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Chair

Mr. Tom Lukiwski

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC)): Colleagues, we are a couple of minutes early, but I think we'll start now.

Colleagues, I'm not sure how long the opening statements from our witnesses will be, but I would like to get a full round of questions in. That would be the full round of seven minutes, five minutes, and the last three-minute intervention by Mr. Weir. Our officials have indicated they're willing to stay a few extra moments. Ladies and gentlemen, that complete round normally takes about 50 minutes.

With that brief introduction, we welcome officials from the Privy Council Office and the Public Service Commission to discuss supplementary estimates (B) with us today. My understanding is that we have opening statements from both organizations.

First up is the Privy Council Office. Monsieur Dupont, are you making the opening statement?

Mr. Serge Dupont (Deputy Clerk, Privy Council, Associate Secretary to the Cabinet, and Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Privy Council Office): Yes, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Please proceed.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee.

Thank you for inviting the Privy Council Office to review our 2016-17 supplementary estimates (B). I'm accompanied by Ms. Kami Ramcharan, assistant deputy minister, corporate services branch, and chief financial officer. My introductory remarks will be brief so that we may turn quickly to the questions of the committee.

As you know, the mandate of PCO is to provide professional non-partisan advice and support to the Prime Minister and ministers within his portfolio, and to support the effective operation of cabinet. In these estimates PCO is seeking spending authority of \$12.3 million for 2016-17, supplementary to \$147.6 million of authorities to date.

[Translation]

Budget 2016 identified a number of needs and initiatives that require investments in the PCO's capacity to support the Prime Minister and the government in the delivery of their agenda.

Some of the additional spending authorities, supporting new and modern information technology infrastructure and security platforms, were approved through supplementary estimates (A).

The resources sought through supplementary estimates (B) will enable PCO to deliver on other priorities.

We hope to have enhanced engagement with provinces and territories, as well as municipalities and indigenous groups, requiring added resources in the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat of PCO, serving the Prime Minister as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

These resources will also enable us to support democratic reform and the Minister of Democratic Institutions.

We are also trying to actively engage with youth through a Youth Secretariat, serving the Prime Minister as Minister for Youth.

In addition, we want to focus on outcomes and results for Canadians, notably through a new Results and Delivery Unit, housed in PCO.

Moreover, we want to focus on a more open, transparent and merit-based appointments policy, requiring added resources in our Senior Personnel Secretariat.

Lastly, we seek to address responsiveness to evolving threats to our national security by bolstering the capacity under the national security advisor to the Prime Minister.

[English]

Mr. Chair, I could elaborate a bit on each of the items I just referred to, but perhaps in the interest of time and your interest in moving quickly to the questions, as the opening remarks have been circulated as a reference, I'm quite happy to move to the questions after the statement by my colleague.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I appreciate your co-operation.

Mr. Thom, your opening statement, please.

Mr. Gerry Thom (Acting Senior Vice-President, Policy and Corporate Affairs, Public Service Commission): Mr. Chair, honourable members, thank you.

[Translation]

I am accompanied today by Philip Morton, chief financial officer and director general of Finance and Administration.

As you may know, the mandate of the Public Service Commission is to promote and safeguard merit-based appointments and to protect the non-partisan nature of the public service.

We report independently to Parliament on the overall health of the staffing system through our annual report.

We expect our annual report for 2015-16 will be tabled in the House of Commons in the coming days. Once we have confirmation of tabling, we would be very pleased to come back to discuss the report should the committee wish us to do so.

[English]

Today we've been invited to discuss the supplementary estimates (B).

Let me just say at the outset that PSC is not seeking approval for new funding. We have sufficient resources to deliver on our mandate, and we will spend only what is required.

For 2016-17 the supplementary estimates (B) included one transfer of \$252,000 from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to the Public Service Commission for the use of the public service resourcing system.

The public service resourcing system is the electronic recruitment system that powers the federal government's primary job portal, known as jobs.gc.ca. It supports the implementation of the Public Service Employment Act and other government priorities by making it possible to manage large volumes of applications from Canadians from across the country.

[Translation]

Just to give you an idea of the kind of numbers we are talking about, last year nearly 8,500 internal and external job advertisements were posted on the jobs.gc.ca site. These job postings resulted in over three-quarters of a million applications.

[English]

Through electronic screening tools the public service resourcing system helps hiring managers manage high volumes of applicants and target candidates who meet their selected merit criteria. Departments and agencies contribute to the cost of operating this system, usually through permanent transfers. The only exceptions are the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Parks Canada, which are named in schedule V of the Financial Administration Act, as separate agencies, but make appointments in accordance with the Public Service Employment Act, and they use the public service resourcing system. As such, the supplementary estimates are routinely used by the PSC to finalize those transfers for those two organizations.

