinct and taking it out of the hands of Public Works.

Would you care to comment on that? I'd like to hear about your ability to operate with so many people in the parliamentary precinct.

Mr. John McBain: Thank you for the question.

Mr. Chair, I will note that I am the assistant deputy minister for real property. My colleague Pierre-Marc Mongeau is the ADM for the parliamentary precinct.

On this specific item, I know that our deputy minister, François Guimont, appeared before this committee, did speak in response to the Auditor General's recommendations, and has tasked a senior assistant deputy minister, Yvette Aloïsi, to develop the governance options directly in response to those recommendations. I would also note that the Auditor General did observe that when we are given a mandate to deliver projects for the parliamentary precinct, we do that exceedingly well.

I do note your observation that there is a myriad of tenants and players involved in this.

Mr. Pat Martin: Okay, thank you.

I have just one closing comment. The reason I raise it is it seems to cost ten times as much to do anything in the parliamentary precinct as it does in the real world, and we're here talking about money.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Chris Warkentin): Thanks, Mr. Martin; your time has expired.

Ms. Coady, for five minutes.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Thank you very much.

I'm going to follow through on some of the questions I asked earlier, but I want to make a comment first. We talked a little bit earlier. One of the witnesses raised the whole issue of news releases and that's where some of the details of some of the cost savings are embedded. I noted yesterday that Treasury Board put out a news release and the heading said "Harper Government Ensuring Respect for Taxpayer Dollars". It's a little unusual, if I may make this point, to indicate the Harper government. It's a little unusual; usually it's "government" that is listed. I would just make that comment.

My questions go back to the whole issue I raised earlier about the operating budget freeze and the savings attributed to that. Some of those savings I know you've indicated, and they are in the supplementary estimates, but specifically I'm going to ask each of you again to answer this. What have your departments and agencies done to ensure savings, to achieve these savings that are required under the budget freeze? What impacts are on the existing departmental operations, and how is it affected? On the corporate risks, the management accountability framework, for example, are the savings one time or ongoing? Will Parliament be presented with the details of how you're going to achieve the budget 2010 savings target?

I'll just ask each of you to run through those, if you would be so kind. Thank you.

Ms. Christine Walker: Thank you for your question.

In terms of the cost containment measures, one of the key elements in containing the costs in the public service is actually containing the payroll costs. We have just recently negotiated the collective agreements so that we can contain the payroll costs over the next three years.

Secondly, in terms of travel, we actually have saved money on travel. In 2008-09, between Treasury Board and the Canada Public Service Agency, we had spent \$760,000 on travel. In 2009-10, the Canada Public Service Agency was merged with Treasury Board, and the total spending for the Treasury Board, which included the CPSA at that time, was \$560,000, a 27% decrease. In addition, for the travel and hospitality, we have increased our due diligence processes. For all of our hospitality, we have a hospitality checklist that basically asks all the questions that are now in the travel directive. Can we use another location? Can we use video conferencing? Every request for hospitality uses that checklist.

In terms of cost containment—your question about sustainability over multiple years—we are taking a look at a three-year plan for the Treasury Board Secretariat, looking at what the impact of those cost containment measures are, looking at what the impact of those cost containment measures would be on any programs, and making sure that—

● (0940)

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Will you be submitting that to this committee or to Parliament? Or how will we be able to determine the details of those operating budget cost containment points?

Ms. Christine Walker: In the operating budget for the cost containment we have to absorb our salaries, and that's what we will be doing.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Yes, you went through the list. You said you're also looking at other means and mechanisms. Will Parliament or this committee be presented with details regarding the remaining operating budget reductions?

Ms. Christine Walker: What I was referring to was cost containment measures within the Treasury Board Secretariat as a department, not the government as a whole.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I would like to ask another department, if I may.

Mr. Alex Lakroni: Thank you for the question.

From Public Works' perspective, the focus will remain on delivering core activities, while focusing on priority-setting and containing the growth to a reasonable level. We know that the budget freeze is about generating efficiencies, and not necessarily a hiring freeze. So for Public Works we took a few measures.

I'm going to start with travel management, travel hospitality, and conference management. Two years ago the total spending in those categories was \$35.9 million. Last year we achieved a reduction of about 34%. The expenditures were a little less than \$24 million. On hospitality alone, the reduction was 50%, so we went from \$453,000 to \$233,000.

As the CFO, I monitor those expenditures on a monthly basis and report to the deputy management team.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lakroni.

Madam Coady, you are out of time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Vincent, you have five minutes.

Mr. Robert Vincent: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome. Appearing here every year in order to answer our questions is a necessary evil. That goes without saying.

I would like to ask you a question.

When you go to bed at night do you turn off the lights and turn down the heating for the night? Yes?

When I'm staying at the Lac-Leamy Hilton Hotel and I open up the drapes in the evening, I can see that the government buildings are lit up from top to bottom, on every floor. I am also certain that the heating is not turned down.

Has no one ever thought that we should, at one point, turn off these lights? That may generate some savings for us. I do understand that you may have some concerns about this, given that, when we were studying other files, we saw that changing a switch cost \$1,000, and, in order to change a plant, it cost \$2,000. I would imagine that you fear exorbitant costs. It seems to me, however, that turning off the lights would be a first step.

What do you think?

[*English*]

Mr. John McBain: Thank you for the question.

I can tell you that most of the buildings you're looking at in the federal government inventory are part of our portfolio, because they're office buildings in this area. The standard operating procedure is that at six o'clock the ventilation shuts down. I can tell you that because I know exactly when it goes off in my office.

If a department has an operational requirement for longer needs, they contract that with us. For example, some departments run until eight o'clock, depending on their programs and their coverage of the country. By nature, the lights and the HVAC don't shut off completely, but they go down to a lower cycle. We change that during the year, depending on the energy costs required to bring them back up.

If someone is on the floor working, the floor lights stay on or can be switched on manually by the people who stay on the floor.

● (0945)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Vincent: At 11:00 p.m., hardly anyone is left in the building, and the lights are on everywhere. I do not mind having a night light, but this one lights up half of the city. We should give this serious thought. We could save a bit of money. No one, except the government, leaves the lights on all night. Let me give you a good suggestion: we must check into this. We will bring this up again next year to see where we are. I suppose that this will be a pilot project for the next 10 years.

