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Chair: Mr. Robert Kitchen



Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

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• (1610)

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 38 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. The committee is meeting today from 4:11 p.m. to 6:11 p.m. to hear from the President of the Treasury Board and officials on the subject matter of the supplementary estimates (A) 2021-22.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all participants at this meeting that taking screenshots or photos of your screen is not permitted. To ensure an orderly meeting—and please be easy on me—I would like to outline a few rules to follow.

Interpretation in this video conference will work very much as it does in a regular committee meeting. You have the choice at the bottom of your screen of “Floor”, “English” or “French”. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. When you are ready to speak, you can click on your microphone icon to activate your mike. When you're not speaking, your mike should be on mute. To raise a point of order during the meeting, committee members should ensure their microphone is unmuted and say, “I have a point of order” to get the chair's attention.

The clerk and analysts are participating in this meeting virtually today. If you need to speak to them during the meeting, please email them through the committee email address. The clerk can also be reached on his mobile phone.

For those who are participating in the committee room, masks are required unless you are seated as well as when physical distancing is not possible.

I will now invite the President of the Treasury Board to make his opening statement. After approximately 60 minutes, the president will leave. It will not be necessary to suspend, as only one other witness will be joining the panel and he will be tested before the meeting starts.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank the President of the Treasury Board for his appearance today.

I would also like to thank the officials, who will remain here for the next 60 minutes.

Following the testimony, members of the committee may ask questions.

Mr. Clerk, can you confirm for me that the President of the Treasury Board does indeed have 10 minutes for his statement?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Paul Cardegna): That's correct.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Drouin): All right.

Then I yield the floor to you, Mr. President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the committee for inviting me to speak about the Supplementary Estimates (A), 2021-2022, which were tabled on May 27th.

I'm joined today by the following officials from the Treasury Board Secretariat: Glenn Purves, who is Assistant Secretary, Expenditure Management Sector; Roger Ermuth, who is Assistant Comptroller General, Financial Management Sector; Karen Cahill, who is Assistant Secretary and Chief Financial Officer; Sonya Read, who is Acting Assistant Secretary, Digital and Services Policy; and Tolga Yalkin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Workplace Policies and Services.

[*English*]

These supplementary estimates are one part of a broad set of reports—including the departmental plans, the fiscal monitor, the departmental results reports and the public accounts—that provide information on spending plans and outcomes to Canadians and parliamentarians. We also report through GC InfoBase, an interactive online tool that presents a wealth of federal data in a visual manner.

Starting late last fiscal year, we made several changes to enhance the presentation of the supplementary estimates. For example, we published additional information relating to the COVID-19 response in both the tabled estimates and in an online annex. We also expanded GC InfoBase with more information on planned spending authorities and expenditures for COVID-19 response measures.

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

Changes to forecasts of statutory spending, including those pending parliamentary approval in the first^x Budget Implementation Act of 2021, are also included in these Estimates. This provides a more complete estimate of the government's total planned expenditures.

Through these Supplementary Estimates, the government is seeking parliamentary approval of \$24.0 billion in new voted spending. Within this proposed spending, the health, safety, and well-being of Canadians are front and centre. Approximately \$11.2 billion of the proposed voted spending responds to the public health, social, and economic impacts on Canadians of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of that amount, some of the top expenditures include: \$1.5 billion for medical research, development, and the purchase of vaccines; \$1.1 billion for enhanced border and travel measures and isolation sites; and \$761 million for the Indigenous Community Support Fund.

[*English*]

These estimates also provide funding for economic responses to the pandemic, including support for targeted sectors and businesses, and funding to promote growth through the recovery period.

In addition, the supplementary estimates propose funding to address homelessness, the lack of affordable housing and food insecurity, all of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

We also continue in our commitment to indigenous peoples. We've proposed funding to settle claims and to provide housing and infrastructure in indigenous communities, child and family services, and mental health and wellness support.

In the funding for the Treasury Board Secretariat, the department is seeking \$19 million for Phoenix stabilization and HR-to-pay initiatives. This funding is required to improve pay-related HR processes and systems and to support new and ongoing employees who are addressing compensation and labour relations work related to Phoenix.

