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Chair

Mr. Tom Lukiwski

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• (0845)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC)): Colleagues, I call this meeting to order.

I have a couple of housekeeping notes before we begin. First, I'd like to take about 15 minutes at the end of today's meeting to go over a little committee business. It shouldn't take too long.

Second, on a little brighter note, I want to announce that our colleague Mr. Clarke is now the proud father of a bouncing baby boy.

Ramez, perhaps you could explain this to me. Why a proud francophone would name his first son Winston is beyond me. Perhaps he's a great admirer of a British prime minister.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Since when was "Winston" not French?

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: At any rate, Mr. Clarke will be attending to some obvious family business for the next few weeks, but he will be rejoining us before the end of the session.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses here today. We're dealing with the supplementary estimates (C). We have representatives from the Privy Council Office and Shared Services Canada.

Gentlemen and ladies, I think you know how these things work. We'll have opening statements, followed by a round questioning from all our panellists.

Mr. Dupont, I think you're first up on my list. Please give us your opening statement, sir.

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

Good morning to you and good morning to members of the committee. Thank you for inviting the Privy Council Office to review our 2015-16 departmental performance report, and as indicated, the 2016-17 supplementary estimates (C).

I'm accompanied by Ms. Kami Ramcharan, assistant deputy minister, corporate services branch, and chief financial officer of the Privy Council Office.

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. As a central agency, PCO exerts a leadership role across government to departments and agencies to ensure the coherence and coordination of policy development and delivery.

As identified in the departmental performance report, in 2015-16 PCO provided advice and service to two prime ministers and their respective portfolio ministers and cabinets, and successfully facilitated the transition from one government to another following the 2015 federal election. We advised on, developed, and delivered a number of key components in support of the government's agenda, including development and publication of ministerial mandate letters, the throne speech, budgets 2015 and 2016, and two first ministers meetings with the provinces and territories. As members know, a third first ministers meeting was held in December 2016.

We performed a central advisory and coordination role in the creation of the cabinet committee on agenda, results, and communications and the creation of the results and delivery unit of PCO in support of the government's commitment to deliver results to Canadians.

Finally, we advised and supported the Prime Minister, portfolio ministers, and cabinet during their first 150 days in office and on advancing Canada's presence and interests at international events, such as the G20 summit, the Commonwealth heads of government meeting, the Conference of the Parties 21 in Paris on climate change, the 2016 nuclear security summit, and the first state visit to Washington, D.C. All of that was in 2015-16.

[Translation]

Budget 2016 identified a number of needs and initiatives that require investments in PCO's capacity to support the Prime Minister and the government in the delivery of their agenda. Some of the additional authorities supporting new and modern IT infrastructure and security platforms, and enhanced digital communications, were approved through supplementary estimates (A).

In addition, the resources approved through supplementary estimates (B) included funding for the following: 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; support for the Minister of Democratic Institutions; active engagement with youth through a Youth Secretariat, serving the Prime Minister as Minister for Youth; a focus on outcomes and results for Canadians through a new Results and Delivery Unit, housed in PCO; a more open, transparent and merit-based appointments policy requiring added resources in our Senior Personnel Secretariat; and responsiveness to evolving threats to our national security by bolstering the capacity under the National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister.

Turning to 2016-2017 supplementary estimates (C), PCO is seeking spending authority of \$4.0 million, supplementary to \$157 million of authorities to date resulting in total authorities of \$161 million in the current fiscal year. Specifically we are seeking approval for an additional \$3.8 million in resources that enabled PCO to support the Minister of Democratic Institutions' activities related to electoral reform and \$150,000 for the Access Control and Physical Security Project at PCO.

For electoral reform, \$3.3 million of the total \$3.8 million funding was to support the following activities: engagement of Canadians through a series of outreach events including 17 ministerial town halls across the country, with the participation of approximately 2,000 Canadians; the creation of an interactive and online engagement application, MyDemocracy.ca, that allowed Canadians to identify the values and features of a democratic system that are the most important to them. These one-time communications and engagement activities required the support of 4.5 FTEs.

● (0850)

The remaining \$500,000 of the \$3.8 million request for electoral reform covers paid digital advertising to achieve greater citizen engagement in the electoral reform consultations.

[English]

The final item in these supplementary estimates is \$150,000 used for the planning, procurement, and implementation of the access control and physical security project.

Budget 2016 provided funding to strengthen security and make required investments in life-cycle updates to systems and buildings. Given the evolving threat environment both in Canada and abroad, PCO's focus includes better securing the perimeter of its facilities to prevent unauthorized entry and enable PCO and the Office of the Prime Minister to function in a safe and secure manner. The funding for the access control and physical security project included 0.7 full-time equivalents.

This summarizes the initiatives to be funded through PCO's proposed supplementary estimates (C).

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the questions of the committee.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Dupont.

Mr. Barr, please give us your opening statement.

[Translation]

Mr. Graham Barr (Acting Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategy, Shared Services Canada): Mr. Chair, we are pleased to appear before your committee to discuss Shared Services Canada's 2016-2017 supplementary estimates (C) and the 2015-2016 departmental performance report.

My name is Graham Barr, the Acting Senior Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategy, and I am accompanied by Samantha Hazen, Acting Director General of Finance and Deputy Chief Financial Officer, who will discuss our supplementary estimates (C). I will be focusing on our departmental performance report and related activities.

[English]

Shared Services Canada was created in 2011 to modernize how the government manages its information technology infrastructure. We deliver email, data centre, network, and workplace technology device services to departments and agencies in a consolidated manner to support the delivery of government programs and services.

Over the past several months and throughout 2015-16, we spent a lot of time and effort in improving our business model to better deliver on our priorities. We have strengthened our "service first" approach to better listen to our customers, take account of industry trends and changes, and deliver value-added services to our customer organizations and the Canadians they serve.

In 2015-16, Shared Services Canada continued its work to upgrade out-of-date mission-critical infrastructure across the government and enhance cybersecurity measures to assure the delivery of vital services to Canadians.

[Translation]

Our efforts have been supported by an investment of \$460 million in Budget 2016.

SSC also played a key role in helping support the whole-of-government effort to welcome Syrian refugees to Canada.

[English]

Our department worked tirelessly to rapidly install the necessary IT for the first welcome centres in Toronto and Montreal. This was carried out in close collaboration with multiple departments, local airport authorities, the Canadian Red Cross, Ontario and Quebec law enforcement, and numerous vendors and contractors.

In 2015-16, Shared Services Canada launched a number of initiatives to strengthen service delivery to partners. This included an online catalogue of all IT services offered by SSC to our customers. We also launched a monthly customer satisfaction feedback initiative to help us continuously improve our products, services, and processes, and in a year we've seen improvements in our results.

We have also continued to modernize and simplify our procurement practices by developing, among other activities, a system to electronically manage the procurement to payment process. We have also taken steps to ensure all our customers can obtain modern enterprise video conferencing services that support the government-wide commitment to a mobile and connected workforce from coast to coast to coast.

Towards the end of 2015-16, SSC launched a comprehensive review of its plan to consolidate and modernize the Government of Canada's IT infrastructure to ensure that the scope, costs, and timelines are realistic.

● (0855)

[Translation]

These are just some of our activities for the 2015-2016 reporting period, as part of our efforts to build a modern, secure and reliable platform for the digital delivery of programs and services to Canadians.

[English]

I would now like to turn to my colleague Samantha Hazen, who will discuss our supplementary estimates (C).

[Translation]

Ms. Samantha Hazen (Deputy Chief Financial Officer and Acting Director General, Finance, Shared Services Canada): Thank you.

For this third and final round of estimates for the 2016-2017 fiscal year, Shared Services Canada is seeking an additional \$34.2 million.

This includes \$3.2 million in incremental funding to provide information technology services to our customer departments and agencies.

[English]

This funding will support new government employees with a suite of standard services such as cellphones and Internet access. It will also support a project led by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada on the DNA analysis of insect and plant collections, for which SSC is providing computing capacity, storage, and ongoing maintenance.

These estimates also show that Shared Services Canada is receiving \$31 million in transfers from other organizations. This includes \$14.4 million from Statistics Canada to stabilize a legacy data centre as well as to support them in carrying out a number of surveys over the next few months.

[Translation]

This work will help reinforce the constructive working relationship we have established with Statistics Canada.

