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## **Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, March 18, 2010**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Merv Tweed**



## Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

Thursday, March 18, 2010

• (0905)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC)):** Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, meeting four.

The orders of the day, pursuant to Standing Order 81(5), are supplementary estimates (C) 2009-2010, votes 1c, 5c, 20c, and 35c under Transport, referred to the committee on Wednesday, March 3, 2010.

Because we are doing estimates, before I introduce our guests, I do have to just say that we are going to call vote 1c, which opens the debate that we're going to have today. By saying that I will now refer to the Honourable John Baird, who is the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. Also joining us is the Honourable Rob Merrifield, who is the Minister of State for Transport. And joining us with the ministers we have, from the Department of Transport, Yaprak Baltacioglu, and also John Forster, from Infrastructure Canada. Welcome.

I know that the ministers have opening statements, so I will ask them to make them and we'll get on to questions. I just want to advise the committee that the ministers are here for one hour and the staff are staying beyond that. Because I think there are going to be lots of questions, I'm going to keep the timelines very tight.

Do you know how long your presentation is, Minister?

**The Honourable John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities):** About ten minutes.

**The Chair:** Please begin, Minister Baird.

**Hon. John Baird:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm very pleased to be joined by my deputy and associate deputy.

I should say at the outset, we have been tremendously well served—the Canadian people and the government—by the hard-working talent at the department, particularly with the economic action plan. They have worked incredibly hard and done an outstanding job.

I want at the outset to start on a non-partisan front, as I always do, Mr. Chair, and compliment the leader of the opposition for his shuffle of his shadow cabinet and the addition of Bonnie Crombie, not only as critic but also as a member of this committee. Welcome.

[Translation]

I have spoken to this committee many times over the past year on the Government of Canada's commitments to Canadians. Specifically, our Government remains committed to stimulating the

economy, creating jobs, and supporting Canadian families through Canada's Economic Action Plan.

[English]

Since we announced the economic action plan in January 2009, the government has worked closely with provinces, territories, and municipalities to green-light projects and to get work under way. As announced in budget 2010, the Government of Canada has committed to almost 16,000 projects across the country, of which 12,000 have begun or in fact have been completed. Construction is under way in every region of the country. Project managers have told my department that work has begun or is completed on close to 3,250 projects worth over \$12.9 billion. As we head into this construction season, these numbers are increasing each and every day.

Members, our funding matches the pace at which funding partners build their infrastructure projects. Provinces and municipalities manage these projects, and we will reimburse costs after claims are submitted. I should note that in many cases work has begun on projects, but the claims haven't been submitted yet. It shows that the municipalities and provinces in question are putting all their efforts into making things happen on the ground. We have been urging our partners to get these bills in as soon as possible. To meet the cashflow needs of the project proponents, we are carrying forward \$1.4 billion from the past fiscal year to match the pace of construction of our partners and will reimburse them this fiscal year when we receive their claims.

One of the primary goals of the action plan was to create and protect jobs. Finance Canada indicates that the plan has contributed to the maintenance and creation of over 130,000 jobs since July 2009. It is estimated that about 45% of the jobs created or maintained by January 2010 have been in the manufacturing and construction industries.

Last Wednesday the Conference Board of Canada released its report indicating that if it were not for the boost in infrastructure spending Ontario's economy would have lost an additional 70,000 jobs in 2009, and in 2010, when spending peaks, another 40,000 jobs will be added to the payrolls in the province. That is a report commissioned by the Conference Board of Canada by Premier Dalton McGuinty.

[Translation]

Year one of the Economic Action Plan was two-fold: it introduced new infrastructure funding, and it accelerated existing funding. We introduced the \$4 billion Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, which has resulted in almost 4,000 new projects across the country. Close to 300 of these have been completed. That's improvements to 300 roads, parks and trails, cultural facilities and more that had not been started this time last year.

[English]

A thousand more projects will be completed in the coming months. We transferred \$699 million to the provinces and territories through the provincial-territorial base funding initiative. For every province that could match the accelerated funding, we have provided it. That's money for highways, for green energy, for public transit, water, waste water, and that has been made available much earlier than expected.

Overall, with the accelerated approval under Building Canada, we have committed nearly \$9.6 billion to more than 6,000 projects since the launch of Canada's economic action plan. That means that since January 2009, Infrastructure Canada has committed funding to an average of 16 projects per day, every single day. I'm proud of our achievements in designing, launching, and implementing an infrastructure program faster than has ever been done before.

We couldn't have done it alone. We worked very closely with provinces and territories to make things happen, as well as municipalities in every corner of the country.

With respect to transport, nowhere has our government been more clear about our commitment to safety and security than with respect to air security. For countries like Canada, who take terrorism very seriously, the attack on December 25 was a stark reminder that we must remain vigilant. That's why in the weeks following our government took additional steps to strengthen aviation security. We announced new body screeners and strengthened explosive trace detection capabilities. We announced our intention to develop a passenger behaviour observation program and we introduced measures to meet new U.S. rules for U.S.-bound flights from Canada. And on February 25 we announced an additional \$1.5 million over five years for CATSA.

I'll turn it over to my colleague, Rob Merrifield.

• (0910)

**The Honourable Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport)):** Thank you very much.

I would just like to add a little on a couple of issues. The first one is CATSA, which is a crown corporation that looks after airport security.

Our government's commitment to airport security is absolutely unequivocal. On December 25 we changed airport security, not only here in Canada, but around the world. The United States implemented very strict restrictions regarding baggage as well as security of passengers. Within the following few days, over 200 flights were cancelled as we tried to react to that incident.

There is no question that the full-body scanners have been very well accepted. We have 14 of them in operation today. The rest, the other 30, will be moved into operation in the next few weeks.

I was just in Mexico City as well as in Japan. The international community, not only in South American countries, but as well in Mexico, is very concerned about signing a unilateral agreement on standards of security. In Japan, with the Asia-Pacific, it's the same thing. I just got back on the weekend.

So the international community is very concerned about this and about making sure that when you get on a plane, it doesn't matter where in the world, you have a standard of security so that the passengers can feel very comfortable that all the security measures have been taken and that they are going to land safely.

Full-body scanners are being very well accepted by the users. I can report that.

I also want to tell you that we are doing something that is very much of concern, not only to Canadians but also to our international communities, on the cargo side of airport security. In this budget, we have added \$37.9 million to be able to deal with air cargo screening. This is something we know a considerable amount about because of a terrorist attack we've had in our country, the Air India attack. It certainly will go a long way in addressing some of the concerns we have, not only here in Canada but internationally, as other countries are moving to the same concerns and are trying to address these issues. We will be having state-of-the-art equipment with the additional funds that are being put into airport security.

I'd like to talk a little bit about Marine Atlantic, which is also something we are very concerned about. We want to make sure that umbilical cord—as some people call it—to Newfoundland, that corridor that is so important to Newfoundland and Labrador and Atlantic Canada, is dealt with in an appropriate way. We have significant problems. Two years ago, the on-time service was 10%. That's totally unacceptable.

Last summer we put on a new vessel, *Atlantic Vision*. We've been monitoring this vessel's performance over the last year. It is performing reasonably well. Our on-time service this last summer was around 50%. So we have improved considerably.

There is \$175 million to renew the fleet and to deal with onshore deficiencies in Budget 2010. Together with the \$416 million, that's almost \$600 million that, as a government, we've put into Marine Atlantic in the last couple of years. This is no small amount of money. It is very important for them to be able to revitalize their fleet and be able to accomplish what needs to be done, which is to have a service that is respectable for that area of the country. There's another \$28 million in the budget to support the other ferry systems in eastern Canada as well.

With that, I think I'll turn it back to my colleague for closing remarks.

**Hon. John Baird:** Out of respect for Mr. Volpe, who I know has some questions, I'll be very brief.

I know this committee has done some excellent work with respect to vehicle safety, and particularly on the issue of Toyota's recall. I'm very happy to provide some more details and material to you. I'll leave it with you today. I understand your request is urgent and that you require the most accurate information possible.

The documents in question are the long-form expansion of the Toyota complaints received since the year 2000. This represents about 650 pages. There is a list of e-mails exchanged between Transport Canada and Toyota Canada concerning the recent series of recalls. This represents about 2,500 pages. Some of this material also needs to be reviewed by the Access to Information and Privacy Office regarding personal identifiers and third-party information.

The department has informed me that it will take approximately four days to remove the personal and third-party information from the material provided, after which time it could take at least 20 days to obtain consent from Toyota to release the information.

We are committed to being as transparent and as open with the committee as possible on these issues, and we'll make everything available that you request as quickly as physically can be done, because we appreciate the important work of the committee in this regard.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

• (0915)

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

Mr. Volpe, for seven minutes.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

Thank you to the ministers for coming.