[*Translation*]

In addition, the Treasury Board Secretariat received an \$89,000 transfer from the Department of Employment and Social Development to support the Employment Equity Task Force. The Task Force's mandate is to study, consult, and advise on how a renewed employment equity regime could be implemented in a way that supports diversity, inclusion, and respect for people.

In conclusion, my officials and I thank the Committee for exercising diligence in their ongoing study of the government's spending to support Canadians during these challenging times.

We are available to answer any questions you may have.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Drouin): Thank you very much, Mr. President of the Treasury Board.

I must point out that you have left committee members an additional four minutes in which to ask questions.

[*English*]

I will go to Mr. McCauley for six minutes.

Mr. McCauley, just so you understand my style, I will put the one-minute time mark on my screen. I know you keep your timer on, but look for it.

The floor is yours.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Thanks, Mr. Chair. You're doing a fabulous job.

Minister, welcome back. Although we have our disagreements, obviously, I'm sincerely glad to see you back and doing well.

I want to talk about SNC-Lavalin. Your government gave a \$150-million sole-source contract to SNC-Lavalin for mobile health units. The issue is that no province asked for them. PHAC did not ask for them. Public health did not ask for these mobile health units, but they were declared such an urgency that they had to be sole-sourced to SNC-Lavalin.

Did this \$150 million go through the Treasury Board process?

• (1620)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you first for your kind words. It's always nice to see and to hear you.

I of course won't need to remind everyone that we've been in a pandemic with severe health and economic outcomes, so a number of investments were important for getting through that pandemic. However, for further insight and details on your important question, I will turn to Mr. Ermuth, who is a specialist in this area.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'd like just a quick yes or no as to whether it went through the Treasury Board approval process.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: That's exactly what I will ask Mr. Roger Ermuth to provide.

Mr. Roger Ermuth (Assistant Comptroller General, Financial Management Sector, Office of the Comptroller General, Treasury Board Secretariat): In terms of this contract, I'm actually not specifically aware of what process it went through. The decision of whether or not a sole-source contract would be made is made by the specific department.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Right. I'm just curious as to whether it went through the process.

Minister, nobody has asked for these mobile health units. They haven't been deployed. In your role as the ultimate guardian of taxpayers' money and providing oversight, do you approve of this money being used for something that no one apparently asked for and that is not getting used?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you again for the question. As we have just heard a moment ago, this is a matter for Public Health and Health Canada to provide more details on, but I would be glad to turn back to Mr. Ermuth for further information.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: No, Minister, I'm asking whether you, as Canada's chief guardian of taxpayers' interests in your role as Treasury Board president, approve of that \$150-million sole-source contract.

The reason I ask is that in the supplementary estimates, there is an additional \$660 million for mobile public health units. We've heard that the government hasn't used any of these units from SNC-Lavalin, but we see another \$660 million in the supplementary estimates.

How much of that is going for SNC-Lavalin, and why is the government continuing to pour money into mobile health units that aren't being used?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: If you would like to have further details on the precise role of the estimates process in guiding the procurement process to which you allude, let me turn to Mr. Purves, who is the—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I realize the request was by PSPC, but they're in your supplementary estimates, and Treasury Board, which put out the supplementary estimates, has it in the highlights, so I assume someone at Treasury Board knows some more details about this \$651 million for health units.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: You are well informed, and that's a tribute to your experience and expertise in the matter.

As is the case of most departments, Health Canada would work with PSPC. Let me turn to Mr. Purves, who would be able to address the connection between the estimates process and that procurement.

Mr. Glenn Purves (Assistant Secretary, Expenditure Management Sector, Treasury Board Secretariat): In that aspect, Mr. McCauley, you have two pieces of information you're looking for. One is the proportion that is going to SNC. I don't have that information—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How much of the \$650 million is going for mobile health units? None of them have been used in eastern Canada, so I'm wondering why there's another \$650 million. It's in the estimates, so it has obviously gone through the Treasury Board approval process. I'm hoping someone from Treasury Board can tell us why there's an extra \$650 million.

Mr. Glenn Purves: Specifically on the mobile health units that are captured in that, we'd be happy to get back to the committee after liaising with public health.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Let me just go back to the supplementary estimates. We've seen the rather—I can't find a word for it—distasteful, I guess, government bailout of Air Canada with, of course, taxpayers' money. The bailout included the wage subsidy, which we

heard, by the way, also apparently didn't go through the Treasury Board process. The wage subsidy was used to pay off Air Canada executives.