However, for 2016-17, the transfer from Parks Canada was processed through the annual reference level update and will be in place for three years until 2018-19, so only the Canadian Food Inspection Agency transfer is included in this year's supplementary

estimates. As such, the amount of the transfer has been reduced from \$504,000 in 2015-16 to \$252,000 for 2016-17.

Moving forward, it's clear that we are in an era of great change within the public service.

[Translation]

We value our partnerships with departments and agencies, and will continue to work with them as well as bargaining agents and stakeholders to support public service renewal. We will also continue to look for ways to modernize and improve our recruitment system and programs for the benefit of all Canadians.

I hope this information is useful, and I am happy to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you.

• (1535)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Colleagues, just to remind you, we have our officials with us for one hour.

We will start with a seven-minute round of questions.

Madam Shanahan, you're first up.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the panel for being here.

Continuing on my quest to understand the relationship between the budget, the main estimates, and the supplementary estimates, let me tackle the first question, which has to do with the Privy Council Office. In budget 2016 we saw an allocation of \$49 million that was made to “ensure that the department has the resources required to effectively support the Government’s agenda, as well as to strengthen security and make required investments in lifecycle updates to systems and buildings”.

At this time you're requesting an amount of either \$10.8 million in the supplementary estimates, or according to your brief, it seems to be moving numbers to \$12.3 million.

I want to understand the relationship between those two or three numbers. How much of the proposed \$49 million do you plan to use this year, and how will you use it? Perhaps you can walk us through some of the items, and break down the amounts to the items you listed in your brief.

Mr. Serge Dupont: I appreciate the question and I appreciate the challenge in reconciling all these numbers many times. Even the officials sometimes will require a bit of a briefing to get it right.

First, to clarify the \$10.8 million versus \$12.3 million, most of that difference includes the benefits that are a statutory item attached to the compensation of staff. The \$10.8 million is before those benefits, and the \$12.3 million is after those benefits.

The \$49 million—and I might have said “billion”, but I think it's “million” in this case—

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: A million, a billion....

Mr. Serge Dupont: It's a hazard sometimes at PCO.

PCO did ask for \$49 million in budget 2016, which was accorded, and \$23.9 million came through supplementary estimates (A), which provided for a large portion of those additional resources related to IT modernization in particular and to e-cabinet.

In the second round of supplementary estimates of \$12.3 million—it is still part of the \$49 million—we are looking for the items that I went through, the various additions to capacity for the Privy Council Office in intergovernmental affairs, results and delivery, appointments process, and so forth. By the end of the year through supplementary estimates (A), (B), and (C), the total of the \$49 million will be reconciled. We expect of course to be spending the large majority of those funds.

In some instances, you'll be aware that the Privy Council Office, like other government departments, can go to the Treasury Board and request a reprofiling of some of the monies to future years, in some cases because it's taken time to hire new staff and so forth. That's a routine matter where we can be told yes or no, but that process takes place with the Treasury Board.

By the end of the year, through supplementary estimates (A), (B), and (C), the \$49 million is secured through authorization of Parliament.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Excellent. If I understand you correctly, you're working through that \$49 million that was accorded with the items that you outlined in your brief here on page two or three.

Mr. Serge Dupont: That's correct.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Let's go through some of those items.

I've been doing some more reading on the mandate and the work of the Privy Council. I truly appreciate that it's non-partisan support to the Prime Minister and to the government of the day, but that must have its challenges as well, as you work through the different tasks that you have before you.

Can you give me a sense of whether you have a wider mandate or a larger scope of activities now than you did in the recent past? That will help me to understand how the spending is being used.

• (1540)

Mr. Serge Dupont: I'd be pleased to.

Let's take a few examples. The Prime Minister is not only the Prime Minister; he's also Minister for Youth and Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs. As Minister for Youth, he has also asked for the establishment of the youth council. He has asked for the development of a youth service initiative that was also laid out in the budget, and he is looking overall for PCO to coordinate youth policy across government. That requires a small secretariat to be established within PCO to support that activity.

The Prime Minister is Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs, and certainly, in this day and age, whether one is speaking about infrastructure, housing, or climate change, all of these issues require

more and more collaborative work with the provinces. There have already been two first ministers' meetings over the past year. Another one is planned to occur before the end of the year. The level of activity in intergovernmental affairs is higher than it has been over the last number of years; therefore, some supplementary resources have been sought for this purpose.