With regard to the \$138.6 million estimates, 137 million will be spent on the increased costs brought about by the signing of the collective agreements with public servants. I think that the collective agreement was not signed recently, it was not signed last week. Months have gone by, perhaps a whole year. It seems to me that you should have thought of this when you made the estimates. How come nobody could see in advance that \$137 million in wages would have to be added?

Normally, we prepare an annual budget. To do this, we look at the previous year's budget, and we see what is new for the coming year. If there are salary increases, we ask for a supplementary estimate. This is how we proceed. Nevertheless, year in and year out, people go through all kinds of amazing adventures to obtain new budgets.

Could you explain to us how this budget is managed? Otherwise, we can say that it is an open buffet, if we are short of money, we will come back before this necessary evil, namely the committee, and will spend an hour of torture with the committee members. Afterward, we will get what we asked for and we will carry on. How do you go about estimating your budgets at the beginning of each year?

[English]

The Chair: You have 15 seconds or less.

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: Perhaps I will take a stab at this.

When we prepare our main estimates for the upcoming year, for example for 2010-11, they're done the fall before. So we don't always have all the information on collective agreements. In the past we have had to use the supplementary estimates to augment them.

In my case, for example, we came in last year with a certain amount of money included for collective agreements. That also included a part for the new year. Subsequent to that there was a budget decision that we would not be funded for 2010-11, so a calculation was done by Treasury Board. It was applied to all departments, and our collective agreement amount was actually reduced. So you'll see a reduction of \$0.7 million.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Vincent, your time is up.

Mr. Robert Vincent: Mr. Chair, this is not a question.

The Chair: Unfortunately, there is no time left for questions.

Mr. Robert Vincent: Were wages not frozen by the last collective agreement?

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madam MacPherson. Sorry to run the clock.

Mr. Calkins, you have five minutes.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Chair, I'm just going to follow up on what Mr. Vincent was questioning.

I just assumed that when the lights were on in a building somebody was cleaning, or something like that. I would be very saddened to know they were vacuuming in the dark. There are some significant risks associated with that. But I certainly appreciate all the public servants who stay.

I used to work at a college, and when the ventilation went off I'd be there burning the midnight oil. I certainly want to extend my thanks and appreciation to those public servants who are working hard beyond the normal hours of operation in service to their country. So I have a bit of a different approach from what some others around this table might have, but I agree that wherever cost savings can be found, taxpayers would appreciate it.

My first line of questioning is on the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. On the whole budgetary process here, it's like the budget is asking permission and the estimates are asking for forgiveness. It seems to be the way these things go. But I understand that it's impossible to have a crystal ball at budget time.

In Indian Affairs and Northern Development there was a requested authorization for \$308 million for specific land claims. Why is it \$308 million? Is that a typical number we would see on an ongoing basis? Based on the ramped up amount of work, should this be added in? Are we going to see three hundred and some million dollars next year? How much did we see last year relative to these estimates?

● (0950)

Ms. Christine Walker: Thank you. That's a very good question. However, the scope of being here is to talk about the departmental supplementary estimates (B) for Treasury Board, Public Works, and PCO. That would be an excellent question for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: So you're not going to answer any questions in regard to that?

I have a question for PCO then. The PCO is requesting \$2.9 million to enhance its security to focus exclusively on the highest-priority elements directly related to the security of the department, Langevin Block, and so on.

Members of Parliament here, senators, whatever the case might be, are fairly secure in the perimeter of the Centre Block, East Block and West Block. When you take a look at where the Confederation Building is located and how easily that is accessible, the Justice Building, even the Supreme Court of Canada, any person can simply drive right up. Of course the Langevin Block is on the other side of Wellington, directly opposite the East Block.

Normally, when somebody is asking for money for security, it is usually because either something is falling behind, something has lapsed and it's time to bring things up to date, or there is a new threat or a perceived new threat that would require an increase in the amount of money being spent on security.

What kind of security are we talking about here? Are we talking about security systems for documents? Are we talking about security systems for computers? Are we talking about physical security, like adding more presence when it comes to securing the building? Exactly what are we talking about when it comes to security?

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: Maybe I will start and Jean-Philippe may want to supplement my answer.

We're talking about a combination of those things. We don't perceive that there is an increased risk, but what we've been able to do over time is to reallocate within the department to ensure that we maintain a certain security profile. It's become impossible to keep up, and we haven't been able to enhance or upgrade our security requirements.

With respect to what we're specifically targeting, it's physical and access security, and notably strengthening the security layers in and around the Langevin Block. That would include improving video monitoring around the building. We need to increase the amount of top-secret space that we have inside the building and upgrading our access control to the building.

We also have a Corps of Commissionaires and other security personnel who have radio units that are now over 20 years old. They do need to be replaced. It has become extremely expensive to either replace those units or repair them. We are looking to buy new ones that have a broader range. We are also looking at an enhanced IT network monitoring capability.

As you know, cyber threats continue to become more sophisticated. By virtue of the work that we do in PCO, our information is extremely sensitive, so we want to strengthen the IT monitoring to ensure that we maintain the safety of our information.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Thank you very much for that.

I guess I'll move over.... Hopefully I'll be asking a question within the realm of the scope that was defined by today's meeting. I'm not sure how that happened.

The Chair: Mr. Calkins, I apologize. I was distracted for a moment. Regrettably, your time is up.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Well, I'd like to be here for several more years, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I was rather hoping you would wax eloquent on the benefits of dimmer switches.

Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I just have to make a comment. It is unfortunate that for these sums of money we don't have the officials available who were requested by this committee. I think that's extraordinary. I chaired the estimates committee in the provincial government of Ontario. Never did a minister not attend when requested for review.

There are large expenditures here, new ones. For example, the MRIF program is an initiative of the former government that the government took a long, long time to give out, and yet there's a supplemental amount of money, \$184.2 million, for a program that theoretically has run out. Where is that going? Is there anyone here who can give us insight into why there's an extra \$184 million in cashflow for the MRIF program, which as far as I can tell was tapped out last year?