I see in the estimates that there's now funding for regional air transportation initiatives. There's almost \$30 million.

Is any of that money going to airlines, including Air Canada?

• (1625)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: First, on the wage subsidy—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: My question is specifically regarding the \$30 million in the supplementary estimates.

Is any of that going to airlines, or specifically Air Canada?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: If you wish, I'm here to be helpful.

If you wish, I can quickly address the wage subsidy—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: No. I'm asking about the \$30 million in the supplementary estimates. Is any of that's going to airlines or Air Canada? Seeing as it's in the supplementaries and you've detailed it in your summary, I assume you must know.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Drouin): I apologize. I hate to be the gatekeeper for time, but it is time.

I will now move to Mr. Kusmierczyk for six minutes.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Thank you very much, Chair.

Minister, it's wonderful to see you at committee yet again. I really appreciate your taking the time with us and I also really appreciate the answers you're providing to us.

The PBO report on supplementary estimates (A) highlights recent improvements in the government's reporting on COVID-19 response spending, including additions to the GC InfoBase. Could you share with the committee the measures you have taken to improve transparency in your financial reporting?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you, Irek. Let me also thank you, and all the committee members, because we're not only very grateful to you but also very mindful of the very intense work you've done over the last weeks and months in this very extraordinary circumstance in which we find ourselves as Canadians. Thank you to you, but thank you to the whole team, obviously.

Regarding transparency, we not only know how important it is for the Canadian government to be transparent; we also hear from Canadians. That's why we have put in place a number of different practices.

Some of them were there before the pandemic, such as the GC InfoBase, the departmental plan and the departmental results reports. We had enhanced the ability for parliamentarians, such as you, to connect the information in the estimates, which is sometimes quite complicated. That's why I'm here today with my officials. It's to connect that information with the budget process, which is equally complicated but works on different rules and follows different timelines.

It's all a matter of being as clear and transparent as we can be so that we can demonstrate to Canadians the results of our investments for them and their families.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: That's terrific, Minister. I really appreciate that.

I know that this committee had asked for monthly spending reports as well. What advantages do you see this monthly reporting yielded or provided in terms of additional oversight and additional transparency? How has this process, in your opinion, benefited transparency?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: You were not only right to ask but also entitled to ask for these monthly reports because of the obviously extremely severe and rapidly changing circumstances of the pandemic. You were provided with this information, which enabled you to connect the size and nature of the different investments we were making. That was alongside other important processes, as we all know, including the budget process and the legislative process. Mr. McCauley earlier alluded to the wage subsidy. That was an extremely important piece of work that Parliament did alongside the estimates process and the work of your committee.

Thank you to everyone for having asked for that. I know and have heard that it has been useful to your committee.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Minister, it's incredible that we have this enormous amount of information that your staff diligently and quickly put together. It's almost like seeing the expenditures in real time. It must have been a tremendous commitment on your team's part. Again, it's something that is incredibly appreciated, because it is quite helpful. It's an amazing amount of information that you have been able to provide to us over a short period of time. I think it demonstrates how you have prioritized transparency and communication on your team.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Irek, I would congratulate you on those specific words, because you seem to understand the value and the difficulty of the work they do at the secretariat. It's a very challenging role that they play. It's not easy, because they have to provide appropriate answers to your appropriate questions, and they are

working in real time, as you said, especially in the context of the pandemic, which is moving so quickly also in real time.

• (1630)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Thank you, Minister.

I have about a minute and a half left. Can you update this committee on your work to modernize the Treasury Board's rules on federal procurement?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Yes. That's a very good question.

We want the procurement process to be efficient, open, inclusive and aligned with the priorities of Canadians and our government.

First, we want it to be efficient in using modern technology, obviously. We also want it to be inclusive of those businesses and those people who want to partner with the federal government in advancing our common objectives of social, economic and sustainable development. We want that to be open and transparent, again to facilitate both the efficiency and the inclusiveness, and we want that to be aligned with the social, environmental and economic objectives of our government.

Let me speak quickly about the social objectives, the objectives of supporting, for instance, indigenous procurement, making sure that indigenous businesses are able to flourish and to participate fully in our procurement activities, our green procurement practices and our green supply chains. These are objectives of our procurement—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Francis Drouin): I'm sorry, Minister Duclos. I have to jump in here. The time is over.