In terms of appointments and Governor in Council appointments, this government has promoted an approach to appointments to boards, crown corporations, and commissions, for both full-time and part-time appointments, that involves a merit-based, competitive, open process. That has meant opening these processes to have a wider reach regarding applications. We've received 4,000 applications to date for numerous positions in the public sector writ large. Implementing this policy has required supplementary resources in our senior personnel secretariat.

Those are the kinds of changes resulting from the Prime Minister's or the government's decision to emphasize new functions and to reach out further to provinces or to potential candidates for certain positions in order to support their agenda. The Privy Council Office's resources have to reflect those incremental commitments by the Prime Minister and the government.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. McCauley, go ahead for seven minutes, please.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Thanks for being with us today.

I want to get a bit of follow-up on Ms. Shanahan's commentary. In the supplementary estimates (B), there was \$10.8 million, which you're now saying is \$12 million. Did we hear that right?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Yes, it's \$12.3 million because one adds \$1.3 million, which is a statutory item that is automatically added.

Kami, EBP stands for...?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That was for the benefit plan.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan (Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services, Privy Council Office): Yes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Give me a rundown of some of the things that were part of that, this extra \$10.8 million plus the \$1.3 million.

You mentioned supplementary resources for the Governor in Council appointments. How much was that?

I'll be honest; I have a great amount of concern. We saw this government spend \$400,000 just for a website to take resumés for Senate applications. I'm wondering how much more is being spent when you talk about supplementary resources for the GIC.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Let me just see here.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Can you provide a broad idea of what the \$10.8 million is for?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I mentioned some of the items, but, for example, the most significant item is the new results and delivery unit, which represents \$3.3 million. That's about 15 people.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How much of that is consulting fees and how much of that is new employees?

Mr. Serge Dupont: The vast majority is actual people in the Privy Council Office. It's roughly 15 people for the purpose of essentially driving a results and delivery approach throughout government.

For example, I mentioned intergovernmental affairs. That's \$1.4 million additional, representing about five people in intergovernmental affairs. I could give you the full breakdown by function.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I missed what the people are doing in intergovernmental affairs. It's \$300,000 a body. What are they doing please? Is that at the ADM level?

Mr. Serge Dupont: No. There are different levels. I think we had one or two additional executives, and two or three additional analyst-level individuals. That is to support a greater activity in regard to first ministers' meetings, as I mentioned earlier, and also a stronger role exercised by the Prime Minister in coordinating overall intergovernmental files across the government whether it's infrastructure, climate change, housing, and so forth.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Is this all through those same five people?

Mr. Serge Dupont: We already had some individuals in intergovernmental affairs. I think there were already 27 people, supplemented by five, to reflect this heightened level of activity, greater emphasis on the relationship with provinces and territories, and also with municipalities, and also with indigenous groups. That is all under intergovernmental affairs.

• (1545)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Are there any other big chunks of money?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I'm happy to share the table with you. Democratic reform is about \$1 million to support the Minister of Democratic Institutions, again within PCO to support the exercise, the outreach, and so forth of the Minister of Democratic Institutions.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I want to move on to a follow-up of something. When your colleagues were here, I think it was in May, we talked about one your roles, which is that you oversee the integrity in the staffing system to ensure non-partisanship within the public service.

I'll read an article from *Maclean's* by Donald Savoie, professor, Canadian public service, University of Moncton. This is about the event when the Prime Minister walked into, I think, Foreign Affairs and got the standing ovation, but it mentioned a couple of other backslapping moments with ministers. I was taken aback at that event. I don't think it was appropriate. If you're non-partisan, you don't exhibit that kind of show. You don't appear to be non-partisan

by hissing at journalists for asking tough questions, or applauding, and getting a bit giddy.

The comment by Ms. Donoghue at the time was that, basically, the responsibility doesn't lie with you for non-partisanship with the public service but rather with individual deputy ministers. Then she said that when we have cases or when there are obvious ones where we can identify individuals, we have the possibility of conducting investigations to see whether or not there's been an issue of conduct or if corrective measures are necessary.

I'm curious as to whether you agree something like that overt partisanship is something at an ADM level, or if it does fall under your purview as it's stated, and if there have been cases where you have investigated or followed up.

Mr. Serge Dupont: I think there are a couple of things.

First, non-partisanship and holding to the values of the public service is first and foremost an individual responsibility of every public servant. It is the responsibility of every executive to uphold it in their organization, of every deputy minister. It is ultimately the responsibility of the clerk to ensure that this value is well understood and reflected in the behaviours and performances of public servants. It is one of the very core values of the public service.

I wouldn't comment on any particular event. There can also be a pride and support in a minister, in a Prime Minister, that is not necessarily inconsistent with that non-partisanship. I think it is a matter of judgment that has to be exercised.