No one?

Okay. How about the fact that we have all this infrastructure spending? For example, the Building Canada fund sat unused for the first two years of its existence—unused. So billions of dollars that

were promised and budgeted for were not spent. Then, because they had so many problems with the infrastructure programs that were supposed to help the economy, we had a big run on announcements from the Building Canada fund.

I'm assuming that Treasury Board has processes in place. And I'm assuming that Privy Council has given advice on the cost implications of having so much of the planned \$11 billion in new spending, as well as these pre-existing promises that have been brought forward, all taking place in one year.

Is there anyone from the government who can tell us how much of a premium we will pay for infrastructure projects across the country because the government mismanaged the timing so badly?

By most estimates—in other words, from the Canadian Construction Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities—70% to 75% of the infrastructure projects are taking place in the current fiscal year. How much in extra costs are the municipalities or the taxpayers on the hook for as a result of that? Is there anybody who can give us some insight?

• (0955)

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: No, I'm sorry, I can't.

Ms. Christine Walker: It's a good question. Unfortunately, we're not able to provide the answer.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: I'm sorry...?

Ms. Christine Walker: I said that it's a very good question. Unfortunately, it's not within the scope of what we were requested to be here for.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Is there anyone here who can undertake to bring back to this committee the information we're requesting? Is that part of your purview?

Ms. Christine Walker: Yes, it is.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Okay, because these are fairly important questions, and the amount of money is significant. And Canadians are going to be asked....

The Chair: Treasury Board answered yes, but I didn't hear any response from either PCO or Public Works.

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: We will certainly work with Treasury Board if there's any information we can add. We'll coordinate with them.

Mr. John McBain: From Public Works' point of view, the programs inquired about are not part of our mandate. They are not anything we are associated with, so we would have no information to add about those programs.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Just to clarify, for my purposes, because I don't want to waste the valuable time of these civil servants, Treasury Board surely has a mandate when there are cost overruns and when there are implications for government spending. No one's washing his or her hands of that. We just don't have the right officials here today with the particular mandate.

I don't want people, seeing the testimony here, to misunderstand. The government is not saying that they're not responsible; it's just that we don't have the people available to us today. Is that correct?

Mr. John McBain: No. My point, Mr. Chair, is that Public Works is not implicated in those programs and therefore cannot offer anything.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: I have a question for Public Works. Where is the status report on the internal infrastructure programs Public Works undertook, which had a costed value of about \$1 billion? The accounting value was different.

Is there any update on the value of the accomplishments? In the last economic action plan... Because it's not subject to any scrutiny, it is a fairly unsure document. It doesn't tie back into any financials. Every time it's been published, it's been restated, so the average member of the public can't follow the promise from the first action report to performance in the next.

On this very specific thing, Public Works had \$1 billion of infrastructure for harbours, bridges, and so on, and internal infrastructure commitments. Have those been met? There's been a lot of discussion. We just heard yesterday that the finance minister is not going to allow municipalities to go beyond. Is this money going to be rolled over internally? Is it all getting done on time? Can you give us an indication about that?

Mr. John McBain: Certainly, and thank you for the question.

Through the economic action plan, the department was allocated \$417 million over two years, ending this fiscal year. In the first fiscal year, we had \$237 million allocated for buildings, bridges, accessibility upgrades, and *le manège militaire*. The department delivered 95% of that funding for in excess of 1,600 projects.

We are under way with the second amount of money for this fiscal year, which totals \$198 million. Our reports are part of the PCO website, which gives updates and provides information on the economic action plan. Our material has been included in each report to Parliament on the economic action plan.

• (1000)

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Just to be very clear, some of the phrasing used in the past has been problematic for a member of the public who has a normal wish to understand. We've been told of projects that were under way that were dreamed about, basically—there's not one job, no shovel in the ground. So just to be clear, you're telling us that 95% of the Public Works internal infrastructure projects in that plan, nothing else added, are going to be done on time and within the two years and so on. Is that correct?

Mr. John McBain: Thank you for the question.

I'll be very precise. In fiscal year 2009-10, the department had an allocation of \$235 million to spend on our owned assets.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Other departments had other projects, but yes.

Mr. John McBain: Yes. We delivered 95% of that money for those projects.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kennedy. Thank you, Mr. McBain.

Mr. Calandra, for five minutes, please.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Thank you.

I'm hoping you can answer. I've only been here two years, but it seems as if AECL is on the list for some additional funding every year. Is there anybody who can talk about how it is that every year Atomic Energy of Canada comes back for more and more money?

Ms. Christine Walker: That's a good question as well. However, it's not within the scope of TBS vote 1 and vote 15.

Mr. Paul Calandra: It strikes me, as we go over these all the time, that Atomic Energy just seems to be the one that constantly comes up. It seems we've been at that for many years. We're still at it.

I noted there's also—and I want to thank the analysts, because I think they did a spectacular report in preparing for this—something from EDC, repayments from General Motors and Air Canada. Can you comment on what those were or not?

Ms. Christine Walker: I apologize.

Mr. Paul Calandra: What it says is that there were repayments. This is difficult, because you can't answer. Assuming they were repayments of loans that were made, I think I know the General Motors one, but I don't quite recall what the Air Canada one was about. If you could undertake to get back to the committee on those repayments, I'd appreciate that.

Ms. Christine Walker: Yes, I can do that, absolutely.

Mr. Paul Calandra: On the infrastructure items, I come from a riding, the entire York Region, that has benefited quite dramatically from the economic action plan. The entire GTA, whether through transit projects in Toronto or roads, bridges, and so on throughout my riding—an emergency management centre has been committed for the town of Markham—a lot of projects have not only been started but are nearing completion right now. I'm assuming that many of the projects listed here are either part of or complementary to Canada's economic action plan and many of the infrastructure projects that have been started.

Of course we know a lot about the success of the economic action plan. I know you can't comment on the fact that 400,000 jobs have been created as part of this. Some of the opposition are sometimes difficult on you because sometimes it's not in the best interest of the opposition to see 400,000 jobs created; it's not in their best interest to see people getting back to work. It's not necessarily in their best interest to see how a program such as this can run efficiently and effectively.