Working closely together we will indeed achieve a great deal. This includes, for example, the fact that Canadians were able to

participate in record numbers in the 2016 Census using Shared Services Canada's networks.

[English]

These estimates also include a transfer request of \$9.3 million from Public Services and Procurement Canada to support various initiatives, including the department's pay operations. For example, we rapidly helped to establish call centres in Ottawa and Toronto last fall in less than two weeks in collaboration with the IT industry. Following this success, SSC went on to implement other related solutions, including a claims centre for Treasury Board Secretariat. These additional centres were also completed quickly to meet the urgent business needs of our customers.

[Translation]

Finally, through the supplementary estimates, we are reprofiling funds to future years.

[English]

That includes \$52 million in support of the Carling campus initiative to consolidate a large part of the Department of National Defence's headquarters function at Nortel's former campus. This is a large multi-year infrastructure project led by Public Services and Procurement Canada as the custodian. Shared Services Canada is responsible for all communication equipment, connectivity, and information management and information technology to support DND's business operations.

I'm pleased to note that after four years of work, the first wave of DND employees moved into the newly refurbished, updated, and upgraded Carling campus in January 2017. All employees were well equipped with IT tools and services to deliver on their roles and responsibilities.

● (0900)

[Translation]

Currently, the move is on track to be completed by 2019. However, due to some delays related to construction, some of the funding Shared Services Canada had planned for 2016-2017 is now planned for 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

[English]

That completes our opening statement. We would now be very happy to take your questions.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you all very much. Now we'll begin our questions.

Madam Shanahan, you have seven minutes.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to everyone for being here this morning with us. My question will go to Mr. Barr of Shared Services.

We've heard from Shared Services a number of times over the last 12 to 18 months. I understand that you're working on your updated IT transformation plan. Just to refresh the committee, could you give us an update on the purpose of the plan and its scope?

Mr. Graham Barr: I'd be happy to.

The purpose of our transformation plan is to chart the way forward for the consolidation of the government's email, data centre, and network systems. Before the creation of Shared Services Canada, SSC's customer departments had 63 different email systems, 50 different wide-area networks, and over 500 different data centres. The vision of our transformation plan is to consolidate that, to streamline and modernize it so that we can build the IT platform for the delivery of services to Canadians.

As you've noted, towards the end of 2015-16 we launched a comprehensive review of that plan to consolidate and modernize IT infrastructure. We based our review on the lessons learned from our early years. In the fall, we also undertook a broad-based consultation with Canadians, with industry, with federal public servants, and with departmental CIOs, all aimed at ensuring we get the best possible advice and input from the various stakeholders to shape the plan.

Under the leadership of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, an external review was launched in the late summer. That review involved the services of an expert panel, a panel of experts from different jurisdictions who had undertaken IT consolidation and modernization efforts before. All that work was undertaken during the summer, fall, and early winter of the past year.

We're in the stage now of analyzing everything we heard through the consultations. The expert panel and the independent review process is wrapping up, so our goal is to have a new, revised transformation plan that will be ready for consideration by ministers and that will have more realistic time frames and scope to chart the way forward.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Okay. That was the major criticism, the delays in putting forward that plan and making it public. When do you expect to have that made public?

Mr. Graham Barr: The consultation did take a while, but we wanted to take the time to do it right. We wanted to take the time to ensure that we heard from as many stakeholders as possible. For example, we undertook three different industry round tables, meeting with representatives from 78 different companies and industry associations.

We set up an online portal on our website to receive suggestions from stakeholders on how to improve our plan. We received 2,500 different suggestions for improvements to our plan. As I said, we're in the process of analyzing that input. We anticipate wrapping up our analysis in the coming weeks and we'll provide that to ministers for their consideration.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: When can this committee expect to see the plan?

Mr. Graham Barr: That will depend on the length of time or the process of ministerial consideration.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Thank you for that.

I have another question. It concerns the estimates.

I remember very well the customer satisfaction survey. I'd like to have an update on it. Last year at this time, it was 2.79 out of 5.

● (0905)

Mr. Graham Barr: That's correct.

We continue to conduct our satisfaction survey on a monthly basis. Our most recent results, for the month of January 2017, indicated a score of 3.1, our highest ever. That may seem like a small increase, from 2.79 to 3.1, but it's an increase that's important to us. It validates the various service improvements we have been able to put in place despite some of the challenges we face.

It's encouraging for the morale of SSC employees as well, and it's helping us start to restore our customers' confidence in Shared Services Canada.

We will continue to conduct a survey on a monthly basis and we look forward to even better results in the future.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: What are the areas that are still lagging behind?

Mr. Graham Barr: The customer satisfaction survey tests five different drivers. The area that is the lowest is with respect to timeliness of our business processes. Our customer departments perceive that it takes longer than they expect it should to receive services from Shared Services Canada.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: What steps are you taking to improve that situation?

Mr. Graham Barr: We're currently streamlining the number of steps in our business intake process. As well, we have set up account teams. Each one of our customer departments is supported by an account team at Shared Services Canada. We are trying very hard to integrate ourselves into the business of departments so that we have more advance notice of the business requirements for those departments and there aren't surprises when they come knocking at our door for a particular service, because we already can see it coming on the horizon.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Are you requesting additional funding to help you in those efforts?

Mr. Graham Barr: No, we are not, through supplementary estimates (C).

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

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Welcome. Good morning.

Mr. Dupont, I'll start with you. I didn't see this in your DPR, but I found a fun quotation for you from last July in "Privy Council Office takes lead in dealing with pay system catastrophe". It was from the Prime Minister.

Can you walk us through any involvement your department had with this? It's very clear that the Prime Minister said PCO was going to take the lead, yet it's not mentioned in your DPR, and we see ongoing problems with it still.

Mr. Serge Dupont: As I mentioned in my remarks, PCO provides the direction, the coordination of action in the Government of Canada writ large. The responsibility for Phoenix resides clearly with the department of public services.

The Prime Minister indicated—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Was that just for show? It sounds as though you're saying you really don't do anything.

Mr. Serge Dupont: No. There remains a primary oversight responsibility for the Clerk of the Privy Council, as head of the public service, to take this matter seriously and to ensure that it is fixed. All the resources are being applied to addressing the very real challenge that Phoenix has posed to the public service and to public servants.

That, of course, has meant ensuring that we are bolstering the resources of the procurement department to manage this pressure through additional centres, that we are focusing on ensuring that individuals are paid accurately, that we are addressing the backlog that was identified, and so forth.

In short, what the clerk is ensuring is that through regular meetings between himself and the deputy minister and through the action of the Privy Council, we are satisfying ourselves that all efforts are being made to resolve this issue as quickly and as effectively as possible.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I want to get to democratic reform. That money has been spent. There was \$3.3 million for supporting engagement. That money has been spent, correct?

Mr. Serge Dupont: That is correct.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: The MyDemocracy.ca was rather amusingly mocked lightly in the paper, etc. Did we go out to bid on that? Was that a sole-source contract?

• (0910)

Mr. Serge Dupont: The process that was used was a sole-source contract, but under what is called the advance contract award notice. There's a public notice to all suppliers that the PCO intends to award a contract to a pre-identified supplier believed to be the only one capable of performing the work—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm sorry, Mr. Dupont. I'm short on time. It was just a quick question.

Who made the decision to choose that company? It had been insinuated that they had been linked either to the current government or to the provincial Liberal government. I'm curious, because you said that was the only company capable of doing this.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Vox Pop Labs was identified as a company that was able to do this. No other companies were known at the time to offer the same service. However, a notification was—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Who would have made that decision, please? It sounds very strange, in this day and age, that this company, which has been widely mocked for what they put out, was the only one in Canada known to be able to do a simple survey.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Ultimately, this is a process that was run by the Privy Council Office. As I indicated to you, the notification was provided, so that any other party who thought they were able to provide the service could have come forward and offered their services. At the end of the day, again, this was managed by Public Services and Procurement Canada in compliance with Treasury Board policies on contracts and on procurement.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay, it was Public Works.

What happened to all the data that was collected from this? What happened with that data? Is it sitting somewhere in Shared Services? Was it destroyed?