I see that Mr. Kitchen, the chair, is back. I told you that I was here not for a long time but for a good time.

Mr. Chair, we are at Madam Chabot from the Bloc Québécois. If you are ready, I will cede the chair back to you.

The Chair (Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC)): Thank you, Mr. Drouin. Thank you for doing an excellent job. I appreciate that.

We will now go to Madam Chabot. I believe it's for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here, Mr. President of the Treasury Board.

It's a real pleasure for me to be sitting in today for someone else on your committee. This is very interesting.

Mr. President of the Treasury Board, we have regularly reconsidered the Davie shipyard question. As you know, that company is a major part of a naval strategy, but it's often absent from government directions.

My question is quite simple. When will we get confirmation that the Davie shipyard is officially—and I emphasize the word "officially"—to become a naval strategy partner?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you for that question, Ms. Chabot. We're very pleased to see you with us today.

My answer is that I'm facing two major challenges.

First, this obviously isn't the Treasury Board Secretariat's responsibility, but rather that of Public Services and Procurement Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Department of National Defence. In other words, it's not my file.

Second, I'd be very pleased to discuss the Davie shipyard with you and to tell you about the extraordinary progress we've made for it and its 1,000 suppliers since 2015. I know this because my riding is situated just across the river from Davie. Every time I go for a walk, I see the shipyard and talk to the workers. Thousands of Davie employees and those of its suppliers are undergoing a major transformation. We're going to build a major marine hub in Quebec and across the country through investments made for Chantier Davie.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Duclos. So you don't have an answer to my question.

However, what costs do you think will result from the many delays in the naval strategy? Have you estimated those costs?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Those costs are obviously public. For specific details and information, you'll have to contact Public Services and Procurement Canada or Fisheries and Oceans Canada regarding icebreakers.

If you insist, Ms. Chabot, I could tell you at length...

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Duclos, may I remind you that I'm happy to continue discussing this with you.

Now I'm going to talk about Phoenix.

Phoenix has been the central issue for our fellow citizens since we took up our duties as members. The compensation granted under the agreements was subjected to tax. The employees' union accuses you of not forwarding the necessary documents to the Canada Revenue Agency to prevent employees' compensation from being taxed. Why haven't you done that? How much money do you expect to recover by taxing that compensation?

● (1635)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Once again, thank you for that question, Ms. Chabot.

It's important for you to be aware of two significant points about Phoenix.

The first one, which you should absolutely keep in mind and repeat whenever possible, is that it's unacceptable for workers not to be paid properly and on time for services rendered, particularly within the Canadian government. That's why we've been working

hard for several years to correct this situation with the help of certain members of your committee.

Second, those delays and payment improprieties caused economic, personal and emotional harm, including stress and anxiety. Consequently, it was essential that we work with the unions, as we did, to pay compensation. We're in the process of paying that compensation to employees, including former public service employees, who suffered harm caused by the Phoenix system.

Ms. Louise Chabot: We know that compensation is partly intended to address moral injury. We still don't understand why those amounts are being taxed.

How much money do you expect to recover by taxing the compensation payable under those agreements?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: You'll have to contact the Canada Revenue Agency regarding the tax treatment of that compensation. You may also refer to clause 18 of the agreement signed with the public service unions for the information the Canada Revenue Agency used to reach its decision. It was made public some time ago.

Ms. Louise Chabot: So that wouldn't be because you didn't forward the documents.

I'd like to ask you a question I hope you can answer. How much money will be spent to replace Phoenix? How much is it costing to stabilize Phoenix?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: I'll ask Ms. Cahill, who is our expert at the Treasury Board Secretariat, to give you the most up-to-date details on that.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Do you think the costs are high?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: I know you'd like an exact answer, and that's why I'm asking Karen Cahill to speak briefly.

Ms. Karen Cahill (Assistant Secretary and Chief Financial Officer, Treasury Board Secretariat): Thank you very much for that question.

Yes, in recent years, the Treasury Board Secretariat has obtained funding to stabilize the Phoenix system. To date, we have received \$30 million over a number of years. However, the expenses are clearly reported in the Public Accounts of Canada. So I would suggest you consult them for the exact expenses incurred to stabilize the Phoenix pay system.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Cahill. That brings us to the end of our six minutes.