I also know the Auditor General praised the implementation of Canada's economic action plan. I'm wondering if any of you have used the example of how we undertook Canada's economic action plan—again, the Auditor General praised it—as we now proceed on other government expenditures, as we start looking at ways of bringing the budget back into balance while at the same time protecting jobs, spurring growth in the economy, and making sure the government at all levels works efficiently.

• (1005)

Mr. John McBain: Thank you. I'd be pleased to answer the question.

When the government indicated the opportunity of funding infrastructure projects, all the custodian departments, of course—because they have an inventory, they assess conditions, they identify need—were able to identify opportunities. So we see, through the implementation and the lessons learned of this exercise, the ability to apply those improvements to our ongoing processes.

At Public Works and Government Services Canada we did not invent a special process, we did not develop special rules. We used our existing tools and processes. We sought special authorities to deliver the program, which were approved by the government. We are now seeking to see if those special authorities, having demonstrated them over two years, could be made permanent. We've also seen the benefit of having some additional resources in some of the support areas to speed up the delivery of these programs. And those are applicable.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McBain.

Thank you, Mr. Calandra.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Bourgeois, you have the floor. You have five minutes.

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

I would like to put some questions to the representative of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Earlier, we discussed the initiative aimed at helping small and medium-sized companies to put innovative products on the market. It is important for us to understand this initiative correctly. Would you be so kind as to answer a few questions in writing, so that everybody around this table can get the answers? We drafted a report regarding the assistance that we believe the Government of Canada must offer to small and medium-sized enterprises.

How are we going to help the small and medium-sized companies to put innovative products on the market? How will you evaluate the merits of each project? How will you choose different projects? Does this initiative change the mandate of small and medium-sized companies? Will this have a regional impact on the plan for developing small and medium-sized enterprises?

Perhaps you could answer my other question orally. On May 3, 2010, the President of Treasury Board announced that PWGSC would be one of the 13 departments that would undergo a strategic review. Has it begun? Have you already identified the kind of savings you could make? Which are the poorly performing programs that you have targeted up to now? Could you answer these questions very quickly please, because I want to have some time to put some questions to Ms. MacPherson.

Mr. Alex Lakroni: Let me begin by answering your first question, because I think it is relevant.

The DICP is a program aimed at stimulating the economy and giving small and medium-sized enterprises an opportunity to succeed, as I mentioned earlier. How will we help them? The program has two clearly distinct components.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Mr. Lakroni, could you answer us in writing?

Mr. Alex Lakroni: We will.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Could you send us your answers in writing? It would leave me a little more time.

However, my second question, the one about the strategic review, is important and I would like you to answer it quickly.

Mr. Alex Lakroni: Very well.

[*English*]

Thank you for the question.

Public Works is one of the 13 departments that were identified this year to conduct this review. We did the review and looked at 100% of our program spending, basically in conformity with the terms and conditions of the review, in order to identify the 5% savings that are expected from us.

So we have used this opportunity to do a comprehensive review. We were driven to ensure that programs are efficient and effective, they meet the priorities of Canadians, and they are aligned with the responsibilities and the mandates of our department.

As I mentioned, we fully complied with terms of reference, which I think are valuable. We also sought independent advice, again in compliance with the terms of reference, from two advisers. And we formulated proposals, which were submitted to Treasury Board as prescribed by the terms of reference on September 16. The final results will be approved in the 2011 federal budget. This is the information I can share with you. Anything specific I'm not at a position to share at this point in time because of confidence of the budget.

● (1010)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Ms. MacPherson, in 2009-2010, a question was put to you about the \$61 million dedicated to advice and support for the Prime Minister and for ministers with portfolios. Perhaps you are not the one who was asked this question, but it was perhaps someone from the Privy Council Office who was replacing you. This year, the amount has gone over \$74 million.

I would like you to tell me what is meant by “advice and support to the Prime Minister” and if this amount also includes the famous communications plan.

[*English*]

The Chair: Be very brief, Madame MacPherson.

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: What you are asking me is the difference in program activity (A), which is the support to the Prime Minister. There was a \$13 million increase in that year over year in the main estimates. And \$6.4 million of that was for chronic funding pressures. A portion of that was directly attributable to the Prime Minister's Office.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The chair could recognize Mr. Martin, if Mr. Martin were in his chair.

Mr. Pat Martin: Well, I would welcome that.

What a treat. Thank you. This is a rare treat, as the lowly NDP usually get one round of questioning.

I do have some questions for the Privy Council Office now. I've just been reviewing the research done by our researchers, and they do raise an interesting point. In dealing with the negotiations with the public service—the round that hasn't been ratified yet, but the agreements have been concluded—it's come to our attention that one of the key items in that round of negotiations was the end to accumulated severance pay, the one week per year of service they earn.

Can I ask you questions about this?

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: It wouldn't be the Privy Council who is responsible for that. That's actually taken care of by the Treasury Board.

Mr. Pat Martin: Yes, I know that Treasury Board negotiates with the—

Mr. Carl Trottier (Executive Director, Strategic Compensation Management, Compensation and Labour Relations Sector, Treasury Board Secretariat): We'd be more than willing to answer that question.

Mr. Pat Martin: I don't know why I found that in my Privy Council document, but it's great if I could ask you.

That severance pay existed as a liability before. But in our mind, it was a controlled liability, in that people would slowly or incrementally claim their severance pay as they retired. Now that you have eliminated it, upon ratification, everybody who is owed any severance pay will want it paid out immediately.

What is that going to cost us?

Mr. Carl Trottier: Well, I'd begin by clarifying that only some portions of the severance pay have been eliminated, the portions on resignation and retirement. So all of the other portions—for example, termination, death benefits, and so on—remain and continue as before.

Mr. Pat Martin: Yes, I understand that.

Mr. Carl Trottier: They are—

Mr. Pat Martin: Aren't you asking for this whole liability to hit you at once now, at a time when we're going to have to borrow money to pay it out? Do I understand correctly that upon ratification of this arrangement, if I have 12 years of service, I can now say, "Okay, I'm still going to keep working for you, but I want my 12 weeks' severance pay now, I want to be paid out now"?