Mr. Serge Dupont: No. A public report, the summary of the exercise, was published on January 24. It's on the website for democratic reform. There is a summary report that all members, and, of course, any member of the Canadian public can go and consult.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I don't mean the results, but IP numbers.... I'm sure we drop cookies into everything. Is all that information stored somewhere? Was it retained to be used for data mining for future stuff?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I'm not sure where or how. We could certainly find out where all the individual kinds of answers may be residing, but the summary report was made public and is readily available for consultation. In total, over 360,000 Canadians participated in the survey.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm going to switch over to Shared Services quickly.

You mentioned the DND project on Carling Avenue. It's nice to see it's finally happening. We know there have been a lot of issues with Shared Services. It's a huge project and much bigger than I think anyone really expected.

Did the DND project in any way interfere with Shared Services' ability to get the other work done, such as the email transformation or moving over the data centres? Was it just a bridge too far or one project too many?

Mr. Graham Barr: Just as a point of clarification, is the member referring to our project to expand and modernize the Borden data centre on the DND base?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: You mentioned DND and Carling.

Mr. Graham Barr: Oh, the Carling campus.... No. The Carling campus was not one project too many for Shared Services Canada.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay.

I was going to ask you to update us on the email transformation, but I only have about 30 seconds, so I'll just say I'm very happy that your service scores are going up again. They were up the last time you were here, so very good. We'll get back to data centres and email transformation in the next round.

The Chair: Yes. There will be another round, of course.

Mr. Weir, you have seven minutes.

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

Mr. Dupont, it's understandable that the Privy Council Office would have started spending to consult on electoral reform, given that the government was elected on a solemn promise that 2015 would be the last election conducted under the first-past-the-post system. Of course, the government recently announced that it was not going to keep that promise and that there won't be any electoral reform, so I want to clarify whether the full \$3.8 million mentioned in your opening remarks was spent before the government made that announcement.

Mr. Serge Dupont: The short answer would be yes. The amounts were spent to support town halls. They were meant to support the MyDemocracy.ca exercise, and of course to pay for Vox Pop Labs. All of those monies were expended.

• (0915)

Mr. Erin Weir: Given that the government revealed after those activities that it had no intention of changing the voting system, would you consider those to have been misspent funds?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I think expenditures that are undertaken to consult Canadians on such a very serious matter as electoral reform certainly would be broadly considered to be well spent. Then a decision is taken by the political process in a democratic system, and as public servants we of course respect that decision.

Mr. Erin Weir: I think they would be well-spent funds if they were part of a genuine process, but if at the end of it the government announces that it's not going to do anything, should we be spending public funds on that?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Again, the monies were able to ensure that 2,000 Canadians participated in town halls across the country, that over 360,000 Canadians participated in an online exercise, that there were other opportunities for Canadians to express themselves, and then it was for the democratic system to take over in the conclusions to be drawn from the exercise and the decisions to be made.

Mr. Erin Weir: The great majority of those Canadian participants that you mentioned indicated a preference for a proportional voting system, yet the government decided not to move forward at all with a new voting system. Can we really conclude that those consultations were a good use of public funds?

The Chair: Pardon me. If I may, I'd like to interject for a moment.

Mr. Weir, I'm listening very carefully to your intervention, but you have to realize that the Privy Council Office supports the efforts of the Prime Minister's Office. They are not the ones making political decisions. I would ask that you try to phrase your questions in a form that will respect the abilities of the PCO as opposed to the political decision-making, which goes to a completely different standard.

Mr. Erin Weir: Fair enough. The PCO is the intersection between the public service and the political arm of government. It's on the borderline, but point well taken.

With regard to the PCO's supplementary estimates more generally, CBC recently noted an increase of about one-third over the last fiscal

year. I'm wondering if you could give us a sense of the rationale for that very large increase in the PCO's budget.

Mr. Serge Dupont: What the story the member refers to was talking about was the increase in the main estimates for 2017 relative to 2016-17, which is fair. A lot of that represents amounts now built into the PCO base that this committee saw coming through supplementary estimates (A), (B), and (C). Since the coming into office of this government, there have been clearly expanded mandates for PCO for the creation of the youth secretariat, for a more merit-based Governor in Council appointment process, for the results and delivery unit, and for a more robust intergovernmental affairs function.

These kinds of functions, which we explained at this committee came through in 2016-17 through supplementary estimates to some extent—not all of them—now get built into the base of the main estimates that then reflect the increase vis-à-vis 2016-17. I could go through the items in more detail, but they're roughly the items that this committee has heard about over the past year.

Mr. Erin Weir: That's fair enough.

I also have some questions for Shared Services, I suppose Ms. Hazen particularly, because they are on the supplementary estimates.

Just last week we learned of a memo from the RCMP commissioner to the Minister of Public Safety with a long list of complaints about a lack of IT support, faulty telephone headsets for 911 dispatchers, long network computer outages that affected officer dispatch and mission-critical databases, and computer hardware failures that resulted in some permanent losses of police information.

I wonder if the funds that are being requested in these supplementary estimates will fix those problems.

• (0920)

Ms. Samantha Hazen: Thank you for the question. Of the funding we're requesting in supplementary estimates (C), none of the money being requested is designated towards our partner at the RCMP.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay, so could I ask more generally what Shared Services' plan is to address these major problems that the RCMP has highlighted?

Mr. Graham Barr: Thanks for the question.

We have recently made changes to improve the services that we provide to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We formed a joint task force with the RCMP in November 2015 to address critical issues, and we have made some progress. We're using financing funding received through budget 2016 to replace aging telephony equipment, networks, and storage for the RCMP. There have been, as the member notes, recent outages in support for RCMP services and programs. The most recent one on January 19, 2017, was not, in fact, caused by network equipment that was well past the end of its life. That network equipment still had a useful life until 2020, was under maintenance contract, and also was receiving software patches on a regular basis. Nevertheless, we will be replacing that network equipment.

With respect to some of the other incidents that were noted, Shared Services Canada has been working really closely with the RCMP, whether it was on the site of the Fort McMurray wildfire or in Moncton to ensure that federal emergency response providers had all the IT equipment they needed to do their jobs, including cellular phones, Internet connectivity, security firewalls, etc. There is some improvement to be made, but we have taken concrete action over the past year in this regard.

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

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

I want to touch a bit on Shared Services. I can appreciate the questions from Mr. McCauley. The thing that's becoming evident is the pattern that's being developed, whether it's with email or Phoenix. There are always upfront costs to implementing a transformation plan or a major IT project, but when you set it up to fail or, as the Auditor General said, when you cut \$75 million out of the budget right up front... Perhaps Mr. McCauley would like to ask the leader of the official opposition, who I believe was the minister back then. She would probably have those answers on why they cut the budget for the email solution. It makes it hard for organizations to fully implement a solid plan.

I'm reading your DPRs, and the start date was April 2012. Right now the implementation date is under review. What's the plan? What's changed? I think last year you were at 10% implementation. Where are we at with email now?

Mr. Graham Barr: With the amount...?

Mr. Francis Drouin: Where are we at with the transformation, the ETI?

Mr. Graham Barr: The email transformation initiative, just as a quick reminder, is meant to consolidate the email systems of our 43 customer organizations into one and to make the system more secure. There are 5,500 email accounts in the Government of Canada. In November of 2015, we halted the migrations or transfer of email accounts onto the new system due to technical stability issues. Basically, the computing requirements for an average email user had been underestimated, and as we were bringing more departments on, the system was failing, so we halted the migrations.

That technical issue has since been resolved. However, there are still some system functionalities that are required as per the contract

that have not yet been added to the service by the vendor. We've been working closely, often, and collaboratively with the vendor to ensure that those contracted system functionalities are included in the service.

Just as a reminder, the vendor only gets paid for each of the email accounts that they migrate onto the system.

● (0925)

Mr. Francis Drouin: Okay.

I want to get back to the line of questioning that Ms. Shanahan was following with regard to the transformation plan. You've mentioned that you've consulted with stakeholders, but I believe that your most important stakeholders are your clients, or your customers, as you call them. How much time do you spend with them trying to understand their business?

I know that one of the major complaints was about timing, about being able to deliver services at their request. How much time is SSC spending with their client organizations to ensure that they understand—I know that they still have responsibility for applications—what their needs are? How much time are you spending with them now?

Mr. Graham Barr: We have been spending a significant amount of time with our client organizations. That is a key difference from the original transformation plan, which did not have as much consultation.