On the estimates, I note that the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority is receiving an additional \$9.359 million. In the spirit of non-partisanship, how much of this money is for body scanners and how much of it is to provide security for airport officials against ministers behaving badly?

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** I'll take that.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Oh, do you want to take that one? While you're doing that, would you tell us how many companies bid on those scanners?

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** On the scanners, it's a very specialized piece of equipment. The number of bids was limited because it's a specialized piece of equipment.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Is it two, three, or one?

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** I believe on this one, there's one individual who could meet the standards we're looking for. There are two things that happen.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Is that an American company or a Canadian company?

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** The scanners are not available in Canada. There isn't a Canadian company. An American company bid on it and retained the bid.

But when we announced the scanners, we announced the behaviour observation. We put that out to tender. There were five

bids on that. One was successfully bid on here last week. When we have the potential to have competitive bidding on it, we absolutely do that.

I would say the behaviour observation actually has a stronger level of security than the scanner. The scanner is more about user comfort. It has better technology. It has more security. It is certainly something that we've never done before, which is behaviour observation, and we look forward to that bid being completed.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Let me turn to Mr. Baird and his offer on Toyota for a moment.

I'm pleased that you have already acted in respect to your March 3 letter and said you'll give us any and all material. You've now said it's going to maybe take 20 days. It doesn't require 20 days for all of it. Do we have your assurance right now that we're going to get it right away?

You know that I have a motion before the committee on getting all information with respect to all of the complaints that have been lodged with Transport Canada. Are you now committing to complete transparency and accountability on that?

**Hon. John Baird:** Yes, you have my personal commitment that the department will do every single thing we legally and possibly can to get you all the information that you're requesting as quickly as is humanly possible.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** The only thing that bothers me is this business about introducing the word "legal". I respect privacy. You're telling me the only thing you're going to redact is the name and address of the complainant.

**Hon. John Baird:** I believe that under the Privacy Act, if there is anything commercially sensitive to which we would be legally required, we'd have to check with Toyota. I'm telling you that I have no problem waiving all of Transport Canada's regard in this to make them available as quickly as possible.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Okay. Are you going to provide this committee with the first quarterly reports regarding floor mats and sticky pedal recalls as well?

**Hon. John Baird:** I think the lists we're tabling today will include the number of complaints received that relate to floor mats and the number of complaints received that relate to the sticky pedal since 2006; the quarterly report from Toyota Canada on the status and resolution of consumer complaints; the conclusion of Transport Canada's investigation into sudden acceleration of Toyota vehicles; the comparison of the ratios for the number of investigators to the number of complaints between Canada and the U.S.; the percentage of collisions that have involved vehicle-related deficiencies as contributing factors; and finally, the names of the persons from Toyota Canada that departmental officials dealt with.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Again, this is good. I note that you've had a change in perspective and attitude towards the recalls. In fact, I hope you weren't misquoted the other day, but I think you said that you were prepared to have the Government of Canada lay charges if you find that Toyota has been criminally liable or if it doesn't comply with the legislation as it is. Are you still of that view?

• (0920)

**Hon. John Baird:** I should be clear, as a minister of the crown, I can't direct a criminal investigation, nor can I direct the laying of criminal charges.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** But you must have read some of those documents to sufficiently be concerned that it's a possibility that you would like somebody to explore.

**Hon. John Baird:** Absolutely. Shortly after the committee hearing the other day, I asked my deputy to review the transcripts and to specifically ensure that the department followed up on any and all information.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** You would have done that in cabinet as well. I noted that one of your cabinet colleagues almost at the same time applauded and lauded Toyota for not only its performance but for coming forward and telling us they were at fault.

**Hon. John Baird:** I think we've had a tremendously good relationship with industry. All Canadian manufacturers, and generally speaking all importers, were results focused. That's always been the thrust of the efforts of the department.

I think the number of fatalities on our roads in the last 25 years has declined, and they've declined considerably. I think police officers, law enforcement, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving can take the big credit, but I think the manufacturers and government have also done the same thing.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Minister, that isn't the issue. The issue is that you have one minister of the crown applauding a company that's currently involved in international investigations on the way it is putting product in the marketplace. I asked in this committee whether the Government of Canada has a definition for safety-related defects. I even asked Toyota. Your department must have a definition for safety-related defects that would apply to all that data you're going to give us. If you have that definition—

**The Chair:** Mr. Watson, on a point of order.

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I understand that the minister has introduced the idea of documents with respect to Toyota. I think we're now conducting a hearing about additional questions beyond documents, and I would like the chair to enforce relevance at this point.

We are also here to talk about the estimates. If he wants to continue Toyota hearings, let the committee consider that as different business. Or, if he wants to ask questions with respect to the documents that are being prepared to be tabled, because that's what the minister opened up in his statement, I think that's relevant. But if we're conducting an additional hearing, let the committee do that at a different point.

I'm asking you to enforce relevance at this point, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Volpe, on the same point of order.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Mr. Chairman, I think the minister introduced that himself. He wanted us to talk about Toyota. He wanted us to—

**Hon. John Baird:** I'm very happy to respond.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:**—deal with the documents that he's going to present.

All I'm doing is asking a question of relevance to the documents, and it surrounds the issue of the definition. The definition of safety-related defects is relevant to the question I asked him whether he and his government are prepared to lay charges and whether that is a reflection of a government position or it is his personal position.

To me, that's relevant.

**Hon. John Baird:** Mr. Volpe, I can tell you that estimates hearings traditionally have a pretty wide scope. I don't disagree with you on that at all.

My deputy can answer the specific question with respect to the definition that you requested.

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu (Deputy Minister, Department of Transport):** You are correct that “defect”, as a word, is not defined in the Motor Vehicle Safety Act. However, under the department's guidelines for enforcement and compliance policy, which is available on the web, we have criteria that outline what a defect is.

As well, Mr. Volpe, we had a court case in 1979, the crown versus Ford Motor Company, where the judge articulated a very coherent definition of “defect”. This is widely known by government and by all the auto companies.

I don't want to read it here, but if the committee wishes we will be happy to supply what our guidelines say and what the courts have said in terms of what a safety-related defect is.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Our time is up.

**Hon. John Baird:** We will table that for the committee so that all members can have it.

**The Chair:** Absolutely—through the clerk's office, please.

Monsieur Gaudet.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good day, Ministers.

Mr. Baird, I have a question for you that has been asked before.

Regarding the December 30, 2010 and March 31, 2011 project deadlines, would it not be possible to grant a short extension to Quebec municipalities?

As you know, problems arise when municipalities are in the midst of elections. In 2009, a general election was held in all municipalities. Many saw a change in administrations. The same thing occurs when a new government is elected to office. As you observed when you replaced the Liberals in office, it took you a certain amount of time to get used to the new rules and to put your new vision in place.

For that reason, I'm asking you if you might possibly agree to give Quebec municipalities, the urban as well as the rural ones, more time to complete their work and their projects.

● (0925)

**Hon. John Baird:** I am mindful of the fact that the needs of the municipalities vary from region to region, or from province to province. In the case of our Economic Action Plan that was first introduced 13 or 14 months ago, it was very clear that the deadline for projects was the end of March, for two main reasons. This was fairly well-known before the elections in Quebec, perhaps 10 months before the elections were held.

Let me outline these two reasons. First, the goal is to stimulate the economy as quickly as possible. That is a priority. In the past, in the case of our government and the Building Canada plan, or of the previous government and its various programs, sometimes, three years passed before the first grants were available or before an agreement was negotiated with a provincial government. Many of these investments are associated with areas under provincial jurisdiction. We must work with the provinces, not only with Quebec, and we respect that. In the case of the Economic Action Plan, we felt that it was important to move forward and to stimulate the economy as quickly as possible. We do not want to see those who are out of work wait one, two or three years, as has been the case in the past.

The second reason is that we want to return to a balanced budget situation as soon as possible. A project in Niagara Falls was announced. There were funds in a budget that dated back nine years. Billions in infrastructure program funding dated back to 2003, to the previous government.

There have been some municipal changes in Nova Scotia and throughout government as well. They are prepared to spend all of their money. All of the municipalities that requested funding under the stimulus plan maintained at the time they applied that projects were shovel-ready and that they could complete the work by the end of March. I realize that everyone would like to have more time, but we need to stay on schedule with the program. I think that I have answered your question clearly.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I agree with what you are saying about Nova Scotia, but that province has a milder climate than Quebec. Even though we did have a milder winter this year, normally temperatures are below zero. It is harder to work in Quebec than it is in Nova Scotia. However, I do understand what you're saying.

**Hon. John Baird:** The situation is the same in Manitoba, in British Columbia and in Northern Ontario.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I do not want you to grant a three-year extension. A five or six-month extension would be acceptable. Back home, March and December are winter months.