Mr. Carl Trottier: That's correct.

Mr. Pat Martin: Well, there are about 100,000 people who are going to say that all at once, are they not?

Mr. Carl Trottier: Well, it will depend on the scenario of each individual. There are three options the employees can take: they can either take it now; they can take it upon separation from the employer; or they can take a mix of a small portion now and a small portion later. So various options are going to be chosen by the employees.

Mr. Pat Martin: Okay, well, what's the plan? How much are you contemplating this is going to cost upon ratification?

• (1015)

Mr. Carl Trottier: I don't have those figures here with me. We have definitely contemplated there being some pick-up in terms of

people taking it immediately, but there is also going to be some significant desire on the part of others to wait and not touch it until separation.

Mr. Pat Martin: Why? For tax purposes?

Mr. Carl Trottier: Correct.

Mr. Pat Martin: My other question along the same lines is about the public service renewal strategy. It says that the annual retirement rate has been rising regularly.

What are the long-term plans for the size of the public service? Is it the intention of the Treasury Board Secretariat to fill vacancies as they arise? Is there an attrition strategy to reduce the overall size of the public service? What forecasting are you doing to accommodate the rise in the annual retirement rate? I think it's 3.3% now.

Mr. Carl Trottier: Unfortunately, I didn't come here with that information today.

Ms. Christine Walker: How it's going to be managed, I think, is a question in terms of the cost containment measures. With the cost containment measures the hope is that with the attrition rate there will be retirements, but those retirements will not be filled as the cost containment measures take effect.

Mr. Pat Martin: That's what I'm getting at. It seems that part of the strategy for getting us out of our deficit—again, I know you're only the messenger here—is to reduce the retirement benefits of the public service and to shrink the public service. This is our worst fears realized, frankly. We incur this massive deficit and the first place people look to try to trim the budget is to cutting and hacking and slashing jobs and benefits for our public service. That's the only conclusion I can come to from seeing both of these things clustered together in this particular study.

Thank you for your answers.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Martin.

Mr. Warkentin, five minutes, please.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Ms. Walker, I'm going to move to the questions that we actually asked you to come to this committee to testify to. It's important for colleagues to get some information with regard to vote 1b, and vote 15b as well.

These votes are with regard to collective agreements and paying out benefits for those. Is that correct?

Ms. Christine Walker: Vote 15 is the vote about the compensation adjustments, which is the \$137 million I talked about.

The benefits that are the employee benefits—public service health care plan, dental plan—that's vote 20.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Pardon me, I didn't—

Ms. Christine Walker: That's vote 20. It's a different vote. So the benefits we pay—for instance, the dental plan, the public health care plan, the pension benefits—actually come out of vote 20.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I think committee members are often curious as to why certain funds or certain allocations come under supplementary (B), as opposed to the main estimates. I suspect that benefit payments would come out of a later vote because they are incurred during the year and these are absolute amounts. Is that correct? Are these in addition to what the estimates may have included?

Ms. Christine Walker: Many times they don't get asked for until the collective agreements have been signed and ratified. I believe some of these collective agreements were actually signed after the main estimates had been prepared. Hence, we come back and get it at the first chance we get.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: For committee members, what I find interesting, of course, is the responsibility within Treasury Board to undertake the challenge function for pretty well every department when it comes to asking for money and additional funds. Are you involved in the oversight or challenge function for departments?

Ms. Christine Walker: No, I am not. That is done by our program sector. And as I said earlier, I'm sure the secretary or the associate secretary would be happy to come and speak to you about that.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I wonder if representatives from the other two organizations would speak to the committee with regard to the challenge function and the responsibility of Treasury Board to ensure that moneys that are being asked for are actually legitimate dollars and going toward legitimate projects, and how the challenge function and the interaction between departments and Treasury Board actually are undertaken when it comes arriving at dollar figures.

• (1020)

Mr. Alex Lakroni: I can start.

Of course all initiatives that are before you today are approved by Treasury Board. We have certain standards in terms of meeting Treasury Board oversight expectations, but within our own department we have a series of oversights before we go to Treasury Board.

For instance, in my capacity as a CFO, I exercise my oversight on initiatives in terms of soundness from financial management, the risks. If we have sound performance, I sign all the proposals before they go to Treasury Board and then Treasury Board exercises.... When I say Treasury Board, I mean the Treasury Board Secretariat. They exercise their own oversight from various areas, from the Comptroller General's perspective, the expenditure management system perspective, as well as from a program and policy perspective. They get back to us with comments and we cannot move forward until we address them. That's basically the standard.

John can give some specific examples of some of the programs before you.

Mr. John McBain: Thank you for the question.

My colleague Christine Walker represents the corporate side of the Treasury Board Secretariat for the real property program, and the moneys you see here are certainly significant. We work very closely with our colleagues in the government operations sector and the expenditure management sector. They scrutinize our proposals. They challenge us with respect to content. They prepare a précis of our

recommendations that is separately submitted to Treasury Board ministers, so there is a very thorough review.

The \$88 million that is asked for in this, which is what I characterized earlier as a quasi-statutory requirement, is developed with very detailed scrutiny of all of our occupancies, whether they are crown-owned or leased, based on actual expenditures and lease and operating costs.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Thank you.

The Chair: Madame Coady, please, for five minutes.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Thank you very much.

I'll go back to some of the key questions I asked earlier, because they are important questions about what departments and agencies have done to achieve the savings under the operating budget freeze.

We have heard from three departments, and they have talked about hospitality and travel quite extensively. With all due respect, you've probably pared those savings down as much as you're able to. I'm more concerned now about the reductions and how they're affecting the corporate risks, and their effect as measured by the management accountability framework.

Can you tell us further what is being done? Are you looking in particular at your staffing levels? Some of you have said you really watch what you are doing with regard to your hires and making sure you are doing the best you can here, but when you look at the amount of money and the savings that the Parliamentary Budget Officer says we will need to make, he was quite concerned about those areas.

I'll ask again if anyone cares to comment further. We have heard from most of the departments, but maybe you can comment more fully.