We have a number of partner organization advisory boards built into our governance at Shared Services Canada. We have been consulting with deputy ministers and chief information officers as well as with employees in customer departments on what their requirements are. We have been holding joint fora with chief information officers as well as chief financial officers to talk about the way ahead, whether it's on the technology side and the IT architecture side or with respect to funding models that can be more sustainable for a transformation program of this scope. That work of consulting with departments is certainly not over. It's something that we expect to continue and even to increase in the future.

As I mentioned in response to the earlier question, we have set up account teams for each of our partner organizations so that they can be more integrated into the business of the departments and provide a better understanding of their requirements. We certainly will be continuing that approach as well.

Mr. Francis Drouin: You've also developed a questionnaire to monitor customer satisfaction. Has the response rate been good in terms of the questionnaire?

Mr. Graham Barr: The response rate is exceeding our expectations. We have 43 different customer organizations. For example, in January, 37 of the 43 responded. As I noted earlier, the average score we received was 3.1 on a five-point scale, which is an important improvement from a year earlier.

Mr. Francis Drouin: That's great.

I want to spend a bit of time on something the Auditor General mentioned last year in regard to service level agreements. Has the department or SSC started to develop those with their client departments? These are service level agreements to ensure the mandate is clear in terms of what services or IT services they're getting.

Mr. Graham Barr: The Auditor General recommended that Shared Services Canada publish service level expectations and report on our progress against them so that there was more transparency for partners. Since that time, we at Shared Services Canada have published a service management strategy and we've made available our service catalogue for each of the 24 services. In our service catalogue, we have established service level expectations. Also, we are reporting to partners against those service level expectations.

We are also finalizing what we call a "business arrangements document", which is an agreement between Shared Services Canada and each of our customers that outlines our respective roles and responsibilities in ensuring the successful delivery of IT services. We developed that business arrangements document in consultation with other departments. We expect to be sending it to those departments within a few weeks and seeking their deputy head's signature to ensure that it has the highest-level endorsement.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now go to a five-minute round.

Go ahead, Monsieur Gourde, *s'il vous plaît*.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses for being here this morning.

In supplementary estimates (C), I note that for a \$157-million budget you are seeking an additional \$4 million; this would take the budget to some \$161 million. In reading the document I also see that this would mostly be used to pay for democratic reform initiatives.

Did the Minister of Democratic Institutions not have the necessary budget for those initiatives? Was that not included in her operational budget?

• (0930)

Mr. Serge Dupont: Mr. Chair, these are one-time expenses that went basically to consulting Canadians over the course of the year about democratic reform. I mentioned the general consultations which were held throughout the country, 17 in all. The same thing applies to the online consultation tool and the work to inform Canadians about it.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Concerning these ad hoc expenses, did the request come from the minister because she did not have enough

money in her operational budget, or because she simply had no budget?

Mr. Serge Dupont: The Privy Council Office has no budget to undertake such expenditures in an ad hoc way, and so it is a decision of the government to grant an additional amount to the PCO. Of course this must then be approved by committees and by Parliament.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: So the government asked you to take these initiatives because the minister had no budget to do so.

Mr. Serge Dupont: The government makes the decision to conduct these activities. Afterwards, PCO must inform the government that it does not have the necessary amounts to fund these expenses, and afterwards steps are taken to go and get the necessary funding.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: It seems there are two initiatives: the engagement of Canadians in 17 meetings in which 2,000 Canadians took part, and then the creation of an engagement application. All of this cost \$3.3 million.

How was money allocated to those two initiatives, what were the percentages? Was it fifty-fifty? Do you have the details? Out of the \$3.3 million total, how much was used to engage Canadians during the 17 town hall meetings, and how much was used to create the mobile app?

Mr. Serge Dupont: As I mentioned, the Privy Council Office spent \$400,000 to support various expenditures related to the general consultations.

In addition, we paid \$369,000 for all the work related to the online tool, which includes the report.

We also spent \$1.9 million to invite Canadians to take part in this exercise by sending an invitation to their homes in Canada.

And then there were staff-related expenses. All of these efforts were supported by 4.5 FTEs and cost \$700,000 altogether.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: We had to pay \$1.9 million to invite 2,000 Canadians to take part in 17 town hall meetings.

Mr. Serge Dupont: No, this isn't about those 2,000 Canadians; it was to direct Canadians toward the MyDemocracy.ca website.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: There were 360,000 people who used MyDemocracy.ca. What percentage of the Canadian population does that represent?

Mr. Serge Dupont: You can do the math as well as I can. The government wanted each Canadian to be aware of this undertaking and to be able to take part in the exercise if they wanted to.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Only 1% of Canadians wanted to take part in the exercise. Do you think this was a success? Earlier you said that this had been a success.

If I manage to reach only 1% of my fellow citizens, it's a disaster.

Mr. Serge Dupont: The important thing is to give all Canadian men and women the opportunity to take part. It is then up to them to decide what they will do and how they wish to express themselves. There may be other ways of expressing an opinion aside from the survey or the exercise.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: The survey clearly showed that this initiative was of interest to 1% of Canadians. Consequently, 99% of Canadians had no real interest in democratic reform, if one goes by that survey which was supported by the government and paid for by Canadians for the purpose of finding out if they wanted to answer. This result shows that this was of no interest to Canadians.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Mr. Chair, conclusions are being drawn and it is difficult for me to respond because they are somewhat political.

I am simply saying that an invitation was sent to all Canadians using these means. Canadians made their decisions and then the political system makes the decisions it has to make to conclude the exercise.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I'll just reinforce some of the comments I made earlier with Mr. Weir.

Mr. Dupont is quite correct in saying their role is not in the political realm. It's strictly for the bureaucracy to support the political activities. The decisions made politically, of course, go to the government, not to PCO.

We'll now go to Madam Ratansi for five minutes, please.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Thank you all for coming, and thank you for taking questions that were of a political nature as well.

I have an interesting question for you. It is from the media of February 24, 2017, Mr. Dupont. It was headed "Trudeau's Privy Council Office budget the highest in a decade".

As an accountant, I like to put context to it. I don't like comparing apples to pears; I compare apples to apples. Could you provide a context? First, has there been a 20% increase? Second, have there been different activities between different governments, and why is the budget for the PCO high?

● (0935)

Mr. Serge Dupont: As I indicated earlier, I don't have the exact percentage increase, but as reported in the media, there is a substantial increase between the main estimates for 2017-18 and 2016-17. That is because, quite clearly, the Privy Council Office has been asked by this Prime Minister and this government to take on additional functions that, in part, go to additional roles that the Prime Minister himself has decided to take on, for example, as Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth.

It's not only to take on the role but also to step up the role. For example, in terms of intergovernmental affairs, there have been three first ministers meetings in a span of one year, whereas there hadn't been first ministers meetings for some period.

To bolster the appointment process to boards, commissions, crown corporations, and so forth, all appointments, both full-time and part-

time, are now done through a competitive process with an open invitation to Canadians to apply.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Then earlier it wasn't an open process?

Mr. Serge Dupont: For some it was, but for, say, part-time positions to be a member of a board of a corporation, the responsible minister could simply submit the names of candidates and they would then be vetted by the federal cabinet.

Now everything is done through an open, competitive, and merit-based system. That means additional resources in the Privy Council Office. The results and delivery unit are additional resources in the Privy Council Office to track more systematically how different departments are going about aligning their activities, not just with inputs but with actual outputs. What are the outcomes for Canadians? How do you define those? How do you report on those? Where are you going to get the data, and so forth? That's a discipline that PCO is now applying across the system.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: With the Prime Minister telling every department and every minister to take that gender lens to look at whether programs benefit both men and women, is that going to require additional resources?

Mr. Serge Dupont: That has not required additional resources in the Privy Council Office. This is the work that all the different departments have to do. As they bring forward proposals, be they memoranda to cabinet or Treasury Board submissions, all of the proposals being brought to cabinet must include a gender-based analysis to determine whether the policy will fairly or appropriately affect gender and other characteristics of the population.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Thank you.

Mr. Barr, does SSC have a strategic plan that is fluid?

There is a reason I am going for this one. You have to have a strategic plan when you are making all these transformation projects.

Mr. Graham Barr: We do have a plan. We call it the transformation plan. It's the plan to consolidate and modernize the government's IT infrastructure. If by "fluid" the member is asking whether it is agile and it adapts to changes in technology as well as inputs we get from various stakeholders, certainly it is. As I mentioned in response to another question, we've undertaken a pretty intense, broad-based set of consultations and we received a lot of input that we are adjusting our plan to accommodate.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: I'll ask later. My time is up.