**Hon. John Baird:** We asked that projects be shovel-ready. For instance, we concluded an initial agreement with Danny Williams in Newfoundland and Labrador and all of the money has been spent. The process was protracted in Quebec and in a few other regions, but all of the municipalities that applied for funding told us, when they submitted their request, that they were ready to go. I took their word for it. That way, my department and the municipalities could avoid any bureaucratic delays. They told us that they were good to go and could complete their projects within the planned timeframes and I took their word for it.

● (0930)

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Thank you.

Mr. Merrifield, it was noted earlier that at the end of 2005, the government invested \$9 million in airports to counter the threat of terrorism. Why did you hire subcontractors instead of Transport Canada employees? You paid for subcontractors, but I get the impression that they are short-staffed. The lines at Montreal's Pierre Elliott Trudeau Airport during the holidays were very long. Why didn't you hire Transport Canada personnel instead of relying on the services of agencies?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** When it comes to the CATSA employees, they're subcontracted out, and this is actually much more efficient. It's actually deemed to be somewhere between 20% and 25%.

When I talked to Tom Ridge in the United States, he suggested that our model is much better than theirs. Really, CATSA is a product that came out of the 9/11 attack. We had to react very quickly. If there's one thing our American counterparts are saying, it's that they wish they'd taken on the Canadian model.

We regulate it. We have CATSA, which our government employees are monitoring and watching. This is one of the recommendations of the Auditor General. We have changed that to make sure it is done as efficiently as possible.

Now, we're not satisfied yet, because what we did announce, the \$1.5 billion of extra money into CATSA over a five-year period, is to make sure that we do a complete review of CATSA, making sure that we are doing it as efficiently as we possibly can. We're not satisfied yet that we are getting not only the best procedures but also the best value for money. Perhaps we'll even look at the structure of it.

We're launching that review now and we're very serious about it, but your concerns are understood. We understand that Canadians are prepared to pay but they want an efficient system.

**The Chair:** Merci, Monsieur Gaudet.

Mr. Bevington.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to you, Minister, for coming in today.

I'm interested in talking about aviation safety, of course. You made an announcement yesterday that you're taking back the responsibility that was assigned to the association that represents the business jet industry. You've also delayed implementation of air taxi and helicopter SMS.

I worked very hard to get some witnesses in front of this committee to talk about the larger issue of aviation safety vis-à-vis major carriers. Since we've seen that in a number of areas the system is not working as well as you thought it would, and as well as this government and the Department of Transport thought it would, are you now considering actually doing a review of aviation safety vis-à-vis SMS for large carriers?

**Hon. John Baird:** Thank you very much for your question. I appreciate your concern on this issue. You and Mr. Masse have worked for many years on it.

We support SMS. I think it is important that the department do a much better job of working with its inspectors. They are the backbone of the system. I think the deputy and I are on the same page in that we've done a lot more listening. We've done a lot better at explaining the direction we'd like to go in with respect to SMS.

The effort on self-regulation was not an effort of this government. It predated our government's arrival. I'm not critical of that decision to do it. I was concerned.... The group in question is a good one. They have decent people who are well-meaning. But when you have a lobby group being the regulator, I found that to be a bit of a conflict. On the TSB report, with respect to the plane that carried—

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** But don't you find the incidents that occurred with business jets to be of the most concern rather than simply a lobby group handling these safety issues...? We've had major incidents with business jets.

**Hon. John Baird:** I don't know about major incidents, but there was an uptake in it. The TSB report on the incident involving Ron Joyce, the Tim Hortons founder, was particularly powerful, and it was one of the reasons, in addition to the eight points you raised.

• (0935)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** There was A.D. Williams in Alberta as well.

**Hon. John Baird:** Yes. I'm not going to argue with you. That's why we're taking it back. I would rather—

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Okay. So it's not just simply about a lobby group. It's about actual aviation safety.

**Hon. John Baird:** Yes, that's the whole reason—

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** That is the whole concern we have here.

**Hon. John Baird:** That is 100 percent—

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Okay. That's good.

**Hon. John Baird:** Frankly, I don't mind saying that you can take some credit.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** I can move on now.

But I would like to know whether you're planning a review, because that is the question I asked. Are you planning a review of major carriers to determine the effectiveness of SMS for the 99% of Canadians who travel by air?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** As the minister said, for the last number of months we have gone across the country, and my staff and I have met over 500 inspectors. We're talking to our unions. We're talking to the industry. We are already conducting that review, and we have taken steps, the steps that you have mentioned, as a result of that work.

This is an ongoing effort. We have to make sure that industry will comply and can comply, and we, as regulators, are well equipped—and our staff is well equipped—to deal with that.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Then maybe we should get you in front of the committee here and understand exactly the nature of the review that you are conducting.

When it comes to aviation security, I know this issue certainly must be in front of cabinet, because there are some cabinet members who are not very happy with aviation security in this country and who don't view the way we're conducting it.... I agree with you to an extent, and I agree with the assessment that the honourable Minister of State made in saying that the system was ramped up after 9/11 and a lot of these decisions are knee-jerk. We need to go back and look at aviation security to understand what is effective and what works for people.

The frustration that travellers may feel sometimes at the way security is carried out is legitimate, and we need to have some understanding of where we're going with this system. Quite clearly, if you or your department had attended the forum that the Liberals and I conducted during the prorogation, you would have seen that the experts are saying that our system is not correct. It's not working. If I could characterize the aviation security system at airports, it's a Maginot line. It can be gone around very easily. Perhaps when you talk about behavioural identification, you're starting to realize that we need to identify threat, rather than simply provide a public relations gesture when someone enters the airport. That is extremely important, and I hope your review will take that into account.

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** You're absolutely right in the sense of taking the shotgun approach. It's the international standards that we're trying to keep up with, and we can't be the weak link in that.

Behaviour observation is more of a single-shot approach, in the sense that you're looking at trying to pick out those individuals who could be potential hazards to security. That's one of the reasons we're doing the review. That's one of the reasons we added significant layers since the attack in December.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** I have one last question—

**Hon. John Baird:** We welcome your thoughts and the thoughts of the committee with respect to the review of CATSA and its operations. I want to see us review every single rule we have.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** I have one more question, please, Mr. Minister.

On the Toyota material, you didn't mention the correspondence. What I wanted to see from the Toyota material was the correspondence between Toyota and Transport Canada prior to the press release issued on November 26. There was a press release from Transport Canada indicating they were working with Toyota Canada on these issues. I'd like to see the correspondence not just on the recall, but on all the work that was going on prior to that on this particular issue.

**Hon. John Baird:** We will give you everything you're asking for, including all e-mails. That was one of the things I raised in my conversation with Mr. Volpe. We will make it all available to you as quickly as is humanly possible.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Thank you very much, sir.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Brown.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Merrifield, you've got mail.



The post office comes under your responsibility, and I know that there's been considerable discussion there. You know Canada Post has historically been one of those institutions that has created great connectivity among Canadians. It's really been part of the social fabric that we have had as a benefit of a country. My understanding is that Canada Post still has one of the lowest rates for postal service in all of the developed countries, and it's a tremendous benefit to us.

Mail is changing. Technology has changed. We all receive mail in different means now, but I know the Liberals have a motion in the House that mail delivery has to continue to historic mail boxes in rural areas of the country.

I grew up in a rural area. Mail service was anticipated and anxiously awaited, I would say. We even had Saturday delivery at one time. I wonder if you could tell the committee what steps the government has taken to protect mail delivery in our rural areas.

• (0940)

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** Sure. That's a very good question, and it's a concern of anyone who lives in rural Canada.

We brought in a service charter, as you recall, in September to make sure we have a universal system and that there's an obligation on behalf of Canada Post. It's the first time, actually, in the history of the country that we have an agreement with Canada Post, and they've agreed to deliver on certain criteria according to their charter. When it comes to end-of-lane delivery, and this is the real issue, we have put forward a directive to Canada Post saying that we want every one of those mailboxes retained in their original position prior to 2005, to comply with the law. If they don't comply with the law and they put the mail carrier at risk, and it's not safe as deemed by the Labour Board of Canada, then there's no option there.

Eighty-eight percent of those who have been analyzed stay right as they are, so the 12% have to be changed, moved in some way, because they don't comply with the labour codes. Those are the ones where some people will get a little upset because they may have to travel a little farther, maybe to a community box that is half a mile away or maybe a few hundreds yards away, depending on where you're at in the rural area.

Our objective is to make sure that every safe mailbox is retained, and we hold Canada Post to that. It is something they're complying with. This analyzing and moving the boxes is not cheap for Canada Post. It costs them somewhere between \$250 million and \$300 million to actually analyze and assess these boxes, so they would prefer to leave them where they're at as well. This is really about safety and making sure that these men and women who are neighbours and friends who carry the mail in the rural areas are protected and are safe.