I can assure the member, and I can assure the chair that from the point of view of the clerk, from the point of the view of the public service, this is an essential value for us. It's certainly one we reiterate, and we really try to exemplify at every opportunity.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How much time do I have?

The Chair: Ten seconds.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I have 10 seconds so I'll just say thanks, and you can respond in about two seconds.

The Chair: Mr. Weir, you have seven minutes, please.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Thank you.

I noticed that one of the items for which PCO is seeking supplementary funding is supporting the Minister of Democratic Institutions' engagement with Canadians through in-person and virtual platforms. The minister did come and hold a public meeting in Regina. It was well attended. The vast majority of people there preferred a mixed member proportional voting system.

I'm just wondering, on the funds that you're requesting, are they to support those meetings that the minister was holding, or what would they cover?

Mr. Serge Dupont: The monies requested in these estimates really cover the internal capacity in the Privy Council Office to support the minister and to support the cabinet committee on open and transparent government in Parliament. It is to support the overall initiative, and that does include the minister's outreach. It does include, as well, planning and the advice that is provided to the minister and to the government on the democratic reform exercise.

● (1550)

Mr. Erin Weir: I noticed that it's in-person or virtual platforms, which suggests to me it may not include the cost of the mail-out to all households that the government is contemplating on democratic reform.

Mr. Serge Dupont: There was an additional reference in budget 2016 of \$10.7 million every four years that would address outreach to Canadians, and this is not covered in these supplementary estimates. That may come forward in supplementary estimates (C).

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay, thanks for clarifying that.

I suppose if the government actually decided to change the voting system, there might be further supplementary estimates around that. This just covers the kind of consultative work that is being done now.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Any expenditure consequence of any particular exercise conducted by the government and by Parliament would have to come here. If there were expenditure consequences, it would have to come through either main or supplementary estimates at some point in time. That is correct.

Mr. Erin Weir: I was also going to ask about the item in these supplementary estimates for the youth secretariat. I am wondering what the rationale was for that secretariat being funded through PCO.

Mr. Serge Dupont: The answer is a simple one. The Prime Minister himself decided to give this his priority attention as Minister of Youth. Therefore, with the Privy Council Office being the department of the Prime Minister, it is normal that the function be located there.

Mr. Erin Weir: If the Prime Minister made himself Minister of Finance, we wouldn't be running the whole department of finance out of PCO. I guess I just wonder if it was because there wasn't an established department of youth already.

Mr. Serge Dupont: That's correct.

I suppose, had it been finance, it might have been a different answer. However, in practical terms, for youth, there certainly was no impetus here to create a new department, and we are easily able to house that function in the Privy Council Office.

Mr. Erin Weir: I definitely see the connection in terms of the Prime Minister as an individual, but I guess I don't see the connection as clearly in terms of the actual policy area or the function. It doesn't seem like something that would naturally be a part of PCO. However, I take your point that if it were something new being set up by the Prime Minister, then I suppose there's a logic to it being connected to PCO.

I also want to ask a bit about the new process for Governor in Council appointments. Last week, at the public accounts committee, the Auditor General emphasized the point that there had often been a lack of orientation and training for people after they received those appointments. I wonder if that's something that might be covered through the supplementary funds that are requested here.

Mr. Serge Dupont: There are no incremental resources required for that specific objective, although we are adding some capacity to that secretariat and that may be deployed over time to different functions, different needs.

The Privy Council Office has a sustained relationship with all of the different organizations. There is on-boarding of new board members, new commissioners, and so forth, in each of the organizations concerned. The Privy Council Office, and also the School of Public Service from time to time, will have briefing sessions for new appointees to different functions.

There is an effort, certainly, to ensure that the individuals appointed to different positions have the proper introductions to their roles.

Mr. Erin Weir: Sure.

You also mentioned bolstering the capacity under the national security adviser. Does that essentially involve hiring staff? What's the supplementary estimate doing in that area?

Mr. Serge Dupont: It's an addition of, roughly, six full-time equivalents. This is so we can be somewhat more nimble in addressing new threats related to cybersecurity or in the domain of counterterrorism. In other domains, not only in Canada but internationally, there is greater focus and greater activity, and it does require added attention under the national security adviser.

● (1555)

Mr. Erin Weir: I appreciate that it's a security adviser to the Prime Minister, but beyond that, is there a reason to have these staff in the PCO as opposed to, say, in the Department of Public Safety or in the Department of National Defence?

Mr. Serge Dupont: In the Government of Canada, the vast majority of the resources devoted to national security are housed in the different agencies, whether it's the RCMP, National Defence, and so forth. In the overall scheme of things, the resources in the Privy Council are relatively modest. They are really intended to ensure that these entities function in a coordinated manner, that there are the proper exchanges of information, that the Prime Minister is properly briefed, and therefore, that we have a full government approach to national security.