The Chair: We will go to Mr. McCauley for five minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thank you.

Mr. Barr, you answered very well on the email transformation. Another one of the three big projects was the data servers. Can you update us as to where we are with moving from 800 little data servers everywhere down to, I think it was, seven main ones?

• (0940)

Mr. Graham Barr: Mr. Chair, I believe the member is referring to data centres, which are buildings that house our servers and network equipment. There are a little over 500 data centres in the Government of Canada, which range in size from large buildings to small closets in office buildings.

As the member suggests, our plan remains to consolidate the number of data centres down to seven or fewer. We have not been able to close old data centres as quickly as we had originally planned. Part of the revision to our transformation plan that I referred to earlier is a new approach to closing the old data centres and transferring the data, the servers, and the equipment of the departments out and into the new enterprise data centres.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Do you have enough resources for that, or will that be an ask a bit further down the road as we get closer to finalizing that transformation?

Mr. Graham Barr: Part of our revised transformation plan—on which, as I said earlier, we are wrapping up the analysis—includes complete costing for all of our IT consolidation and modernization projects, including our data centre consolidation project.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Do you feel comfortable that we have the right plan and we're on the right track for it?

Mr. Graham Barr: The plan we've been developing as a result of the consultations and the analysis of our lessons learned is a much more realistic plan with much more realistic timelines and also a realistic migration schedule.

As I mentioned earlier, we are currently just finishing our analysis of the 2,500 suggestions we heard from industry stakeholders, Canadians, and departmental CIOs. We'll be putting that before ministers very shortly.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Great.

With regard to your service scores, do you break them down by department, or is it overall? When you said you grew, I think, from 2.7 to 3.1, was that overall, or are you able to break them down by department?

Mr. Graham Barr: Do you mean our customer service scores?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Yes.

Mr. Graham Barr: Yes, we have a score for each of the departments. The 3.1 I mentioned earlier is the average of the 37 of our 43 partners who responded to the January survey.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How do you deal with the very, very low scores? I'm sure the RCMP was not high up there, considering their comments recently. Do you have a plan to go after those, or is it a mixed bag? Some are low scores because of their infrastructure; some because of service delivery.

Mr. Graham Barr: We do take a very targeted approach. The implementation of the customer satisfaction survey has really helped our efforts to improve service delivery because it allows us to target specific departments.

For the departments that are in, I'll just say loosely, the bottom 10, we have developed specific, concrete action plans in consultation with those departments. These plans are aimed first at understanding the scores that those customer organizations gave us, but more importantly, what concrete actions we can take to turn them around in the coming months.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Great.

Ms. Hazen: I have a very quick question. You mentioned in the supplementary estimates (C) that there's money for new phones, new equipment. Are these replacements for current existing employees, or are these for brand new employees who have come aboard?

Ms. Samantha Hazen: As a part of our request through supplementary estimates (C), there is new funding of \$1 million. That is to support some of the standard suites of services that we offer to Government of Canada employees. It's really money to cover the cost of new FTEs who have been added to the Government of Canada since the time of our main estimates.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Great. Thanks.

The Chair: We will go to Mr. Whalen for five minutes.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you all for coming.

Unlike my colleagues, it's my impression that the money spent to determine Canadian values with respect to the electoral system was worthwhile. It brought us the sense that the values of Canadians did not necessarily align with any of the proposed options for change, so even if people wanted change, they didn't know what to change it to. From my perspective, I'm glad that the money was spent.

My question, really, is this: why was the request for money not in advance of the programming? Why was it not requested under supplementary estimates (B)? Why is it that the PCO is asking for the money rather than the Minister of Democratic Institutions?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan (Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services, Privy Council Office): I'll take an opportunity to respond to the question, Mr. Chair.

Budget 2016 would have identified money associated with doing this initiative for the PCO. In terms of developing the initiative, what we do is develop a Treasury Board submission to seek funds for it. We didn't develop it in time because we were still working out the details in terms of finding out what we were going to do, how we were going to spend the money, and how it was going to be used.

Once we have a good understanding of what we're doing with that, then we go forward with the Treasury Board submission. When your Treasury Board submission is heard determines whether it's in your supplementary estimates (B) or (C). The Treasury Board submission wasn't heard in time for it to be in supplementary estimates (B). The work would have been under way, we would have been developing our proposal, but we would not have had it in time to meet the timelines associated with a supplementary estimates (B) kind of initiative.

• (0945)

Mr. Nick Whalen: It wasn't a situation where you could put forward some type of a contingency amount as part of the supplementary estimates (A) or (B), just to say that you expect you're going to need \$5 million for this initiative, and then make the exact request later. It required an exact request.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: The budget document gives us the opportunity to say that we think we're going to spend a certain amount of money in this area. The Treasury Board submission brings it down into finer detail of what we're going to do. Typically, the department throughout the year has enough money within its base to, what we call, cash-manage the expenditures. We don't need the money right at the time we're undertaking those expenditures, but we will need the money before the end of the year because all of the other things that we were spending our money on have to happen by the end of March. We would have used some of the existing resources within PCO to cash-manage the expenditures related to this initiative, and then by the end of the year we would need to balance the accounts.

In terms of why it doesn't go directly to the minister, all of the budgets for any government activities come into a department. We are the department that supports the Minister of Democratic Institutions, and that's why it comes to us.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Within the department, is this the total overall spend for the democratic reform initiative, the \$3.8 million for the entire year?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Yes, the \$3.8 million for the entire year is the forecasted expenditure. We won't know the exact amount until the end of the fiscal year—we still have about four weeks to go until then—but that's the estimate for what we generally expect we're going to spend.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Dupont, it looked as though you were going to interject there.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Yes. I was going to say, on this exercise on electoral reform and reaching out to Canadians, that's it but there is continuing democratic reform, of course, under the Minister of Democratic Institutions and we will be supporting her.

There were some monies in the supplementary estimates (B) that will likely be ongoing, about \$1 million per year, seven and a half person-years, bolstering the capacity of the Privy Council Office to

support the Minister of Democratic Institutions in her ongoing mandate. She has a new mandate letter from the Prime Minister.

Mr. Nick Whalen: I have another small question that might link both of you together. In paragraph 2, on page 8 of the departmental performance report from last year, it said that the PCO expected to consolidate its data centres by November 2017. I wonder whether you have more insight into this, or is PCO managing its IT systems separately from Shared Services Canada?

Why is there this delta between Shared Services Canada not knowing what it's doing, not going to table the report and know when it's going to implement the initiative, and PCO saying it's going to happen in November 2017?

The Chair: If possible, please keep the answer brief.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: What I could suggest is that in our departmental report for last year we were talking about getting ready for the eventual move to the extended data centres that Shared Services Canada is developing. That's why it's not done right away. We have to look at all our applications, look at our data—

Mr. Nick Whalen: Is November 2017 still the timeline you're working towards, or has that changed?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: I think that has changed. I don't think we're going to be able to get there by November 2017, but we're trying to do the best we can.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Is it through Shared Services Canada that this work is being done?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Yes, absolutely.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

To complete our first round, we'll go to Mr. Weir for a three-minute intervention, please.

Mr. Erin Weir: Thanks very much.

I felt that Mr. Whalen was on the right track there, asking about the supplementary estimates for democratic reform. Ms. Ramcharan, you made the point, of course, that you have an estimate in the budget of how much you're going to seek and then you can come forward with a more precise amount through the Treasury Board submission. I wonder if you could tell us how the amount we're looking at today, the \$3.8 million, compares with the amount that was budgeted originally.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: If I recall correctly, the amount that was sought in budget 2016 for this initiative was going to be over a four-year term. What we provided for initially in our Treasury Board submission was before we would have known the results of the conversations with regard to democratic reform, or within a very short period of time between the results being known and our Treasury Board submission. What we ended up getting, in essence, was only one year of funding related to the democratic reform. We would have sought a longer period of funding in our Treasury Board submission, but what Treasury Board ministers gave us was one year, with the opportunity, as we better understand what our next steps would be, to potentially go back and seek the additional money in a subsequent Treasury Board submission.