We've actually had 120 auto accidents since 2005 and we've had three deaths, so this is fairly serious. There's no one who wants to get their mail in the rural communities.... I live in a rural area as well, and I wouldn't want to put my letter carrier at risk, and I don't think anyone in Canada does either. This is something we are working very aggressively at. Actually, only 6% of the population of Canada gets their mail via rural delivery, and 88% of those are not going to change, so we're talking about a very small number. But people habitually get their mail in a certain way and they don't like to get it changed in any way, so we understand that.

**Hon. John Baird:** Could I just jump in on one quick point to validate? I found it ridiculous that they couldn't continue rural mail for every single house. They've been doing it for years. I thought it was crazy, and it sounded like a lot of baloney. Minister Merrifield had arranged for me to go out with Canada Post folks, not half an hour from Parliament Hill, to see it for myself. There are some areas of the country where, with the topography, these are not small rural roads any more. They're now major thoroughfares and we have cars zooming by. I said we'll just put the mailbox a hundred feet off the road so that we can maintain delivery. When we went out to actually physically do it, they couldn't even get up the road because their road wasn't plowed.

I would encourage all members, if you have any interest in this file, to take Canada Post up on their offer and physically go and see it. I didn't believe it at all until I physically went to see it. Forget the legal consequences and the moral consequences. I couldn't live with myself if some postal carrier was killed because we made some sort of political edict that at all cost this had to be maintained. I would encourage members to do it. When you see it yourself, you really understand it.

• (0945)

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** With regard to that, I sent a letter to each of you in this committee—I believe every senator and member of Parliament—encouraging you to go on a ride-along, because the more you become informed about this issue, the more you'll understand it and be able to help your constituents.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Minister, can you talk about whether or not there have been complaints and how we've been dealing with those?

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** Yes. We take those complaints and we give them to Canada Post. We don't get into the day-to-day operation of Canada Post; they're a crown corporation. They have been working very, very closely with these individuals, trying to accommodate them wherever possible. As I said, they don't want to move any of these boxes. They have to, to comply with the Labour Code, and it's really about safety. They have been doing an exceptional job. They're about halfway through. There are about 800,000 boxes that they're assessing, and about 355,000 to 400,000, I believe, in that neighbourhood, have been assessed already, so they're about halfway through.

There are some areas of the country where more of these have to be moved and assessed than in other areas. So some of the ones that have a significant number of them that need to be moved have been working exceptionally well. That doesn't mean they're going to solve all the problems, but even the specific member of Parliament from that area has suggested that Canada Post has done an exceptional job in the communication work in trying to accommodate the mail delivery wherever possible.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Dhaliwal.

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

Thank you, and welcome, ministers and officials.

Minister, the way I see it, a large portion of the estimates is related to your economic plan. I would ask the minister if he would agree that the infrastructure stimulus spending he had is temporary. Is that yes or no?

**Hon. John Baird:** Yes.

I'm pleased to answer infrastructure questions, but you're not Gerard Kennedy. Where is Gerard?

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** He will come back.

**Hon. John Baird:** Is he not the Liberal infrastructure critic?

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Minister, by saying...

**Hon. John Baird:** I like you, Sukh, but I...

**The Chair:** I'll remind everybody that this is televised.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Minister, when you say temporary, are you confident in your stimulus job creation figures in your budget?

**Hon. John Baird:** The Department of Finances makes those figures. I have no reason to doubt them. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities came out with this: every \$1 billion in infrastructure spending would create or maintain about 11,000 jobs. That's a good number as well.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** We notice, Minister, that you made a critical error when you used those numbers, because you used a wrong multiplier. You used a multiplier by using permanent spending, while you just admitted that the stimulus money you are spending is temporary. By making this critical mistake by using a wrong multiplier for permanent spending, how much have you over-estimated your job creation numbers?

**Hon. John Baird:** We should be very clear. This is a jump-start for the economy. This is not a permanent measure. We've always been very clear on that. Our hope is that as the fragile recovery takes hold, we will see the private sector take over in terms of job creation.

The other thing is that we've sped up Building Canada, which is seeing significant long-term investments happen, which is a bit slow.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** When you say that they are temporary measures, you agree that you used that multiplier for temporary spending, not for the permanent...

**Hon. John Baird:** It's not going to be after 2011, that's right. And that's not just the Government of Canada.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** That's all. I just wondered.

**Hon. John Baird:** All ten provinces are doing the same thing. So we agree.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** On the other issue, when it comes to your budget and the action plan, you say that this money should be timely, targeted, and temporary, right?

**Hon. John Baird:** That's correct.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** When it comes to targeted and temporary, it's very consistent, the way I see it. But "timely" you have changed. In the 2009 budget, you said that timely means that we should spend that money in the first 120 days.

**Hon. John Baird:** We wanted to get projects under way as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** That was in 120 days. But in the 2010 budget you say, "Timely: to support the economy when private demand is weakest". Why did you change the definition from 2009 to 2010?

● (0950)

**Hon. John Baird:** I don't think we changed it. The object of the game is that it had taken governments, frankly—our government under Building Canada and the previous government under all their infrastructure spending—too long to get things going. Our department moved probably ten times faster than we normally did. So did the provinces. Would we have liked every single project to have gotten under way within 120 days? You bet. If you look back over the past year, by no means was it perfect, but it was literally ten times faster than ever before.

I'll give you an example in your province. British Columbia was able to move very quickly. We worked with them very quickly. Then they dissolved the legislature and weren't able to continue when they went into a provincial election campaign that was scheduled. So we got a lot done very quickly. Then after their election, they took two or three weeks for a cabinet shuffle. They got a new minister. It took her, naturally, two or three months to get up to speed. So there was a little bit of a gap there. That happened in British Columbia. It happened in Nova Scotia. But at the end of the day, we were able to get the job done. It was a two-year plan.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Ministers, it is a pleasure to see you both.

I'm going to challenge you that it was anything but quick, because when you look at the supplementary estimates (C), and you look across the suite of infrastructure programs, it was anything but swift or timely.

On the infrastructure stimulus fund, 44% wasn't delivered. That is \$850 million unspent of \$2 billion. When you look at the communities component of Building Canada, 48% wasn't delivered. That is \$135 million of \$250 million. On provincial-territorial-based funding, 48% wasn't delivered. That's \$240 million unspent of \$495 million. Of the green infrastructure fund, 93% wasn't delivered in the fiscal.... That's \$186 million unspent of \$200 million. So it wasn't timely. In fact, there was a lapse of \$1.4 billion, and that was a lost opportunity to create approximately 30,000 jobs.

In fact, the economic action plan promised to create 190,000 jobs. What we see is, "It's coming". There was a net loss of 300,000 jobs in this recession. Yet you are taking credit for it. Can you explain it to us? Can you admit that you failed to deliver on your commitment in budget 2009? When you are suggesting, especially, that 300,000 Canadians have lost their jobs since the recession hit, you should simply—

**The Chair:** I'm going to have to stop it there. We're way past the five minutes.

Minister, could you be very brief?

**Hon. John Baird:** I'll be very brief.

I think you're using what I would call "Kennedy math" and you're better than that.

Let me tell you this. Would I have loved to have spent it all immediately? You bet. Let me use two examples that you cited. One is that we offered all the provinces and territories.... Every province and territory has \$175 million available under Building Canada. We said to every province and territory, we will give you that money right now if you want it, and a majority of the provinces said they'd take it. Some provinces said no, they didn't want it.

Ontario, our provincial government, said no, they were too busy with all these other projects and they wouldn't take it. And I don't criticize them for that. Other provinces took advantage of it.

Of this launch of programs, I will say that it is ten times better than any infrastructure program brought forward by the federal government at any time in the last 25 years. I'll give you an example. The MRIF program was a very successful program launched by the previous Liberal government. It was in the 2003 budget. In 2003-04 the government spent nothing. In 2004-05 the government spent nothing. In 2005-06 the government spent 0.04% of the budget. So it wasn't perfect.

Building Canada wasn't a heck of a lot better, frankly. So we've moved a heck of a lot faster than has ever been done before, and it takes time to work together. I'll give you an example. Your city of Toronto wanted a program—

• (0955)

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Mississauga.

**Hon. John Baird:** Sorry, Mississauga—your region.

Mississauga does a lot better, you're right. I concede that point. Hazel has already finished projects, she is not just starting them.

Take the city of Toronto, for example, in your region. It was the only application we got from the entire province of Ontario that was improperly submitted, because they wanted to spend what would

notionally be their share over ten years. They knew it wasn't eligible, and they applied anyway. I said to Mayor Miller, you come back to me with projects that are eligible and I will hold money available for you. He did, and we were able to announce that in July. I wish we could have announced it in March, but we were only able to announce it in July. And inevitably, when you have 500 projects he wasn't going to be able to spend the majority.