I have two other questions. I'm simply opening the door, so if you want to explain how you are going to find those savings, I'd appreciate that.

As I say, I have two other questions, so please note the time. Thank you.

Ms. Christine Walker: I'll be relatively quick.

As chief financial officer, we have to sign off a statement of internal controls that we have on the internal controls in place to be able to ensure the stewardship of funds. So the last thing we want to see with any cost containment measure is the degradation of those controls. What we are focusing on, in IT for example, is consolidation of purchases, streamlining processes as much as we can, so really trying to improve the efficiency of our purchases and the efficiency of the staff and the employees we have in the work that we do. That is what we're focusing on in terms of the cost containment measures.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I'll allow for another comment, and then I have to ask two more questions.

Thank you.

Mr. Alex Lakroni: From our perspective, we talked about the travel but we also implemented budget management excellence in PWGSC, which was more promoted, because the freeze leaves the implementation to the discretion of the department to achieve efficiencies.

Let's be mindful that about 70% of our operating budget vote is program-specific expenditures. That is non-discretionary, and is funded through a formula and indices. The main impact for us for not receiving the funding for collective bargaining is less than 1% to our gross budget of \$3.8 billion, so the impact for us in this fiscal year is \$5.6 million, and it's managed through a financial plan.

Our financial plan yields efficiencies as follows. I talked about sound financial management principles that we implement. There is continuous focus to manage expenditures such as travel, hospitality, conferences. There is tight control of expenditures, particularly the discretionary spending, and there is analysis of demand in certain key areas such as professional services, to make smart use of professional services, and we are managing revenues very carefully. We do annual and semi-annual evaluations of our reallocations.

•(1025)

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Thank you very much.

I'm cognizant of the time; I only have a minute left.

Again, I appreciate that detail, and if you could submit it to this committee, that would be helpful.

What I am looking for from all departments is how you are going to achieve the requirements of the budget savings targets.

I have two further questions. The funds associated with vote 25 will allow federal departments and agencies to carry forward unused funds from the previous year to a maximum of 5%. When I added it up, the total vote was about \$1 billion, I think. Is that number correct?

When you're reclaiming some of these costs, should we put it to the cost savings of government or toward the deficit you have?

Can anyone comment on that? Could Treasury Board comment on that?

Ms. Christine Walker: Yes.

What the carry-forward budget allows you to do is carry forward 5% of basically your main estimate from the previous year. That goes into the department. That can be spent by each department for the initiatives they have planned for that year.

At this point in time I don't think there is a plan out there to take that carry-forward and put it back into the fiscal framework.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Okay.

I have one final question. I'd like to get back to that, but I have to get to another one.

In vote 10—

The Chair: Madame Coady, I'm sorry.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Out of time.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin.

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

At some point, as a committee, we have to either vote in favour or opposed to the respective votes that are given to us. We have the responsibility for five specific votes, to undertake a review of them.

The Privy Council vote 1b was with regard to security and so forth. What was the amount of that vote?

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: It was \$1.4 million net.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Okay. The next vote that's recommended is under Public Works and Government Services, and it's vote 1b. I'm just trying to bring the committee back to what we as a committee are responsible for. We've gone quite a distance to look into other issues, but today we have some very specific initiatives that we're supposed to review.

On vote 1b, under Public Works and Government Services, what was the amount of that vote?

Mr. Alex Lakroni: The amount that is asked for in these supplementary estimates is \$96.5 million.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: And of course we've talked about what's included in that already.

In terms of vote 5b of Public Works and Government Services, what was the amount of that vote?

Mr. Alex Lakroni: It was \$56.7 million.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: And remind me what's included in that vote, those dollars.

Mr. Alex Lakroni: Well, for the \$56 million, we have the data centre sustainability projects, we have the *manège militaire*, and we have the transfer from Transport Canada for environmental remediation. And we have \$51.8 million that's being transferred from operating, from vote 1 to vote 5, to align the funding with the spending.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Right.

Okay, so under Treasury Board, vote 1b, what was included in that vote?

•(1030)

Ms. Christine Walker: A total of about \$1.5 million, and what's included in that are increased spending as a result of approved programs for classification, cyber security, and the public service readiness plan, less the cost containment measures of \$2.2 million, and there are some small transfers there as well.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Right. And then vote 15b.

Ms. Christine Walker: That is the \$137 million, which is to fund departments and agencies for the costs related to the signing of collective agreements, and these are retroactive adjustments that are prior to April 1, 2010.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I appreciate this. This is helpful, because we have gone a distance into other directions this morning, but as a committee, of course, we're responsible to look into these respective votes.

I think we've had a full airing of at least these respective votes. There's going to be some interest, I think, from our committee to address other issues that were brought up today, but I just wanted to get a final clarity to ensure that I wasn't misunderstanding what we were voting on today and to bring us back, as a committee, to the responsibility of our committee to look at these respective votes. So thanks.

The Chair: Are you finished?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I am, thank you.

The Chair: Then Madame Coady.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: My colleague.

The Chair: Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There was an earlier comment about the government's success in terms of jobs and so on. I think people need to understand that we have 3,000 fewer jobs still, compared to before the recession, but more importantly, we have 115,000 more part-time jobs. So it's the transfer of full-time jobs to part-time. And probably the most important of all, there are 350,000 more unemployed now than when the recession started. So I think people listening to this committee hear the various accountabilities about spending, but there's still a basic economic job to get done in this country that isn't getting done by the current government.

I still would like to try to find out where we're at in terms of some of the questions that my colleagues raised.

On the government's plan to exact expenditures, can anybody here table what the economic impact is going to be in terms of job loss and so on? Clearly, if there are going to be cuts in government, there's going to be cost containment, there are going to be fewer jobs. So what is the jobs implication of some of the numbers we're hearing about? Is there anybody who can give us that kind of estimate?

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: I can't.

Ms. Christine Walker: No, I'm sorry.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Sorry...?

Ms. Christine Walker: No, I'm not available to provide that information.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: I'm sorry, I apologize. I'm having a little bit of trouble—

Ms. Christine Walker: I apologize. I can't provide that information. I don't have that information for you.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: But the Privy Council, for example, I'm sure must... These things must be fairly advanced. The government is coming here with reports on certain areas where they're underspending and certain areas where they want to spend more, but in a general framework that we're headed for... I think it's appropriate for the committee to ask for the level of preparation there is.