• (0950)

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay. Can you make any kind of comparison between the amount that was originally envisioned and the amount that was actually spent? Even if it was over four years, presumably there was some kind of accounting of how much per year.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: There is. Unfortunately I don't have the details with me, but I can definitely get back to the committee.

Mr. Erin Weir: Yes. If you could come back with a written response on that, I think it would be of great interest to the committee.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Sure.

Mr. Serge Dupont: I would add that what has been spent this fiscal year is what was projected to be spent this fiscal year on the exercise.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay, fair enough. That's exactly what I was asking.

Mr. Serge Dupont: It's not over or under budget. It's pretty well on budget.

Mr. Erin Weir: Would it be fair to say, then, that all along the plan included this mailout to all households in Canada?

Mr. Serge Dupont: It did not necessarily include all the modalities, but essentially a budget had been set to reach out to Canadians, and those were ultimately the amounts that were expended on it.

Mr. Erin Weir: Fair enough. Thanks very much.

The Chair: You have about 30 seconds.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay. Don't worry about it, then.

The Chair: All right.

Colleagues, we'll go into round two. As I said, I'll need about 15 minutes at the end of this meeting to deal with some committee business. We won't have enough time for a complete round, but I think we can have a full seven-minute round and then two questions, one each from the government and the Conservatives on the five-minute round.

We'll start off with Mr. Peterson, for seven minutes, please.

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank everyone for being here this morning and for the work you put into preparing for today, and frankly the work you do

for Canada on a daily, ongoing basis. Thank you for your commitment to that.

There are just a few questions I want to touch on here. If I may, I'll make a bit of a comment. Frankly, it's kind of shocking that any member of Parliament would think it's a waste of time or resources or money to consult Canadians. I think that's the fundamental role of a member of Parliament, so any effort we can make to consult Canadians I think is something that should be lauded and not critiqued. That's certainly the way I look at my role as a member of Parliament, being able to hear what Canadians think. Frankly, if we can do that in an effective and efficient manner, it's certainly incumbent upon us to do so.

I think that was done during the MyDemocracy.ca exercise with the expense of \$3.8 million. Every Canadian had the chance to participate. Members might think 360,000 is a small number of Canadians to consult with, but that's probably 360,000 more than were consulted in the decade before, so I think it's quite an achievement. The old consultation was to walk down to the PMO and that's where you would consult, so we've moved away from that regime I think.

But I want to talk about another component of the PCO's estimates here, and it's the smaller part, the roughly \$150,044 for access control and physical security projects to strengthen the Privy Council's Office security infrastructure. I just wonder if you can elaborate on that. A lot of these are new terms to me, and maybe some of my colleagues, so could you elaborate on the details of what that program is?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Sometimes, Mr. Chair, the unfortunate part of our business is that we introduce new terms, but for things that members would readily recognize. Essentially it's when you go, for example, through a security gate that's automatic with a pass that you can flash so the gates open and you can come in. That is in part what we are talking about here.

Essentially, for the Privy Council Office we have altogether in the perimeter around Langevin 11 buildings. We are trying to modernize and ensure that we have state-of-the-art security systems for access to these buildings. What we're doing now, and it's going to continue on next year, is the beginning of the process this year. We do have to do planning, procurement, and implementation for this access control and physical security project. That's door-access control systems, which means there's software, of course, supported by servers. There's a control panel. There are card readers and there are cards that will be issued to Privy Council Office employees and so forth, and that is simply to bolster the security of the perimeter. That access control is part of a broader exercise to ensure that the Privy Council Office, and of course the Office of the Prime Minister, can work in a very secure environment.

• (0955)

Mr. Kyle Peterson: I'm just wondering why this is in the supplementary estimates and wasn't planned ahead of the game.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Again, we had monies put forward or announced in budget 2016. Some of the monies were secured in supplementary estimates (A), and others in supplementary estimates (B). This is a relatively small amount for this fiscal year, and therefore was carried into supplementary estimates (C). There's no particular reason for it. Those are going to be, as I indicated, a carry-over to the next fiscal year of this project.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Thank you.

I want to continue with the PCO for a moment here.

I went over your performance report. You categorized the priorities into two priorities, I think. Is it time maybe to revisit those priorities based on the new roles, the new functions, that your office is performing? You're effectively I think supporting not just the Prime Minister now, but also the Minister of Youth and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Do you see any reason to change the priorities of your department, or does that new role fit into the priorities as they exist?

Mr. Serge Dupont: The fundamental role and mission of the Privy Council Office will remain the same. There are three parts we identify. First is the support to the Prime Minister and the ministers of the portfolio, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and the Minister for Democratic Institutions in this case. Second is the support to the cabinet, the effective operation of the cabinet, and third is then to be leading the public service writ large. Those three components are going to continue, and I think will remain our top-line objectives.

However, we have to evolve as the priorities of the government evolve, as the role and the priorities of the Prime Minister evolve, as he takes on, as I indicated to you earlier, new roles. We, of course, try to reflect in our different documents—including the performance report, which is however backward looking, and in the planning documents—how we view our priorities, how we consider we can best service the Prime Minister, the ministers of the portfolios, the cabinet, and ensure an effective and responsive public service.

We evolve. We do reflect on our objectives, and particularly our performance indicators, but the fundamental characteristics and role of PCO stand.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Thank you.

If I can get a quick question in, I have an accounting question for Ms. Hazen.

I note in your report that your estimates show that Shared Services Canada is receiving \$31 million in transfers from other organizations. Do you expend the money first and then they pay you back? How does that process work?

Ms. Samantha Hazen: Thank you very much for the question.

As Ms. Ramcharan alluded to earlier, we do a process whereby we can cash-manage funds. If we know in advance that these monies need to be spent, we can incur the expenditures up front and then receive the money as part of the supplementary estimates (C) process.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Thank you. That clarifies it.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. McCauley, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay.

Mr. Peterson, I'm glad we were not in camera, because there's no way anyone would have believed me when I went out and said that you defended MyDemocracy....

Mr. Dupont, to go back very quickly to MyDemocracy.ca, when was the decision made? You mentioned that it was sent over to Public Works to source it. Do you know when the decision was made to create that website in the process? If you don't, that's fine.

Mr. Serge Dupont: I'm just checking my notes to see when the contract was awarded. The contract was awarded in September 2016.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. You mentioned in your notes, "These one-time communications and engagement activities required the support of 4.5 FTEs". Are those contract FTEs, or were they people transferred in to help out, or were those new hires who have now been released or permanent FTEs who were added? This was for the creation and engagement of MyDemocracy.ca.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Right. PCO has about a thousand employees altogether, so there's a fair amount of movement in any particular year, and it will adjust to some of the pressures up and down. I would suspect in this case—and I'd be happy to check to be very clear about it—we would have allocated some resources and maybe hired a couple of extra people who would have been devoted to this activity. Then that requirement is no longer there the following year.

• (1000)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: They're just generally shuffled on to other duties.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Yes, it's probably just part of the overall churn —

Mr. Kelly McCauley: It's just throwing in an extra four and a half people there...?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Yes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: On the \$500,000 in the supplementary (C)s for ads, I'm not sure if you discussed it already. What is that for? I know that it's a horizontal line.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Thank you for that, because we talked about it a bit when we talked about reaching out to Canadians in the mailout that went to the households. There were—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Was that the democratic reform one?

Mr. Serge Dupont: That's correct.

That was mailed out to the households. I did mention that earlier.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay.

Mr. Serge Dupont: In addition to that, the \$500,000 refers to design, media planning, and media via digital advertising, banners, and posts, so that included banners on various websites—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Was that solely to support the democratic reform one or was that across the board for other items as well?

Mr. Serge Dupont: This was also in support of democratic reform, of electoral reform, and that included Twitter ads, Facebook ads and so forth, so that, again, individuals could click and then be directed to MyDemocracy.ca.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How many people are currently employed in the Senate selection process? It's come up before in a couple of our meetings on supplementaries in terms of what I think is an outrageous sum. I think that just this last year it was something like \$1.2 million for what they said was basically forwarding resumé.