I will put the public service, I will put the political leaders—federal, provincial, and municipal—and compare them against any single public infrastructure program launched. I'll go even further than 25 years and say since the Second World War and say that we've moved ten times faster. And that's a pretty great accomplishment.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Desnoyers.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Minister, my question has to do with the operating budget of The Jacques Cartier and Champlain Bridges Incorporated, which is increasing by about \$13 million or \$14 million, from \$46 million to \$60 million.

In your opinion, is this budget sufficient to undertake in the short term repairs to the Champlain Bridge? As you know, it is one of the busiest bridges in Canada. Currently it is also in very serious need of infrastructure repairs. That brings me to my question.

Given the \$13 million or \$14 million increase in the corporation's budget, do you think this injection of capital is sufficient to finally make the bridge safe?

[*English*]

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** Sure. You're absolutely right. The Champlain Bridge does need some repairs, there is no question of that. That's why, not in this budget but in the budget prior, \$212 million was allocated for the Champlain Bridge for repairs over a ten-year period. We added to that in this budget another \$51 million, I believe it was—\$38 million and \$19 million for the Mercier and the Champlain respectively.

So you're absolutely right, it's important that these bridges stay safe. The money that was allocated in the last two budgets is moving to ensure that this does happen. People from the area can be assured that they are safe. We will watch them very closely. They are run by a crown corporation, the Federal Bridge Corporation, and people can be assured that the bridges are safe.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. John Baird:** I could also answer the question.

Let me just say that not only is safety important, it is mandatory. While safety is mandatory everywhere, I have to say that Quebec is well aware of safety considerations, in light of what happened during the construction of the Quebec Bridge one hundred years ago. Moreover, the report released by Pierre-Marc Johnson was very clear on this score.

I am not an engineer and my colleague is not one either, but when we receive a request concerning bridge safety, we make it a priority of ours. When we receive a notice that additional money is needed, we comply with that notice. It's very important to us. I know that it's a matter of great importance to Quebec and to our government.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Thank you.

I'd like to come back to CATSA. You have allocated an additional \$9 million for safety considerations. My colleague made an interesting suggestion, namely that we should perhaps revert to the old system where we had our own security guards.

Another colleague also mentioned that last December, people were quite frustrated when they had to go through security. It's a known fact that CATSA contracts out security work. It was clear at the time that the subcontractors did not have enough staff to meet needs. The same situation exists today. Does this mean that an additional \$9 million will be allocated next year?

Mr. Merrifield, you stated that the savings of 20% or 25% that could be gained by contracting out this work may eventually not be realized. I'm not sure that contracting out the work is a cost-effective as it should be, considering how important security is and the fact that we're assigning that responsibility to others.

I'm also curious about the number of subcontractors in Canada who handle security matters. How many subcontractors were awarded contracts and who are they?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** When it comes to the contractors, they subcontract. Employees of CATSA are contracted out to different contractors. There are two or three of them across the country, or perhaps more than that. But that's not the issue you're talking about.

You're asking how we dealt with it when we hit the kind of stress we ran into on the days right after Christmas, after the attempted bombing, when we had new rules imposed on us by the United States. My colleagues Mr. Baird and Minister Van Loan—Minister of Public Safety at the time—went to exceptional measures because we had exceptional situations. We had lost and had to cancel over 200 flights—

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** My question to you was as follows: Who are the subcontractors? You appear to be telling me that there are two or three of them. Could there possibly be many more?

• (1000)

[English]

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** We'll get you the exact numbers—6,000 plus.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** I see.

My other question regarding subcontractors is as follows: Are steps taken to ensure that all of these subcontractors are properly informed of security standards?

I have travelled in a number of airports and I'm not sure they all have the same standards, or that these standards are applied evenly. So then, how do you ensure that the safety of passengers is taken into account when we go for the cheapest option? We try to get the best possible deal as far as security is concerned, when we know that today, security is becoming an increasingly important consideration.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'll ask the minister to be very brief, please.

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** Certainly.

My colleague is really questioning whether these contractors are trained appropriately. I think that's what the issue is. That's one of the reasons why we're doing a full review of airport security. We have the same concerns that you do. We're going to do a very thorough job of that as we move forward into this very short time ahead.

Just getting back to December 25, my colleagues did bring in the RCMP, the Montreal police force, and Transport Canada officials to shore up the emergency situation. We're looking at streamlining that so it can be done efficiently in the future if it ever poses itself again.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Hon. John Baird:** Could I just jump in for one second?

On Christmas Day we had the events over southwestern Ontario coming into Detroit. We literally signed new security regulations in the middle of the night. I think Canadians understood on the 26th and 27th that there were going to be some problems and challenges when we had to put significant increases in measures in place.

Canadians will do their part, but they bloody expect the government to do their share as well in making sure that the proper staffing is in place. That's why we called in Transport Canada officials. The Montreal police did a phenomenal job in coming in to help us at Dorval. The RCMP did a great job at Pearson. By the 28th it began to recover. But we're conducting the CATSA review to look at some of these measures and how we can do a better job. Canadians will do their share, but they want the system to work better for them.

**The Chair:** Mr. Watson.

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With the minister cutting into my time like that, I'm feeling less love than Mr. Volpe here.

I'm kidding.

I want to ask a question of Minister Merrifield with respect to Canada Post, and then one on VIA Rail.

Picking up on rural mail delivery, as I drive from work to home in my own constituency, which is a rural constituency, I've seen a couple of situations. One is that I still continue to see drivers in left-hand vehicles driving against the flow of traffic in order to easily reach into the mail box. I'm not sure that is a proper situation. Or I've seen what is presumably at least the short-term solution, which is to add a second driver in the right-hand passenger seat to drive with the flow of traffic and be able to easily reach into roadside mail boxes. I'm not sure that the addition of a second driver is likely a long-term solution for what was originally an ergonomic problem of a single driver reaching all the way across into a mail box.

My question is whether you're aware of any analysis being conducted by Canada Post about the implementation of right-hand-drive vehicles with respect to rural mail delivery? If so, when do they expect to complete such an analysis, and is there any agreement with any auto maker or other tenderer, or some sort of agreement to provide right-hand vehicles, if it is deemed necessary to have them?

What can you tell us about that?

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** I can tell you that Canada Post is looking at putting some right-hand-operated vehicles on the road to address those kinds of concerns. I think it's obvious that it's inappropriate for them to pull over to the opposite side of the road against the traffic.

So those safety concerns are being analyzed and addressed.

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Okay.

With respect to VIA Rail, I recall in Budget 2007 some significant capital expenditures being made by the government, followed up of course in our economic action plan last year with some significant additional resources. I can speak from local experience: I know you were present to announce a new rail station in Windsor.

Can you talk about how those investments are being deployed? More broadly speaking, I've already put on the record that we're getting a new station for Windsor, but how are these investments being deployed in the Windsor-Quebec corridor and more broadly speaking across Canada? Can you give us an update on vote 75, I think it is, as I look at the estimates? Can you give us a better understanding of how that money is being deployed for VIA Rail?

• (1005)

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** Yes, I can. Congratulations on the new station in your riding. It is really a refurbishment of the full lines right from Windsor up to Quebec City.

Actually, I can announce that we are ahead of schedule in that refurbishment. There is \$900 million in total, \$407 million in economic action money in last year's economic action plan, with 85% actually spent, allocated already. That whole series of changes to that line is taking place at an accelerated rate.

As well, I was in Vancouver, where VIA was showing off one of their newly refurbished cars destined to go on the trans-Canada line, as well as some of the refurbished cars on the Windsor-Quebec corridor. These cars are really significantly improved—

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Yes. They're dramatically different.

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** They will give an opportunity for VIA Rail to add ridership. They certainly need to add ridership right across the country, if they're going to stay viable, because there's no question

that taxpayers subsidize. We're pleased to be able, as a government, to make sure they have the tools to succeed.

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** I want to come back to the Canada Post issue again with a brief question about right-hand-drive vehicles. Is there any offer of agreement, or what can you speculate or what do you know about providing right-hand-drive vehicles?

I might as well put it on the record. Is there some consideration given to a right-hand-drive version of the Grand Caravan in Windsor, with respect to Chrysler? What can you tell me?

**Hon. Rob Merrifield:** Yes. I don't know the specifics of it, but I can get you the details and actual numbers. The Grand Caravan is one of the vehicles that is being used. I know there is some contracting that has been let. There are some vehicles that are coming from overseas as well. This is all within the rules and regulations that Canada Post runs under. We make sure they follow all the laws of the country when it comes to their tendering and bidding.