Privy Council and Treasury Board, for certain, are key parts of whatever job is going to get done on the management side. I think it's also fair to ask, in the context of 350,000 more unemployed, how many unemployed is the government planning to add as a result of

its cost management program review? Or use whatever euphemisms you want to use here.

I think it's fair for Canadians to know about that side of the ledger, as well as the financial side. Is there any indication or undertaking—

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: I'm not aware of who would have the responsibility for that, even inside PCO. I can certainly inquire.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Would someone have responsibility? I think Canadians would be interested to know that an increase in the number of unemployed, the result of government actions, would be something that would be monitored by this, or any government.

Ms. Marilyn MacPherson: I expect it's a shared responsibility between Labour Canada and the Department of Finance. I suspect there are a number of departments, as well as Treasury Board, that are implicated. I'm just not sure who has the single accountability for rolling it up.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Okay.

Ms. Coady.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Thank you.

I do want to get back to the vote 10 question I was about to ask, and this is for Public Works and Government Services. The funds associated with vote 10 will provide funding to pay for set-up costs—accommodation, basic operating costs, salary costs—associated with ministers' regional offices program, for administrative support to federal cabinet ministers.

Could you tell me which offices are being set up, and for whom? Maybe you could give me a cost comparison from previous years, please.

• (1035)

Ms. Christine Walker: It might be under Treasury Board; it might be under Public Works.

Mr. Alex Lakroni: The program is with Public Works, but vote 10 is Treasury Board votes.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Can I ask Treasury Board, then, please?

Ms. Christine Walker: I don't have the list of which ministers' regional offices would be refurbished under this \$2.5 million. My understanding is that the \$2.5 million was to enhance the security for all the regional offices. We can provide that information.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Could you provide that? It's very specific. It talks about salary costs, accommodation, operating costs. I'd like to know which departments, and how much for each of those departments. It talks about set-up costs. I'd like to have much more detail on the vote 10, please.

Mr. John McBain: Mr. Chair, perhaps I could add some information.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Please.

Mr. John McBain: Those are ostensibly generic offices that are located across the country. I don't have the information you're asking for, but I have been associated with them in the past, in work that I've done. They're located in Halifax, in Edmonton, etc.

We can get the specifics you're asking for and we will provide that to the committee.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Can I have that rather expeditiously?

As you know, we have to vote on the estimates, and I'd like to be able to ask the ministers some of these questions when they get here. It seems that we're adding to the costs of these offices in a time of restraint, and I'd like to have more details.

I'd like to have it by next week—early next week—if I may, please. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Coady.

That ends the round of questioning for this morning. I want to thank the witnesses on behalf of the committee.

Now, if I may, colleagues, we'll move to the vote. The question to be asked is shall vote 1b, under Privy Council, carry? For a point of clarification, that is a request for \$1.4 million.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I'm sorry, I missed your comment.

Can we postpone these votes?

Mr. Chair, I would suggest that the votes be postponed until after we have answers to the several questions we had. I've just asked for further details, and we have until three days before December 10....

I'd like to have a discussion about future business and perhaps getting the minister and the Parliamentary Budget Officer here.

The Chair: I'm in the hands of the committee. Is there a will to postpone these votes?

Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Chair, I think today we got full clarification on the votes that are actually presented to us. There were questions with regard to other votes, but votes that aren't actually part of this list. So I think we did have a full airing and a full response on every single vote that's before us today. There are other votes within the supplementary estimates (B) that there were questions on. We can have an opportunity to talk about those later, but in terms of the ones we have before us today, I think we've had all the information that was necessary.

The Chair: Madame Coady.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I'd like to have all the information before we do these votes. There's no necessity to have these votes today. I would ask the chair to consider that. We've just asked for more details on a particular requisition for funds. We had questions that were not able to be answered by some of our experts who were before us today from the bureaucracy. I'd like to have the Parliamentary Budget Officer here. It's what we as a committee had decided we would do. So therefore I would respectfully ask to postpone the vote to another meeting.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was one of the individuals who had a question that wasn't asked, but the reality is the question I asked pertained to a particular department for which there is a standing committee looking at the supplementary estimates or that has the ability to look at those

supplementary estimates. That would be the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Several of the questions that weren't able to be asked were related to infrastructure projects. Those questions could be posed by members of the Liberal Party, the Bloc, and the NDP at those respective committees going through the supplementary estimates for those particular departments.

This committee is tasked with a very specific objective so that there's not duplication and overlapping of these. I don't expect that this committee would be hauling in representatives from all across the broad width of the various government departments to answer these questions. That's the purview of the other 25 standing committees or whatever there are here at the House of Commons.

I'm fully prepared to go ahead today, based on the information I've heard, with our votes.

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Chair, maybe you can ask for clarification for the benefit of committee members. Was there any information you've documented that was requested that pertains specifically to any of the votes we are looking at this morning?

• (1040)

The Chair: There's at least one undertaking, I recollect, from Public Works.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Was it with regard to vote 1b or 5b?

The Chair: My memory may be failing me here, and I could stand to be corrected, but Madame Bourgeois had started to ask a question. You then followed up with that question, and I thought—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: That wasn't within these votes. That was a different program.

The Chair: Well, it was within the range of interest of both the opposition and the government members.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: It was, absolutely, and something we can follow up with, but it wasn't included in the votes we're actually tasked with approving.

The Chair: Well, certainly on some definition of supplementary estimates (B), that's true.

Are there any other...?

Madame Coady.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I don't know why we would have to rush to get these votes through today. We have until December 7, I believe. We have indicated at our committee meetings that we would like to hear from the ministers, we would like to hear from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. I just don't know why we would want to rush through these particular votes when we are going to hear from others on this very issue. Therefore I just respectfully ask that we have the information before we actually have to take these votes, but I'm at the will of the committee.

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I think we're well briefed on the votes that are actually our responsibility, but if members are not prepared to do this today, we can move it to next Tuesday's meeting or another time. I just know that we're running out of meeting time over the next couple of weeks before Christmas.