We will now go to Mr. Green for six minutes.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Thank you.

My constituents in Hamilton Centre are paying very close attention to the ongoing proceedings as they relate to residential schools and the responsibilities of Crown-Indigenous Relations to indigenous and first nations communities across the country.

I note that Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs is requesting \$610 million under vote 1a for the Federal Indian Day Schools Settlement Agreement, which includes compensation for persons who attended a federally established, funded, controlled and operated Indian day school during the period from January 1, 1920, until its closure or transfer from Canada's control.

Mr. Chair, through you, how many people do you expect to be compensated through the Federal Indian Day Schools Settlement Agreement?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you, Matthew. I'm always happy and privileged to be in your virtual company.

I would say that obviously this has been a top concern of my colleagues Minister Bennett and Minister Miller. For the precise link between the estimates process and those investments and actions, let me turn to Glenn Purves, who is most able to answer.

● (1640)

Mr. Glenn Purves: Thank you, Mr. Green.

You wanted to know effectively how many claims have been received and how many....

As of January 27 of this year, over 98,000 claims have been received and more than 48,000 survivors have received payments for individual compensation under the settlement.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you.

As a follow-up to that, what is the deadline, if any, for people to apply for compensation?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Purves, would you like to provide further precision?

Mr. Glenn Purves: We would have to follow up with the department on that one. Unless I can find it somewhere, I don't have that answer.

Mr. Matthew Green: The department of industry is requesting \$57 million in vote 10a, under grants and contributions, for Sanofi Canada for the construction of a vaccine manufacturing facility. This initiative is related to COVID-19.

Is the \$57 million a grant or a contribution to Sanofi Canada?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Before I turn to Mr. Purves for the right, precise information, let me say, Mr. Green, that this is an outstanding and important question in the context of our investments in biomanufacturing in Canada.

I have the privilege of having Medicago in my riding. Medicago is the only company now to be—

Mr. Matthew Green: Respectfully, as I commented earlier on, you may be the best penalty killer in the business. I have three minutes left. I would like to know if it's a grant or a contribution, respectfully, Mr. Duclos.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: I understand. I won't speak to you about my riding anymore. I will turn back to Mr. Purves for an answer.

Mr. Glenn Purves: It's a contribution.

Mr. Matthew Green: It's a contribution, so there are no strings attached, no agreements around perhaps preferential procurement in the future.

Do we know if the vaccine manufacturing facility will be producing COVID-19 vaccines? Is there anything within the contribution or the grant agreement that indicates that we would receive some kind of procurement consideration?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Go ahead, Mr. Purves. You will be in a better position.

Mr. Glenn Purves: Mr. Green, we're looking at it through the lens of the spending authority provided. That's where Treasury Board has the expertise, but the department of industry would be better placed to respond to the details of the contribution agreement and exactly what's going to be produced.

Mr. Matthew Green: If my memory serves me correctly and if I remember the language of contribution agreements in relation to the WE scandal, is it that the contribution agreements can be used as a sole-source kind of...? Is there a different process for contribution agreements that make them perhaps less vetted?

What would be the process, for the sake of this conversation, in terms of the difference between the contribution agreement and a grant?

Mr. Glenn Purves: Well—

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Sorry, Mr. Purves. I think you and I are quite well aligned, but I will let you speak.

Mr. Matthew Green: No, I would prefer to hear from you, Mr. Duclos. If you could be on the record, that would be great.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: I will say it in different words, but the answer is the same.

I think my colleagues in this case, Minister Anand and Minister Champagne, would be delighted to provide you with the right details. If you want, you can ask them to be in touch with your office.

Mr. Matthew Green: Is the Treasury Board not privy to final approval of contribution agreements? If so, what are the parameters Treasury Board [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] would have to go through to make approvals for contribution agreements?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: The Treasury Board does two things with regard to those files. First, it assesses and eventually provides the policy authorities. That includes whether grants or loans can be provided, and under which conditions. The second thing the Treasury Board needs to do is provide the financial authorities. That's obviously related to the estimates process, and you're part of it by virtue of your work and by inviting my team and me to be here today.