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean has a point of order.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** The minister promised us an hour today for estimates. We've gone over that by ten minutes. I'm wondering whether we can release the minister now and get to his officials.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry; I wasn't paying attention to the time.

**Hon. John Baird:** I'll take one question from Mr. Volpe, out of respect for the great wise helmsman of the committee.

**The Chair:** We'll give one question to Mr. Volpe, out of respect.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Very nice; thank you very much, Mr. Baird. I hope you'll feel the same after I ask you this question.

I want to take advantage of the fact that you appear to be very open about what you think the Government of Canada should do with respect to the Toyota recalls. You've given us an indication that you have a compendium of information, but that you also already have the tools. I think you have the tools under the regulations, under the act, and under the definition that the deputy has already said you understand and have obviously reviewed over the course of the last little while.

Your view of both Toyota and the safety of the product it has been putting on Canadian roads has clearly changed over the last couple of weeks. Two days ago you said you were prepared to take a look at criminal charges. I'm wondering today whether you are prepared to impose definitions for safety-related defects that are going to guide the way that your department looks at things. Are you going to order a restructuring of the architecture of the way that complaints are received, of the process? Thirdly, are you going to take the responsibility for issuing recalls for product that is unsafe on the road?

Are you willing to do that today? You have indicated that you have the tools. Will you do it today?

**Hon. John Baird:** With respect to the criminal issue, I want to be very clear. Canadian cabinet ministers, unlike their U.S. counterparts, cannot order a criminal investigation. They cannot order criminal charges. That's the American system, not the Canadian system.

I can tell you that I have a significant amount of confidence in the calibre of my officials who are charged with making these type of decisions. I welcome any advice from the committee. If they feel there are specific changes required to regulation or to legislation based on the facts—not on a perception, but based on a reality—we're very pleased to hear the advice of the committee and to raise the bar, if that will lead to safer roads in this country. I feel very strongly about that.

• (1010)

**The Chair:** I'll have to interrupt there.

I want to thank the ministers for attending today.

I know you have other commitments, but I know the staff is going to stay and continue to take questions. Once again you've made yourself available, as always, and we appreciate it. Thank you very much.

We'll take a two-minute recess and then we'll come back to departmental officials.

• (1010)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1015)

**The Chair:** Welcome back.

We have new guests at the table. In order to expedite the conversation, as the questions are asked you can either introduce yourself.... I'm sure Mr. Volpe and our committee members know who you are.

I will go to Mr. Volpe to finish his round.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Madam Deputy and colleagues.

As for the question I was asking the minister regarding the whole recall process, Madam Deputy, he indicated, of course, the 1979 court decision on the definition that wasn't included in the Motor Vehicle Safety Act. I have specific questions that I think perhaps Mr. McDonald will address, but that's up to you.

Last week the head of the defect investigations was surprised and appalled—I think those were two words he used, and Mr. McDonald was here when he was using them—at the fact that Toyota was not aware of the sticky pedal issues. Rather than get involved in the minutiae of what the problem is, the larger issue is that there is product on the road the manufacturer had already identified as problematic. Because Mr. McDonald provided us with some information at committee, information came forward that the department was aware of the problems. What I think we would like to know is whether in fact the safety of the customer is going to be in the hands of the manufacturer, or whether Transport Canada is going to assume some responsibility for actually applying the law. As I heard the minister, he thought there was a role for Transport Canada. I'm wondering whether it is going to be your recommendation to the minister that he act promptly to ensure that he assumes the responsibility for recalling—

• (1020)

**The Chair:** Point of order, Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I was not aware that the officials were coming today to talk about Toyota, because obviously I would have prepared much differently. I know the minister opened up that line of questioning in relation to a general positioning on it, but I'm not sure if the officials are prepared to answer those questions.

Certainly I know they came here on estimates. I'm just wondering if we could hear from the officials whether they're prepared to answer questions on Toyota today. Certainly, if they are, we could pursue that line of questioning, but that's not what we invited them here to do.

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** Mr. Chairman, this issue is of particular importance to the safety of Canadians. We appreciate that we're here for the supplementary estimates, but we're ready to answer the questions of the committee. We may not have some of the details that you have asked for, but we will be happy to provide them after.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Thank you for that.

I'll just finish off. I don't mean to trap officials into a policy issue—that's not their job—I just wanted to ask, on the basis of what the minister said to us today and the documentation he said he wants to make available to everybody, whether you're prepared to make the recommendation that they move directly into the area where he can act quickly, i.e., the regulations.

Obviously the question of resources—that's money. That's not something you can do. The government has to make a decision whether it wants to put resources to this. Pardon the pun, but at least on the mechanical side of the regulations and the legislation, are you prepared to advise the minister that there is action he could take today, especially since he admits publicly he wants to assume responsibility?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** Why don't I start not with some of the detailed questions that you have asked, but in terms of under the current law and under the current regulations the onus is on the government to regulate. We have a criminal law power, whereby the automobile companies have to report to us when they become aware of a defect that's related to safety. That's the rule.

The purpose of the law or the intent behind the law, as we understand it, is that for large automobile companies it is in their commercial interest to make sure their vehicles are safe, because this is about consumer confidence. If a car company is not actually putting out safe vehicles, I don't think their sales will work very well.

That's the main logic. The government regulations are there to make sure that the car companies actually take the appropriate action.

In terms of Transport Canada's powers, we feel that over the years we have a very good track record of ensuring that when we become aware of any issues or any problems, we have been able to raise that with the automobile companies. And they do act quickly. That's one thing.

If we feel any change to the regulations is required, we will look at that, for sure, but I believe my minister has said that we welcome any ideas that this committee may come up with. If you feel that there are things we should be doing differently, or that the law should be changed, we would be happy to look at every suggestion you have—the same thing that we will do as a reflection on the Toyota situation to see if there are any changes required. Whether the solution is to pull the recall power directly into the government and that actually will provide a better protection for Canadian consumers, we have to look at that very carefully, and we have to make sure that it will work appropriately.

Regarding resources, because I believe the committee is going to ask us about resources—because it has been asked—we don't have infinite amounts of money. We have the budget we have. We have the budget that Parliament has appropriated. We allocate that money to the best of our ability to manage the risks we deal with. We are a regulatory department. We have regulations on all modes of transportation. We do our best in matching our resources to the risks we're facing.

This is not an apples-to-apples comparison, but if we look at the United States and their NHTSA recalls and investigations unit, I believe they have 56 or 57 people dealing with 35,000 complaints. I'll get you the exact number. We have 16 people in that particular group, dealing with 1,100 complaints, but our system is different because we don't have the numbers like they do in the United States, where we have millions of cars and thousands of complaints.

So we have to go by the substance of the issue. For our investigators, they really take the time. They're professional people. They're engineers. They're car specialists. They look at and examine each case and each complaint we have. So that's what we go by. We believe that they actually.... They are very proud of the work they do.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable member said that Transport Canada was aware. I do not want there to be, in any shape or form, confusion that we were aware of a sticky pedal issue. There is nothing, according to my professional staff, who know these things and who deal with the complaints...that we had any knowledge of “sticky pedal” as being a defect. Our people heard about this from the car company, from Toyota, on January 21. So just to make sure that we correct the record, because it's very important.... Because an alternative suggestion is that we knew about it and did not do anything, which is absolutely not correct.

•(1025)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Gaudet.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a question about Canada Post. Why has the government cut transfers to Canada Post by \$50 million? Are you not worried that service to the public will be adversely affected?

**Mr. André Morency (Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Management and Crown Corporation Governance, Corporate Services, Department of Transport):** I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, but I do not understand the question. We have not reduced Canada Post's budget. It is a self-financed Crown Corporation. However, in its supplementary budget, it did receive an additional sum to handle the extra volume of mail in the region in which the Olympic Games were being held. Canada Post's budget has not been cut because the corporation does not receive any money to fund its operations.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I was unaware of that.

I live in a rural riding. The safety of letter carriers has been mentioned, as well as the safety of customers. In our region, people remain in their homes for quite a long time. Having to walk 500 metres to pick up mail when you're 65 years of age or older is no small feat. There are no sidewalks along rural roads. In fact, Canada Post customers have the same safety concerns as the corporation's employees. Perhaps something needs to be done to make the situation safer for both parties, that is for Canada Post customers and employees alike.

**M. André Morency:** You're right.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Do you intend to remedy this situation? Will you carry out a study to validate the concerns of both employees and customers? It's all well and good to say yes or no, but what do you in fact intend to do?

**Mr. André Morency:** I could talk about the safety review conducted by Canada Post of each mailbox, of each house laneway and walkway. Canada Post will talk with residents to determine where mailboxes could best be located from a safety standpoint for their employees and of course, for customers.