The Chair: Mr. Grewal, you have seven minutes, please.

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.): Thank you to our witnesses for coming today.

I want to continue on with my colleague's question on the national security adviser to the Prime Minister. How much of the total is being spent on that?

Mr. Serge Dupont: What is requested here is an amount of \$0.6 million. Actually, I apologize; for six full-time equivalents, it's \$3.7 million.

Mr. Raj Grewal: Okay. Thank you.

Just as a curiosity question, we're asking for supplementary money to bolster the capacity under the national security adviser. Has this happened in other years, as well? Has some of the funding for national security come through supplementary estimates?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I don't have the record.

I could assure you that, if a budget supplemented resources for the national security adviser to the Prime Minister, that would have been reflected in supplementary estimates. I would imagine that, given the greater focus on national security over the last number of years, there would have been additions to those resources over the last number of years.

Mr. Raj Grewal: A lot of the supplementary money is being used for communication: interdepartmental communication or intergovernmental communication. Is that building upon something that didn't exist in previous administrations?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I'm not sure that I made reference to any additional resources for interdepartmental communications. I did make reference to intergovernmental communications.

Mr. Raj Grewal: Yes.

Mr. Serge Dupont: The intergovernmental secretariat in the Privy Council Office has had various levels of staff over the years, depending on the type of activity or engagement that took place with provinces and territories. Of course, when one goes back 20 years, it was a virtual department. It was a very large organization, but it was reduced over time. In the last budget, the government indicated an intention to provide some increment to the resources, given the willingness to work with provinces closely on a number of priorities and to have greater activity, notably, among first ministers.

Mr. Raj Grewal: You mentioned a focus on outcomes and results for Canadians, notably through a new results and delivery unit. It seems like we're just adding another level of tracking for something. Can you explain this a little bit?

Mr. Serge Dupont: The government was very intent on ensuring that across departments and agencies there was a very clear focus on outcomes for Canadians, that we weren't simply thinking about activity, about creating a new program that would appear to respond to a need, but where it would actually be difficult to track results in the actual benefit to Canadians.

The Prime Minister and the government are really quite intent on ensuring that as we're allocating results to new purposes, we try to identify, indeed, at the outset what it is we're trying to accomplish, what variables we could use, what data we could rely upon to see whether we're making a difference, how we track that, and how we report on that to the government, to Parliament, and to the Canadian public, so that the action of the government becomes more concrete in terms of how it is affecting individual Canadians.

In order to drive that, it was decided to establish this unit in the Privy Council Office. One of my colleagues testified before this committee and said there had always been in the Treasury Board Secretariat an effort to identify results and to find some metrics.

The difference, in this case, is that those conversations not only engage officers at Treasury Board and program officers in individual departments but they are also actually engaging the ministers and the Prime Minister in some detailed conversation about what it is exactly we're trying to accomplish through certain initiatives. That's the result the delivery unit is trying to permeate across government.

• (1600)

Mr. Raj Grewal: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Ratansi.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): I have a quick question.

You were talking about resources that are being provided to results and increasing the policy capacity. Could you elaborate on what that means for intergovernmental affairs, and what is meant by enhancing the capacity?

Mr. Serge Dupont: It means that, very concretely, as one is working to prepare and to deliver a first ministers' meeting, one does need some.... I'm the deputy minister of intergovernmental affairs as well, so I'm well aware of the fact that now you do have to rely on people in order to have the contacts with the provinces and territories to know their positions on certain issues.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Are you spending more on this because we are doing so much more consultation, and getting the first ministers together because it didn't happen for 10 years?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I'm saying that there have been two first ministers' meetings over the past year. Another one is planned before the end of this calendar year, and that does require significant engagement.

There is also greater interest on the part of the Prime Minister as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to have a view of what kind of intergovernmental discussions are taking place across different portfolios in government, and for him to be advised and be kept up to speed on that. That means there will have to be some individuals in the PCO whose job it will be to track that, analyze it, and advise on it.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go now to our five-minute rounds.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clarke, you have five minutes.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoulu, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank all the witnesses for being with us today. We appreciate it very much.

I will start with you, Mr. Dupont. The supplementary estimates requested by the Privy Council are in the order of \$12 million, is that correct?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Yes.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: You said that it was to strengthen certain infrastructures, like the youth council, intergovernmental meetings between provincial premiers, and so on.

Are there any new infrastructures that you haven't named? If that is the case, I would like to hear you talk about them.