It's mentioned in the supplementaries that this million dollars supports the Senate selection committee. Is that correct? Is that like an ongoing cost for secretarial support?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Let me try to ensure that I give you the correct answer here. For new funding that was sought for Senate reform—and this was in supplementary estimates (A), I believe—there was funding of \$1.5 million to essentially fund 5.4 full-time equivalent positions. Of course, we did allocate existing—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Yes, it's in the upcoming main estimates as well.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Pardon me?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: It's in the upcoming main estimates as well, that increase of \$1 million.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Okay.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Then it's correct that it's a million dollars ongoing?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I'm sorry?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Is that correct? It's a million dollars ongoing for secretarial services for the selection of senators.

Mr. Serge Dupont: It will vary over time, but it's in the range of one million dollars. It's for more than the secretarial here. There is support for the advisory committee—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: We asked earlier and they said it was basically printing resumé as they came in, so there didn't seem to be a lot of support for them. I'm just querying about \$1 million for—

Mr. Serge Dupont: Well, there is the capability, of course, the website being constructed in order to receive the applications.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: We asked about that and that was a separate cost as well.

Mr. Serge Dupont: What I can assure you is that there is more being done than simply photocopying resumé.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Would you be able to provide us with a description? I know you don't have time right now, but could you provide us with the full details of what they're doing?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I'd be happy to provide you with a description of the work of the Privy Council in support of the Senate appointment process, absolutely.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Yes, and specific to that \$1 million.

There is a fair amount of money in the supplementary estimates for consultants for the deliverabilities—you know, supporting the government with its agenda. One of the things that's come up

recently with the PBO was the issue of the procurement, getting the promised procurement money out the door.

Is that something that would have been assisted through the deliverabilities, like getting the government agenda pushed forward? Would that have been assisted from PCO, or is that completely separate?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure I understand the question and whether it's addressed to PCO or to Shared Services Canada.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: No, it's to PCO.

You talked about there being \$26 million in consulting money for deliverabilities to ensure that the government rolls out its agenda, or that PCO assists the government with its agenda.

Mr. Serge Dupont: I did not say consultants' money.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay, the consultants—

Mr. Serge Dupont: No, sorry.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: When you talk about deliverabilities, is that—

Mr. Serge Dupont: Okay, deliverability is—

The Chair: That's probably a question more designed for Treasury Board Secretariat than the Privy Council Office, but Monsieur Dupont, if you want to answer, that would be fine.

• (1005)

Mr. Serge Dupont: Perhaps to clarify that, if—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: If it's better answered by Treasury Board, I'll ask Treasury Board.

Mr. Serge Dupont: My answer focused on the expansion of responsibilities as reflected in the main estimates of the Privy Council Office. I made reference to results and delivery unit, which is not consultants, which is not buying services from the outside. There may be a separate issue around the government's overall buy of consultant services.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'll follow up with Treasury Board.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Weir, you have seven minutes, please.

Mr. Erin Weir: Thank you.

I appreciated the responses from Shared Services about IT support for the RCMP, but it's not just the RCMP. The memo that I mentioned also highlighted an 11-hour outage that not only downed the BlackBerrys of all RCMP officers, it also prevented about 240 other police forces from accessing the Canadian Police Information Centre.

Since we have the Canadian Police Association on Parliament Hill today, I want to ask what Shared Services is doing, either through these supplementary estimates or otherwise, to ensure that there is going to be proper IT infrastructure, not just for the RCMP but for all the other police forces that ultimately depend on the federal system.

Mr. Graham Barr: Shared Services Canada is using funding that we received through budget 2016. We received \$384 million over two years. It was \$234 million for 2016-17, and the balance of \$151 million in 2017-18.

We're using that funding to address the most immediate pressures with respect to our aging infrastructure, so our networks and data centres that have been determined to be mission critical by departments and that are also at the end of their useful life, which is typically a five-year period.

Since we received the money from budget 2016, we have been reinstating maintenance contracts that had previously expired because we had limited funds to renew them. We've been upgrading networks and servers that support mission-critical programs like the ones the member mentioned with respect to policing services. We've been replacing firewalls. We plan to replace all of our end-of-life firewalls, as well as replace out-of-date telephony equipment. A specific example relevant to police work is in remote detachments in western Canada. We have been replacing their telephony equipment so that 911 services function as they should in those regions.

Throughout 2016, we have been procuring a lot of this new infrastructure. We have started rolling out some of it, and we plan to do more in 2017-18.

Mr. Erin Weir: Based on all of that, would you feel confident that this problem won't be repeated, that we won't have another incident where police forces across the country lose access to the database of criminal records for many hours?

Mr. Graham Barr: The Government of Canada's IT infrastructure is certainly more secure than it was before Shared Services Canada was created. Before the creation of Shared Services Canada, the government's approach to protecting its networks and data was fragmented, covered by a patchwork of firewalls of varying effectiveness. No one single organization had a single perspective on the security posture.

Today, at Shared Services Canada, we have a security operations centre that monitors systems 24-7, 365. We've instituted a supply chain integrity process that I believe we've talked to this committee about before. We've invoked the national security exception to ensure security, but despite all the best preventions, cyber-threats and other flaws in computer systems are continually evolving and becoming more sophisticated and more customized. No organization is immune to a cyber-attack or a computer failure.

Mr. Erin Weir: Was this outage the result of a cyber-attack or a computer failure?

Mr. Graham Barr: It was the result of a computer failure, yes.

Mr. Erin Weir: That's my sense, but thank you for that.

Ms. Ratansi often reminds our committee of her background as an accountant. Now, of course, I didn't have enough personality to be an accountant, so I had to be an economist. Despite that, I feel that Ms. Ratansi and I are actually on the same page in asking PCO about the extent of its budget increase, and I feel like the response that we both received was that PCO has been asked to take on some additional functions.

I'd like to ask whether those functions are actually appropriate to PCO. Mr. Gourde, and I think, Mr. Whalen have already asked a little about why the electoral reform spending was done through PCO rather than through the Minister of Democratic Institutions. One could also ask whether the Minister of Youth's functions are properly done through PCO. I'm just curious to hear your take on whether those additional functions actually make sense for PCO as an organization.

•(1010)

Mr. Serge Dupont: What I would say is that the scope of the functions residing in PCO has evolved over time. In some cases, prime ministers wanted to bring into PCO special secretariats or special functions to look at different priorities, and PCO has evolved over time in response to those priorities of different prime ministers and different governments. It is perfectly within the prerogative of a prime minister to organize the machinery of government as per the allocation of responsibilities that the prime minister sees. That is one of his prerogatives as the head of the government, and we as PCO then endeavour to meet that need.

What is not happening here, and where there could be an issue, is where you would have duplication, for example, where we'd be doing something that is also done in another part of government. It's not the case. We're bolstering intergovernmental affairs, because in serving the Prime Minister as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Minister of Youth, and so forth, those are perfectly legitimate functions to be in PCO if that is the choice of the Prime Minister.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Ayoub, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions will be addressed to Mr. Barr's team.

The departmental performance report of Public Services and Government Procurement Canada, which is under the management of Minister Foote, provides dates, several topics, and the status of programs. According to what I can see, things are on the right track in most cases. In addition, there are dates marking the beginning and the end of things, which allows us to understand that projects are long-term and not limited to 2015-2016.

For instance, I see that the program to welcome Syrian refugees was rolled out and is now complete. That is on page 13 of the report. It refers to 25,000 Syrian refugees.

What are the plans for 2017? Will the next report, the 2016-2017 report, include another line on the reception of Syrian refugees, or will that topic not be raised in the report?

[English]

Mr. Graham Barr: No, our report on plans and priorities, or “departmental plan”, as I believe it will be called for 2016-17, will not have a specific line for the Syrian refugee project.

[Translation]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: I see. There will not be any, despite the fact that we know that we continue to receive refugees?

[English]

Mr. Graham Barr: Shared Services Canada will continue to support, but it won't be highlighted in our plan for 2016-17.

The support that we have provided to the welcoming of Syrian refugees, setting up the welcome centres, providing telephony equipment, Internet connectivity, etc., will continue on an ongoing basis as long as the need is there.

[Translation]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Indeed, we see in the report that there were several investments to improve IT in order to accelerate or facilitate the arrival of these refugees. Consequently, you can guarantee that those investments were not made in vain, and that they continue to be made. That is what I understand. Thank you.

On page 29 of that same report, you talk about linguistic management and related services. This refers to the delivery of translation services. There is an end date: March 2017. We are now in March 2017. Was a situation report prepared? It says that things are on the right track; however, March 2017 seems to be the end of the exercise. Perhaps I am mistaken, but I believe that such services are offered on a continuous basis and will continue to be offered over the years to come. There is no end date regarding the improvement of linguistic services or the delivery of translation services.