However, some mailboxes have been in the same location for a long time. If a recommendation were to be made by Canada Post and by residents, I'm certain that the solution will have already been discussed. In some cases, mailboxes were moved for these very reasons.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Thank you.

Madam Deputy Minister, what was Transport Canada's budget for 2009-2010 and what kind of budget will it have for 2010-2011?

[*English*]

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** It is \$1.4 billion for this.

•(1030)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Is that for 2009-2010 or for 2010-2011?

**Mr. André Morency:** Its budget for 2010-2011 will total \$1.8 billion.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Does this have anything to do with airport security and automobile safety, for example, the safety of Toyota vehicles?

**Mr. André Morency:** There are a number of reasons for the changes. First of all, our real property budget will increase because we want to purchase land in the Windsor area. In addition, the way in which the department is funded to cover operational costs has changed. Airport leasing charges which were formerly paid directly by airport authorities to the department are now paid directly to the federal government.

Some of the increases reflect the change in our accounting process.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Earlier, the Deputy Minister said that Transport Canada's budget was finite. However, do you think it would be possible to hire a few more people to improve security?

[English]

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** I said that we don't have infinite resources. Nobody does. We have a good budget, and I think with the current budget that has been announced... We have some security measures that have been announced, for example, in air cargo, which is important. We also got some resources in terms of aviation security for our regulatory functions. So yes, more resources have been added in terms of our security function.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Bevington.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Madam Deputy Minister, I have a question for you. Do you approve all press releases from your department?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** No, I don't.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** So the press release that was issued on November 26 indicating that Transport Canada was working with Toyota on the issue surrounding accelerator problems, pedal problems, was not through your department.

Who would have issued that press release indicating that Transport Canada was pleased with the work they were doing with Toyota at that time on those issues? Not in January, but on November 26.

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** Let me clarify about the press release in question. I think that was about the floor mats issue.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** It clearly says pedal in there. The pedal issue was the issue they were working on.

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** Let me have a look at the exact wording, but the purpose of the press release was on the floor mats issue. The department puts it out. It's under our authority. It's just that I don't personally approve all communications products because they go out very fast and we try to make sure we're as efficient as possible.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** If that's the case, there was no follow-up with your department. If you're working with Toyota on the issue, then your department didn't follow up with Toyota over the next December and into January. Until the end of January there was no communication about where the floor mat issue was going.

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** There were a number of contacts with Toyota on the floor mat issue and there were meetings, actually, so I'll ask Mr. McDonald to answer some of the details.

**Mr. Gerard McDonald (Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Safety and Security Group, Department of Transport):** We had had communication with Toyota since September on a variety of issues. When they brought the floor mat issue to us in November, they decided to do an additional recall with respect to the Venza vehicle, and that was essentially the genesis of the press release.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** I'll just change to another subject: full body scanners. From the reports we received, the Kelowna testing had many, many false positive results. Is that the situation with these full body scanners? Their ability to actually detect is under some concern because of the great number of false positive tests that you are getting with them?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** Our colleagues from the CATSA organization have learnt from the pilot test that was done in Kelowna and they believe these machines are actually a good way to ensure we can detect things under the clothing. We can get you their false positive results. I don't have them, but I can get you those, if you wish.

• (1035)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** I would like to see those, yes, of course. You've just invested an enormous sum of Canadian taxpayers' money in these full body scanners. Even the Pope doesn't like them, and we have a situation now where we're putting in equipment that may not actually be that effective. If you were getting 70% false positive results from the body scanners at the Kelowna test, did you do other tests after that?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** Yes, CATSA has looked at these machines and they believe they are effective means—

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Did you do other tests in situ after those results came back from Kelowna?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** They did tests before we deployed these machines. It is not only Canada; a number of countries have been buying these. It's very important that we note it is recognized as a good alternative to physical pat-downs. It's accepted by the United States and many countries as a credible way of detecting unwanted material under people's clothes.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** The Minister of State mentioned Tom Ridge in discussions. Does that individual own shares in the company that produces the full body scanners?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** I don't really know; I can't really answer.



**The Chair:** I would ask, too, that anything that's requested by committee members come through the chair.

Mr. Mayes.

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

I'd like to echo what the minister had to say about the way the department has moved out the infrastructure money. We've had some great success in my constituency of Okanagan—Shuswap. As the former mayor of a community, I know that you're only as good as the people who work for you. You've made the minister look very good and I think you've done a great job in that area.

I'd like to ask a few questions about airport security. I know the department wants to make sure that safety and security levels are as high as possible to protect Canadians. But is there a point where there are going to be some challenges?

The focus has been on new screening technology. Has any thought been given to looking at the people who cause the problem, not at the things they bring into airports for the purposes of endangering lives? Are there some challenges to profiling people? Is there a policy or direction from the ministry whereby they're going to start moving away from screening the actual luggage and start looking at the passengers?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** As you said, airport security is not an easy subject. We have to be vigilant at all times and in many cases. We are looking at additional measures. For example, on behaviour observation, our colleagues at CATSA have been looking at a program on that. They have offered or are about to offer a contract to design this particular program, which will look at situations and focus on the people who might actually pose a danger to aviation security.

Are we not going to scan suitcases or are we not going to scan people? I don't think it would be wise, given that we live in high-risk times. As to whether we can do this in a more efficient way, a more effective way, and a more thoughtful way, I think the committee agrees. We are all open to that. The review we will conduct on CATSA is actually meant to do exactly that.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** As a member of Parliament from British Columbia, when reading some of my notes here, I was interested to see that Marine Atlantic provides and pays for ferry service from Cape Breton to Newfoundland. I know it's an obligation under the Constitution. But as a British Columbian, the thought that came to me was why doesn't the Government of Canada have the same type of arrangement with the ferry service from Vancouver to Vancouver Island, for instance, when we know the Trans-Canada Highway ends in Victoria? Is there a particular policy that has made a difference in how both of those services are provided?

• (1040)

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** There is actually a longstanding agreement with British Columbia. We provide federal funds.

I'll ask my colleague, Kristine Burr, to answer.

**Ms. Kristine Burr (Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy, Policy Group, Department of Transport):** Thank you. Mr. Chair.

We actually provide an annual subsidy to the Province of British Columbia for the ferry from the mainland to Vancouver Island. It's partly a longstanding arrangement and it is in fact, as you suggest, in recognition of the importance of the connection between the mainland and the island.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** Could you provide me with the formula for how you determine that number?

**Ms. Kristine Burr:** I'd be happy to provide additional information, but it is based on a longstanding agreement between the federal government and the Province of British Columbia. There are provisions in the agreement for annual adjustments to reflect inflation.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** Thank you.

About 200 kilometres of the Trans-Canada Highway goes through my constituency, and it's of very great importance to me. I'm really happy to see all the investments that are happening through the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada to upgrade that highway. After the stimulus money and the Building Canada money has been spent, is there a program for capital for nationally upgrading the Trans-Canada? Is there an annual figure that is normally spent every year by the Government of Canada?

**Mr. John Forster (Associate Deputy Minister, Infrastructure Canada):** With respect to the investments in the Trans-Canada Highway, they come out of the infrastructure funds and programs. At the moment, there's work being done through stimulus and work being done through Building Canada. That was a seven-year fund that runs until 2014-2015. After that time, at this point there's no money beyond the Building Canada fund for that.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** But it does go until 2014.

**Mr. John Forster:** Yes, it's until 2014.

**Mr. Colin Mayes:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Dhaliwal.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

Madam Deputy Minister, welcome to you and your associates.

I will be focusing my questions on British Columbia only. In British Columbia, when we talk about the largest coming investment in rail infrastructure, it is the New Westminster swing bridge, where a whole bottleneck happens. Could you update me on the status of that particular project, please?

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** I'll ask Kristine Burr to answer your question, but we have made significant investments in British Columbia as part of the gateway initiative. Federal dollars have been leveraged with industry money. It is actually making a difference already.

**Ms. Kristine Burr:** Thank you.

I would just confirm what the deputy has said. There is a significant amount of investment under the gateway initiative. As you may know, the province and the federal government have worked closely together with local municipalities and with industry to identify the priority projects that would be the most effective in reducing congestion and improving the efficiency of transportation, particularly in the lower mainland and out to the port, in order to ensure our transportation system supports exports and imports.

When this collaborative work was undertaken around 2005, the New Westminster rail bridge was one of the projects identified as being important and as one that should be on our work plan.

What happened was that we focused primarily on the most pressing projects, the ones that would improve transportation and deal with congestion immediately.

As we speak right now, we're working with Public Works, which owns the bridge, Port Metro Vancouver, and CN Rail, which uses the bridge for a lot of rail traffic, and we're looking at future options. It's very much on our radar as a project that needs to be undertaken in the foreseeable future.

•(1045)

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** You mentioned a specific gateway project. Are you on track to finish that project on time?