Mr. Serge Dupont: I have given other examples. There were appointments of the Governor in Council, the Results and Delivery Unit, democratic reform and departmental correspondence. So those are administrative issues, but I think that, overall, I have referred to the main elements.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Thank you.

Is the official name really the "Prime Minister's Youth Council"? Is that what it's called?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I believe so, yes.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: It's housed in the same building as the Prime Minister's office.

Mr. Serge Dupont: No, the Youth Council was appointed following nominations. Actually, 16,000 youths expressed their interest in being involved in the conversation about the Government of Canada's major priorities. Fifteen youths have been appointed to the council.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Where do these young people meet?

Mr. Serge Dupont: So far, they have met once in Ottawa, in September. We cover their travel and hospitality costs. The Privy Council Office has a small secretariat to support all of the processes.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I understand. Thank you.

What is the budget allocated to the secretariat so far?

Mr. Serge Dupont: The budget is \$1.7 million for about eight people. It supports the council and the development of a youth services initiative, which the government wants to put forward.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I fully understand. Thank you.

Let's talk about additional infrastructures needed for meetings between provincial premiers. I think the idea came from Mr. Charest in Quebec. The first meeting was held in 2003 or 2004, under Paul Martin. It might be difficult to answer my question, but do you know if, at the time, during the first meetings, 15 additional people were needed to run that type of intergovernmental meeting? Was that the case under Paul Martin? Were there any cuts under Prime Minister Stephen Harper? What led to the need for these people now?

• (1605)

Mr. Serge Dupont: I spoke about five people, not 15. Mr. Charest started the Council of the Federation, which meets once or twice a year. It's the provinces without the federal government.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I see. That makes my question completely irrelevant.

I'll move on.

My next question is for the representatives of the Public Service Commission. Legislation favoured the hiring of veterans. In the last year, I was the official opposition critic for veterans. I'm not anymore—I have another responsibility—but I found that hiring veterans wasn't a significant success. Do you know why this is exactly? Why are we not seeing the effects of this legislation?

Mr. Gerry Thom: Thank you for the question.

The act came into force on July 1, 2015. To put things in context, we had to make some changes to the priority system so that we could manage new applications efficiently. As I recall, we hired 90 to 95 veterans last year.

The annual report will be released soon. I can't give you all the details, but there are close to 150 appointments for the fiscal year that has just ended.

It's also interesting to note—and I verified this in the last few days—that we have about the same number of appointments for the first seven months of this fiscal year. So it's going fairly well. The important thing is that everyone is aware that we must make an extra effort, especially in terms of information and communication with the various departments. That's what the deputy ministers are doing now, and they are trying to raise as much awareness as possible.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Mr. Gerry Thom: Thank you.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Drouin, you have five minutes.

[English]

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for being here.

I want to continue on with what Mr. Grewal was speaking about.

You mentioned that the results and delivery unit hired 15 people, I believe, since last year. You started speaking about the metrics, and I heard you mentioning internal metrics. I'm trying to understand how that's going to have an impact on the third-party organizations that we fund.

For instance, a few years ago I remember the government of the day announced \$100 million for the Canada accelerator and incubator program. That money was dolled out to universities, but we found out that Canada still fell behind in terms of the innovation scale.

I know that's a hard thing to measure, but is there a sincere effort being made to try to measure those metrics, and ask our third-party organizations to actually make a hard difference?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I appreciate the question.

As I mentioned, there has always been and will continue to be an effort to measure the results of individual programs. There are efforts to build that from the outset, particularly when funds are paid out to third-party organizations through the contribution agreements, to try to set out what results are expected and how they'll be measured and tracked, and so forth, their evaluation of programs *ex post*.

What is perhaps a bit different, as I mentioned, with the results and delivery unit is that there is an effort on the part of the government to say, on the innovation file, writ large, there will be a number of different initiatives to try to track the results on the overall priority, and then, of course, to go back and be informed by the program results at a more segmented level, but to be able to report broadly to Canadians on how the government is moving the needle on innovation, on infrastructure, and on other major priorities. That's perhaps one of the differences here. I was trying to do it on a bit of a more macro level, but the challenge is doing it meaningfully in a way where the government is confident that it actually has the levers to move that needle, trying to measure it appropriately, and then communicating that to Canadians.

• (1610)

Mr. Francis Drouin: Great. Thank you.

On the PSC, we've talked about Destination 2020. That was released in 2014 and a number of cross-government initiatives were brought forward. I asked your colleague, Ms. Donoghue, the last time, about the impact on hiring millennials. I just want to understand what steps the organization has taken in order to attract more millennials to the Government of Canada. I know this is a priority for Treasury Board, so I'm trying to get a better understanding of whether anything has changed.