•(1015)

[English]

Mr. Graham Barr: Just as a point of clarification, is the member looking at the departmental performance report for Shared Services Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: I'm referring to the 2015-2016 Departmental Performance Report.

Mr. Graham Barr: From Shared Services Canada?

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: The one from Public Services and Government Procurement Canada.

[English]

Mr. Graham Barr: Okay. That's not our department. I'm here representing Shared Services Canada. We are in the same portfolio, under Minister Foote, but Public Services and Procurement Canada is a separate department. I'm not equipped to talk about their departmental performance report today.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Sorry.

Mr. Graham Barr: I believe they are appearing on Thursday.

[Translation]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Fine. I had several questions about the Public Services and Government Procurement Canada report, but I will move to another topic.

Let's talk about specific projects.

Shared Services Canada asked for \$64 million which were re-profiled to supplementary estimates (C) in the amount of \$870,000.

Can you tell us a bit about what you are going to do with that money?

[English]

Ms. Samantha Hazen: Yes. Thank you for the question.

In our supplementary estimates (C), we are asking to re-profile \$64.2 million. That money is for two specific projects. The first one is \$52 million in regard to funding for the Carling campus project that I spoke about in my opening remarks. We're moving some funding to the next fiscal year, 2017-18, as well as the next subsequent fiscal year, 2018-19.

The other item that comprises the \$64.2 million is a re-profile of funds in regard to budget 2016 funding we received on the cyber and IT security front, in order to augment our security measures for our IT infrastructure across the Government of Canada. That is an amount of \$12.2 million that we will be moving to the next fiscal year.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Thank you.

Can you tell us more about the work being done by Shared Services related to the Carling campus?

Ms. Samantha Hazen: The Carling campus project is led by PSPC, Public Services and Procurement Canada. SSC is providing the related IT infrastructure support associated with the move to Carling campus.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Thank you.

That's it for me.

[Translation]

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

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

There is a large increase in the 2016-2017 budget of the Privy Council Office as compared to 2015-2016. You said that the responsibilities of the Privy Council Office had evolved, no doubt at the request of the government or of the Office of the Prime Minister.

Are these new initiatives, or initiatives from different departments that were placed under your responsibility?

Mr. Serge Dupont: There is no instance I believe where activities done elsewhere were placed under the responsibility of PCO. For instance, the Results and Delivery Unit did not exist before. Of course, the Secretariat of the Treasury Board always did work to analyze results. However, this is a complementary mechanism we are adopting at PCO in order to be able to refocus government action. This allows us to determine in a concrete way how we hope to see actions affect Canadians' lives, and the economy as well. It also allows us to measure other variables. This team was built within PCO.

In other cases, we extended resources at PCO. Intergovernmental Affairs are one example I mentioned. Our Prime Minister and government want an enhanced relationship with the provinces and territories in a number of files. For us, this means a capacity to better support the Prime Minister with regard to the overall intergovernmental relations strategy.

As for the Prime Minister's Youth Council, that entity did not exist as such before. We created a unit within Privy Council Office to support the Prime Minister.

Overall, these are new priorities which either extended the needs that were already there or created new needs that had not been defined before.

• (1020)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: The 33% increase for next year will be used to meet these new and extended needs. Will they become permanent, or is there a chance that they may decrease over time?

Mr. Serge Dupont: The 33% increase is for 2016-2017, as compared to 2015-2016. It also includes ad hoc investments for work we have to do to enhance IT infrastructure at the Privy Council Office. We had systems that were becoming outdated and so an investment was needed. This year, there has been an increase of \$22.4 million as compared to 2015-2016 for those investments in the modernization of our IT infrastructure, as well as for other organizational changes we had to make simply to bring the PCO back up to level, if you will.

In certain cases, some functions will be maintained to the extent that they remain priorities for the Government of Canada. In other cases, they are one-time investments in order to upgrade the assets and capacities of the PCO.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: All of these initiatives have required that you hire new employees. Could you tell us how many new employees there are as compared to previous years?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I don't have that in mind right now. Just a minute, please.

Could we answer later? It wouldn't necessarily be in writing. We should be able to provide that figure to you during the meeting.

[English]

The Chair: We can afford a few seconds. I'm not sure if we can afford a few minutes.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Sorry, I don't want the member to lose his time because of our searching through our papers here.

[Translation]

Ah, here is the answer: There are 113 more FTEs this year than there were in the previous year.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: During this year, you have about 900 or 1,000 employees?

Mr. Serge Dupont: We have close to 1,000 currently.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: That means that there were 900 before.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Around 900, yes.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: That explains that increase, in part. With a 12% increase in the number of employees and a 33% increase in the budget, there must be a relatively large increase in capital assets, correct?

Mr. Serge Dupont: It is rather large, yes. As I mentioned, for instance, an investment of \$22 million had to be made in information technology, and that is included. In fact, these are expenditures to improve systems, but also expenses on services such as those from Shared Services Canada; these are expenses we have to make to ensure that we have a modern infrastructure.

[English]

The Chair: Our final intervention will be from Madam Ratansi. You have five minutes, please.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Thank you. I'll ask three to four quick questions, and then you can answer. Otherwise, I'll lose my time.

I'm curious. What is the intersection between PCO and SSC with regard to a risk mitigation strategy on IT? That's number one.

Number two is in terms of cybersecurity. I understand SSC is working on cybersecurity, but you didn't use half of your budget last year. What is your thought process in moving it forward, and how are we doing there?

Number three is that when Wayne Smith came to us, he talked about the strained relationship between SSC and Stats Canada. Has it improved and are we moving forward?

The last, I think, you may have answered to Mr. Weir. Do you have baseline data for the RCMP pre-SSC and post-SSC? They were also raising some concerns.

Thank you.

• (1025)

Mr. Serge Dupont: Let me address the first question, and I think Mr. Barr may address the others.

In terms of the relationship between the Privy Council Office and Shared Services Canada with regard to the security of information technology infrastructure, think about it as we are the client and they are the service providers. We clearly will have discussions about explaining our risks, our risk tolerance—or perhaps I should say intolerance. Then they will, as technology providers, be able to work with us in developing the solutions that will meet our needs. That's the conversation. We are the client, they are the provider, and we need to get to a mutual agreement on what can actually be done.

Mr. Graham Barr: I'll go in reverse order. There was no baseline for RCMP services before the creation of Shared Services Canada. In fact, for the vast majority of departments there was no baseline on service levels, and that has been one of our fundamental challenges at Shared Services Canada. There was very limited information on services and assets that were consolidated at SSC, which meant that we did not have a basis for service level agreements or to measure if we were improving service.

With respect to Statistics Canada, over the past several months, we have built a strong and productive relationship with Statistics Canada aimed at ensuring that we have a reliable and secure IT platform for the delivery of their important programs. The chief statistician and the president of Shared Services Canada meet every two weeks to monitor progress on mitigating risks associated with IT.

There are currently no outstanding operational issues at Shared Services Canada related to IT. We have worked very hard over the past few months to secure their existing IT environment, and we are working on a strategy with them to eventually move them out of their old data centre into a new one that will completely meet their security requirements. All the SSC staff who work in the data centre

servicing Statistics Canada are cleared to the secret level, and they take an oath to respect the requirements of the Statistics Act.

With respect to your first question about what we are doing on cybersecurity, we are using budget 2016 money to strengthen the three connections to the Internet that the Government of Canada has. This is to ensure that we can scan all the traffic that goes through those network connections even if that traffic is coded. We're also creating and building a list of applications that are safe to be installed on the shared network infrastructure. That's in addition to what I mentioned earlier in response to the earlier question about our security operations centre.

We have a computer incident response team that provides guidance and mitigation to departments in the form of information products. We've instituted, along with the Communications Security Establishment of Canada, a supply chain integrity process to ensure that no untrusted equipment, software, or managed services are procured by Shared Services Canada or used in the delivery of services to Canadians.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Is this part of your capital or operating budget?

Mr. Graham Barr: It's a mixture.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: I guess my time is up.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

To all our witnesses, thank you very much for your appearance here today. We appreciate it greatly. You are now excused.

Colleagues, we will suspend for about two minutes and come back in camera to discuss future business.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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