The Chair: I detect a faint consensus on that point. Therefore—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Chair, I think it's just important that committee members do understand that these do have to go back early December, so that will mean we'll have to give up committee time in.... We'll have to move some stuff around to make this happen.

The Chair: That's fine.

Madame Coady.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: It's already on our calendar for December 2.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Okay. Perfect.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: It's already there on our calendars, another date on estimates. I think we could get through that day and then be able to do our votes.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Very good.

The Chair: I thank the committee members for not putting the chair in one more awkward situation.

Again, I'd like to thank the members. We have scheduled a subcommittee meeting, and there are now a number of things to talk about at the subcommittee meeting, hopefully including the rescheduling of the supplementary estimates.

We do have Mr. Gourde's motion before the committee. I'll let him speak to it.

Can I dismiss the witnesses, colleagues?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur Gourde.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Chair, we would like to ask the public servants from Public Works and Government Services Canada to appear as witnesses next Tuesday, November 30, if possible. The motion will be delivered in both official languages to those who have not received it.

Given the fact that we heard witnesses this week, we will have further questions to put to the Public Works and Government Services Canada officials. I would like this motion to be adopted by my colleagues, please.

[*English*]

The Chair: Colleagues, Monsieur Gourde's motion with respect to calling Public Works officials on November 30 is in order. It's on the table. I'll let members speak to it first.

Madame Coady.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We're going to go into a subcommittee now where we discuss future business, and one of the dates, of course, will be November

30. I think we are going to talk about who we all want to have at that meeting.

Rather than taking up time today, I'd propose a friendly amendment to take out the specific day, Tuesday, November 30, and leave it open, so that we may call this particular group back. I don't want to put a particular day in there at all, because we'd like to reserve the right to have a discussion at the subcommittee meeting to determine who we would like to have at committee.

The Chair: Would Mr. Gourde regard that as a friendly amendment—just a removal of the date?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Certainly, I would prefer that it be on November 30. We can vote on the amendment.

• (1045)

[*English*]

The Chair: Is that a yes or a no?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: As far as I am concerned, I vote no.

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Chair, let's proceed with this. There's another point I want to bring up before we break, and I know we're constrained for time here.

The Chair: Okay. Therefore, Madame Coady's—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Just vote on his—

The Chair: First of all, we have to deal with Madame Coady's formal amendment—or is it not a formal amendment?

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I'm hearing that it's not a friendly amendment, so we can just dispense with it and we'll vote on this particular one.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: We can discuss this.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I can make it a formal amendment if that's....

The Chair: If you make it a formal amendment, we have to vote on the amendment, and then we vote on the main motion.

Mr. Martin.

Mr. Pat Martin: I don't know why we would vote for this, whether it's got the amendment or not, because it sort of undermines the work that we're about to do in about 15 minutes.

We're just about to go into a planning committee meeting and we will be locking ourselves into one specific witness who we may or may not want to talk about at our planning committee. I think we should put this aside or vote it down, and go to our planning committee meeting and talk about witnesses.

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin or Mr. Gourde.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: We could accept a planning meeting, while taking my motion into account.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll stand the motion down pending the subcommittee meeting. Is that correct?

Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: One thing that came out of the last meeting was the desire of this committee to bring forward Mr. Bartolucci from the province of Ontario. He, of course, was the minister responsible for signing the contract with the federal government with regard to the security forces of the Ontario government. Now that we've received the information, or you, Mr. Chair, have received the information from the OPP, it would be important to have Mr. Bartolucci come to our committee in the coming days.

I'm just looking for a consensus from committee members that we include him in the consideration of witnesses and that we see him. I know that Mr. Regan had suggested that we should see him at this committee, but only after we had received this information. Now that we have received this information, I think it would be important that he be included in the list of people.

The Chair: I'm assuming you could raise that matter at the subcommittee meeting as well.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I'm getting a sense that... I'm just looking for a consensus from committee members, if that's something they would like to do before we press on to the subcommittee.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I think it's something we can discuss at the subcommittee, Mr. Chair, and hash it out there.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I don't think there's anything to hash out. Mr. Regan invited this to happen. I'm just sensing some unwillingness on behalf of the Liberals to have this—

The Chair: I don't actually have a motion in front of me, and unless you actually did make it a motion, I would be hard-pressed to carry on the conversation.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I think I'd like to bring it forward as a motion. If we can expeditiously vote on it right now, that would be helpful.

The Chair: Colleagues, Mr. Warkentin wishes to move that this committee call Mr. Bartolucci.

Madame Coady.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I'm not quite sure why we would have a subcommittee meeting if we're going to do the work here and now.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: What I find, Mr. Chair—

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Excuse me. We're going to get into a list of people we would like to call before this committee. We have some

suggestions. We have a calendar. That's the purpose of the subcommittee, to go into detail and talk about who we want to have and who we don't want to have.

I have a motion that I would like to present before this committee as well.

If we're not going to have a subcommittee, then we'll carry on and do the work here, but if we're going to have a subcommittee, I think that's the proper place to have this fulsome discussion.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I can expedite this, Mr. Chair.

I would ask for unanimous consent to include Mr. Bartolucci as a witness for this upcoming week with regard to the hearings on the G-8 and G-20, so we'll move to the vote immediately.

The Chair: As a potential witness.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: As a witness.

The Chair: I don't see unanimous consent.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, colleagues.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Could I give notice of a motion?

The Chair: I think you can give notice of a motion outside of the meeting.

• (1050)

Ms. Siobhan Coady: We now know that the Ontario Provincial Police have provided some copies of some information. I'm not quite sure what it is at this point in time. I'm going to put forward a motion that the committee orders the Ontario Provincial Police to provide it with a copy of the report detailing the final breakdown—because I'm not sure what we have yet—of the costs incurred by the OPP that they provided to the public safety committee. We're just asking for it to come here.

I would ask that the report be provided to this committee at the same time as it is provided to the public safety committee on December 1.

The Chair: You can raise that motion on the second if you're not satisfied with the subcommittee meeting.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: On December 1.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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