Mr. Gerry Thom: Thank you for the question.

As far as Destination 2020 is concerned, or the Blueprint 2020 plan, I think Ms. Donoghue probably talked about the new direction in staffing, the initiative that we put in place last year. Now we're in phase two of the new direction in staffing. What we are doing is really looking at our recruitment programs, when we go outside, looking at our system, as we've mentioned, trying to make the system easier and more user-friendly. We are doing some user experience with Canadians to make sure that we can meet their needs.

We're working with all departments, and obviously with the employer, Treasury Board, to try to come up with new programs to focus on millennials specifically.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Is there an effort being made to measure where millennials are working within the departments? I hear this constantly on the ground and I haven't seen the real numbers, but young people working in IT will be told, "Oh, well, you guys will do social media." I know they are qualified for more than just doing social media. I'm trying to get a better understanding so that when I speak to these people I can say, no, there are a lot of millennials working their way up.

Is there a leadership program for them and whatnot?

The Chair: Mr. Thom, give a brief answer, please.

Mr. Gerry Thom: Yes.

We have quite a bit of data, but it's not as detailed as knowing where they actually work in each department. With effort, we could get that from all the departments and from the employers.

There are quite a few. I don't have the statistics. It's in the annual report, but there are quite a few young people, millennials, getting hired and staying in the public service. We sometimes think they are not coming in, or whatever, or they're leaving, but that's not necessarily the case. It's not as bad as we think.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Clarke, you have five minutes.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Public Services and Procurement Canada is asking for a supplement of about \$46 million. Actually, it's \$60 million, but \$46 million is for the—

[English]

funding for incremental costs related to post-implementation pay operations.

[Translation]

Is that related to the problems with Phoenix?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, but I don't have those numbers. This isn't part of the PCO's supplementary estimates (B). These are probably numbers from Public Services and Procurement Canada, and I confess I'm not prepared to answer questions about them.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I understand.

That's it for me.

Mr. McCauley, it's your turn.

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks.

I don't have much for you, just the Blueprint 2020. I'm curious, you have the Destination 2020, but where we are right now, is it still a valid plan, or does it need to be taken apart completely? More resources? Less resources? A clean break and a new program? Could I just get your ideas or your thoughts on it?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Destination 2020 was never about resources. There was never a call for additional resources in support of the exercise or in support of its conclusions.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That's not what I'm asking. Are we on track? Should we be adjusting midway through? It's just your thoughts on where we need to go with it.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Yes, that's what I'm sharing with you. The vision is very much on track. The vision was a bottom-up vision that came through from our staff from right across Canada through a series of engagement sessions. We are acting on some of the conclusions and the messages and the key interest flowing from that, for example, in providing greater opportunities for mobility, for people to learn, to have new learning experiences in the public service.

There are initiatives being taken in a decentralized fashion across departments in response to Destination 2020. Destination 2020 will be living and breathing, and I would venture, it will be beyond 2020. Of course, it will be refreshed over time, but this is, frankly, a call from the staff of the public service who want to be meaningful, who want to be relevant, to work with the best possible tools, to be as representative as they can to Canada.

•(1615)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I was looking for feedback on it. Is there anything big that is identified or stumbled upon that says we need to address this right away, we need to look at this right away, or is it just incrementally working through the process?

Mr. Serge Dupont: That's a good question. One could think, is there a big bang that is necessary in some fashion or another? I think there are a series of discrete initiatives that are making a difference. I'm not a fan of saying we're happy with just incrementalism. I think we do have to think boldly about recruitment, about how we broaden the reach, about how we bring the millennials in, about how we promote the millennials.

You're asking me for my views. I would love to see deputy ministers at age 40, where we'd be able to promote individuals faster so that we're more nimble, more energetic as a public service. It's a vision that we have. It's an ambition we have. Destination 2020 was a great exchange with our staff that we're acting upon, and I think it will continue to inspire the public service.

The Chair: There's another minute if you want it.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Go ahead.

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke: How many employees are at the Privy Council Office?

Mr. Serge Dupont: There are about 1,050, unless I'm mistaken. It's close to the same number as about six or seven years ago, meaning that, even with the additional resources we'll have this year, the Privy Council Office will have close to the same level of resources as it did six or seven years ago.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Perfect. Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Mr. Ayoub, you have five minutes.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I'd like to thank the witnesses for being here.

I will try to understand. One thing seems obvious to me, but I would like you to confirm it. When we make changes, we need more transparency, more consultation, and when we want to reach out to Canadians, like the current government does, we need additional resources. I imagine that if it wasn't done in the past or if the vision was redirected, it would be normal to need to allocate budgets to consult Canadians.