**Ms. Kristine Burr:** At this point, we're still at the preliminary stages. We've got a study under way looking at the engineering questions and also at whether this piece of infrastructure should reside with the Department of Public Works or whether it would be better handled as part of Port Metro Vancouver, perhaps, because it's really transportation infrastructure and not the kind of infrastructure that Public Works generally deals with.

We're also looking at whether this would be a good project for a P3 and getting private sector expertise in to work with the players to replace the existing bridge.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mrs. Crombie.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** I had three questions for Minister Merrifield. Since he's left us, I'll still pose them to you to put them on the record, but you may or may not be able to respond. I'm just going to put them all on the table.

I know this question about Canada Post being in the police and security business during the Olympics came up earlier. There was \$652,000 for security of the mail. Can you elaborate on how that was spent? It seems like an inordinate amount of money for Canada Post to be spending on policing and security for the Olympics. That's the first question.

Second, I'm delighted the minister is following our lead on rural postal delivery. Of course safety is the primary concern, but my concern is with the elimination of delivery in rural and remote areas. I'd like you to comment on that. I'm also concerned about the job loss that may ensue as a result.

Finally, I don't think your responsibility is the Royal Mint, although it does come under Mr. Merrifield. You are indicating it is? Good. I understand that \$1.4 million was spent on the forensic audit to discover that the \$20 million of missing gold wasn't really

missing. Can you comment on the \$1.4 million and how that was spent, and whether or not that was a good use of taxpayers' money?

Thank you.

**The Chair:** And could you do it in a very brief time?

**Mr. André Morency:** I'll try to answer the questions as they were posed.

In terms of what Canada Post did specifically to ensure a certain level of security of the mail coming into the Vancouver Olympics area, Canada Post would have that information. We, as a department, don't really have the specifics of how they actually conducted that work. It's more an operational issue. The money here in the supplementary estimates is what they had planned to spend based on what they saw being the level of effort for that period of time.

In terms of rural post delivery, Canada Post is not in the business of eliminating rural post delivery. In fact, as the minister mentioned, there is a service charter that in fact enshrines the continuation of rural mail delivery. What they are looking at, of course, as the minister stated, is a safe way to deliver that mail in rural Canada.

Whether this would result in any job losses would be a question better posed to Canada Post. It certainly hasn't been conveyed to us that this is about jobs. It's really about the security and the safety of those delivering the mail.

In terms of the Royal Canadian Mint, yes, they have indicated to us that they have spent \$1.4 million in the context of all those entities that they engaged to help look at that issue. Those included a company like Deloitte & Touche, which probably included other experts, and it also included the RCMP, which looked into whether there was any criminal intent there. So certainly they've been quite forward in saying that it cost them \$1.4 million to complete the very detailed examination, which they felt was necessary to get to the bottom of the situation.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Desnoyers.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Yes.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean, on a point of order.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Mr. Chair, I was going to suggest to Ms. Crombie that if she did want to get answers to those questions from Canada Post, she should write a letter to Minister Merrifield, and I'm certain the answers would be forthcoming.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Desnoyers.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** I'd like to come back to the subject of CATSA. Who is responsible for CATSA?

[English]

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** Actually, we are responsible for CATSA, as it's within our portfolio. I am the portfolio deputy minister, but I am not the accounting officer for CATSA, and I'm not the manager of CATSA. We have a regulatory function for which Mr. McDonald is responsible. Our view of aviation safety and security comes from the regulatory side, but we also answer for them because we have the portfolio responsibility.

• (1050)

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Basically, you're responsible for all security considerations. This issue always worries me a great deal.

I touched on the various complaints from people about security, about the lack of personnel and about the frustration that people experience. A while ago, I asked some questions about the number of subcontractors. I was told that this information would be provided to me. I would like to know how these contracts are awarded to subcontractors. Do the same rules respecting subcontractors apply from coast to coast?

I'm also interested in how these subcontractors are managed, in terms of security at various locations, not only strategic ones but also on bases across Canada. I'd like some assurances that this information will be forwarded to me as soon as possible.

Finally, I'm interested in body scanners. Earlier, some questions were raised about body scanners. Apparently, an American company was awarded the contract. I'd like to know the name of that company and who runs it. When these contracts were awarded, were steps taken to ensure that there would be some Canadian spinoffs from these contracts? Or, will equipment maintenance also be done by the same American company? What kind of maintenance costs are we looking at? Why can't the maintenance be done in Canada? I would imagine that the cost of servicing this equipment is quite high, if the scanners are not replaced every six months. I would like answers to these questions in writing.

[English]

**Mr. Gerard McDonald:** Certainly, Mr. Chair, we'll make that available in writing.

I can answer a few of the questions posed. For others, I think the answers should probably come from CATSA itself.

First of all, with respect to the number of companies that are subcontracted to provide screening services, across the country CATSA has contracts with 11 companies to provide screening services at the 89 airports at which they're supposed to be providing that service.

With respect to the contracting, CATSA follows standard Government of Canada contracting rules, and I'm sure they can provide you with more information on their exact processes for the letting of those contracts.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Earlier, mention was made of a 20% to 25% cost saving. I'd like to know what comparison was made to arrive at this figure? Is the figure based on the number of employees in Canada who used to handle security services?

How did you arrive at this projected cost savings of between 20% and 25%, as Mr. Merrifield stated earlier? I'd also like to see that document.

[English]

**Ms. Yaprak Baltacioglu:** We will get you the information from CATSA.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm going to end the meeting now and thank our guests for attending. I'm sure we'll cross paths in the future. Thank you very much.

Just for the committee's interest, on Tuesday we will be holding a subcommittee meeting. It was requested of all members to submit their priorities. Please submit them before 5 p.m. today for discussion on Monday.

Mr. Volpe has a motion that is on the record.

• (1055)

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Mr. Chairman, you know that my motion's been before the committee for several days. It is very specific. I don't think you need me to read it again.

For all honourable members, especially those on the government side, we were given an indication by the minister that he would make available any and all information. He enumerated a compendium of information. I believe I heard him say as well that he would provide all of the material that's in that motion. I think it should be fairly easy for us to simply accept the motion, because the minister has already included it in the spirit of the information he's willing to put forward. I think we can agree to it by consensus.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** As always, whenever Mr. Volpe brings up issues of such importance the government of course will agree. In this case it's no different. So we agree with his motion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bevington.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** As the minister indicated, the helmsman of the committee here has put forward a motion that covers a number of particular areas. "Helmsman" is a concept that I'm still trying to grasp. If it means that he's at the back of the ship looking forward, I hope that's good. I hope that his information will follow.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Gaudet.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Will we receive a translation in both official languages? Will everyone receive it at the same time?

[English]

**The Chair:** I know that the motion reads that the report will follow in French. Based on the timelines that were provided by the minister today, we will wait until it's in French and English to present it to the committee.

Is that reasonable?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** So then, versions in both official languages will be tabled to the committee at the same time. Otherwise, I will object. We've already had a bit of a problem on that score.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I would ask Mr. Volpe if he would consider a friendly amendment that the report arrive at the same time in French and English.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** It's always the intention of every member of this committee that all information arrive to every member simultaneously. Last week the Bloc members accepted information by the department, even though it wasn't all translated. Some of the documentation was in French, some of it was in English. I think the intent at the time was to receive information as quickly as possible, and they accepted it. I hope that the same spirit will prevail while we accept that the government is trying to make sure that everything is available in both official languages.

**The Chair:** Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** I would like to propose a friendly amendment that the document be in both French and English. I hope that Mr. Volpe will accept this friendly amendment. I certainly don't think we should treat our friends in the Bloc, or just French-speaking people, any differently. We should wait until it's translated properly according to the rules of all parliamentary committees.

**The Chair:** Mr. Volpe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Just so everybody understands, we want to respect everybody's right to have information in both official languages. We don't want to have a situation where it says that we will withhold all information until all of the translation is done. There's a certain timeliness to this, but we want information in both official languages.

And I think you're right, Mr. Jean.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Gaudet.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I agree with what you're saying, Mr. Volpe. However, at one point, we were criticized in the House of Commons for accepting a document that was only in English. We don't want to agree to this again, because it will become a habit. We agreed to it once to help things move along, but we can't agree again, because we were criticized for it. Therefore, we have to object.

• (1100)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** There's been a friendly amendment proposed that when the documents are prepared they will be prepared in both official languages and presented to the committee. Okay?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** There's only one last thing. Last week I asked for documentation in Excel. It wasn't provided to us in Excel initially.

**The Chair:** We have it now, I believe.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Just as a final understanding on this, while we've accepted this motion, the material should come to us as it is available in both languages. We're not going to wait for all 25,000 pages to be translated. Once the first 5,000 are translated we'll get them.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe:** Okay. Merci.

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned.

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