Let's take the example of Senate appointments or all the jobs across Canada. If you only make appointments, if you don't call for applications, as you said earlier, it might cost less, but you'd simply be making appointments.

You're requesting new funds, a normal part of the budget process. How will those funds help in carrying out that consultation, and support the Prime Minister's Office and all the departments? Certain consultation plans or democratic reform come to mind. Could you give me some examples of changes and progress that have been made?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Mr. Chair, I can take the example of the Senate appointment process. The amounts requested will be higher this year than they will be in subsequent years since there are a significant number of vacancies. This year, we have a total of \$1.5 million, which represents five people in the Privy Council Office.

This helped support a process that garnered 2,700 applications through an invitation to all Canadians on a website. It also allowed an advisory committee to make recommendations to the Prime Minister to fill 21 positions in seven provinces. It is considered that the contribution of these resources, which are not enormous, is important for democratic life in Canada.

•(1620)

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Does that bring together the mandate letters to the ministers and the Prime Minister's desire to open these Senate positions?

Mr. Serge Dupont: In this case, it was up to the Prime Minister. As I recall, it was probably reflected in the mandate letter of the Minister of Democratic Institutions, but it also fell to the Prime Minister. It was an important process.

All the mandate letters contain a request from the Prime Minister to work closely, for instance, with the provinces and territories, with indigenous groups, to have that openness.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: I have to interrupt you, Mr. Dupont. Your answer was comprehensive. Thank you.

I want to move on to the Results and Delivery Unit, which is a new tool, a new way to quantify and better monitor the progress of the ministerial mandate letter process, departmental objectives and the Prime Minister's objectives. Can you explain how it works and the office dynamic?

Mr. Serge Dupont: This office supports the Cabinet Committee on Agenda, Results and Communications. It also supports meetings between the Prime Minister and his ministers on a series of priority matters, such as innovation, infrastructure and reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

For each major priority, the Results and Delivery Unit works with the departments involved to better define expected results, to see how to measure the results over time and, in the case of discrepancies, to find the data that is not available.

One person in each department has been made responsible to collect data to support accountability to Canadians and to Parliament. On the one hand, it is a driving unit within the government and, on the other, an advisory unit for the Prime Minister so that he can work with his ministers and with Canadians to focus on results.

[English]

The Chair: Colleagues, before we go to Mr. Weir, for three minutes, when we excuse our witnesses at the conclusion of this meeting, I'd like about five minutes in camera to discuss future business. It shouldn't take any longer than that.

Mr. Weir, you have three minutes, please.

Mr. Erin Weir: Thank you.

When the Public Service Commission appeared before our committee on May 12, officials indicated that the challenge was not necessarily to attract new recruits but to retain them within the federal public service.

I wonder if you could elaborate on why that's the case.

Mr. Gerry Thom: You're right. The situation is still the same. There are no real issues as far as attracting individuals to come to work for the federal public service. The problem is keeping them here for a long time, for a full career. What we have to realize and live with is that we have to change the way we manage our resources. What we see is that the people who are coming in are not necessarily going to stay for 30 or 35 years in the public service, and not for bad reasons or good reasons. That's the way it is. They want different challenges and so on. What we need to do, I think, is to find a mechanism so that people can leave and come back easily to the public service, which does not exist right now. Right now, if you

want to go, there are programs that exist, but they are complicated. They take a lot of work, a lot of effort.

We have to find a way that, if an individual wants to go for good reasons to the private sector, or a provincial government, or anywhere else, then they can go, come back easily to continue their career with us, bring that experience, and at the same time, not be penalized for all the benefits that they might lose over the few years.

This is one way of trying to retain. We have to change our mindset. We cannot just hire the way we did and think that people will just stay with the organization because it's a great place to work and so on. We have to do a little bit more.

• (1625)

Mr. Erin Weir: Have the problems with the Phoenix payroll system made it harder to retain people in the federal public service?

Mr. Gerry Thom: Listen, I'm sure everyone—I can only speak for our organization—had and has some issues with the pay system, for sure, that we're managing with the department.

I don't think so. People are coming in. We hired about 10,000 students during the summer. These are people who came in, they wanted a summer job, and they wanted to gain some valuable experience. Potentially, a lot of them maybe had some issues with their paycheques—potentially, I don't know—but it didn't stop them from coming and wanting to work for the government to gain that experience.

The Chair: Lady and gentlemen, thank you once again for your appearance here today. Your testimony has been very helpful.

We will excuse you now. Thank you.

Colleagues, we'll suspend for about two minutes, and we'll then go into a quick five-minute in-camera session for future business.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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