Mr. Matthew Green: How's it different from a grant?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: What is the difference between a contribution and a grant?

Mr. Matthew Green: That's correct.

● (1645)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: These are obviously important distinctions. I would defer to our colleagues Ministers Anand and Champagne to explain exactly whether and how there is a difference between those two things in the particular context of their operations.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. That ends our first round.

We'll now go to our second round. We will start with five minutes with Mr. Paul-Hus.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, Mr. President of the Treasury Board.

Your colleague, Minister Anand, told us that only one business had been sued for non-compliance with contracts regarding the provision of personal protection equipment, or PPE. Two weeks later, the Auditor General came and told us that at least one other company had been sued as well.

Can you tell us exactly how many businesses the government has sued for non-compliance with PPE contracts or other COVID-19-related contracts?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Good afternoon, Mr. Paul-Hus. I'm very pleased to see you and hear you.

That's an entirely legitimate question. If you want an exact answer—and I imagine that's what you do want—you'd have to put it to either the Department of Justice, if you're talking about legal proceedings, or to Ms. Anand, who's responsible for the procurement process.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: So you, as President of the Treasury Board, have no idea of the number of government claims currently before the courts. I'm thinking of one concerning Tango Communication, for example.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Procurement processes are managed by Public Services and Procurement Canada. If it relates to Health Canada, then Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada are obviously involved in the exercise. If that results in lawsuits...

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: That's fine, Mr. Duclos. Thank you. I thought that, as President of the Treasury Board, you managed the money the government spent. So I thought you also knew when money was sent to people who hadn't complied with the contracts.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: We don't manage legal proceedings. You mustn't confuse the Treasury Board Secretariat with the Department of Justice...

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you. I have to move on.

Here I have a memo dated April 2020 concerning the delegation of authorities. Greater spending powers were delegated to subordinates in various departments. We understand why quick action was required when the pandemic started. However, this delegation of authorities has just been renewed until December 31, 2021, whereas we're no longer managing a crisis but rather a process of bringing matters to an end.

Can you explain to me why we have to renew such significant delegations of authorities?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: That's an excellent question.

Yes, renewals and adjustments have been made. As regards the renewal of initial delegations, significant standards and expectations were transmitted to the departments concerned.

I'm going to ask Roger Ermuth, who is an expert on this matter, to provide you with more details.

[English]

Mr. Roger Ermuth: Yes, some of the delegations have been continued on now until the end of December.

My clarifying question would be... If it's in relation to some of the extra expenditures authorities, I might turn to Mr. Purves. I'm not sure how your question is being asked. If it's in relation to some of the procurement, I would be happy to give a little bit more detail.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: It's about the memo from last year on delegation of authorities and new emergency contracting limits to address the pandemic situation.

Mr. Roger Ermuth: Thank you very much. That's what I was looking for in terms of the clarification in relation to procurement.

Yes, there were some procurement flexibilities given in the early days of the pandemic—

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I want to know why we extended it to December 21, because we don't need it anymore.

Mr. Roger Ermuth: With regard to why we extended it, it's more limited at this point in terms of the departments that have access to it. The rationale is that the pandemic is still evolving. In order to be flexible and available to meet whatever demands come out in the next little bit, it was extended. It will be reviewed again in the lead-up to December.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Ermuth.

[*Translation*]

The pandemic is receding now, and we can see that the pace of spending is accelerating and inflation is on the rise.

Mr. Duclos, how do you, an economist and professor of economics, perceive what's happening? Are you concerned about the situation in Canada?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: We're actually monitoring the situation. Even though the pandemic is probably coming to an end, we must continue enforcing measures and making sound investments to protect people's health and safety.

However, our economy has been hit hard by this health crisis in recent months. If we want to emerge from this situation soon and in a strong and united manner, we'll have to continue making investments for a period of time. Those investments will help us leave the crisis behind and, as I said, stay economically and fiscally sound and strong over the longer term.

• (1650)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We will now go to Mr. Drouin for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

I obviously want to thank the President of the Treasury Board for being with us today to defend these budgetary appropriations.

Mr. Duclos, you have been an ally on the francophonie file. I've seen you many times in our official languages caucus.

Yesterday, the Minister of Official Languages introduced her Bill C-32 on the modernization of official languages, which provides for a number of protective measures. First of all, it states that bilingual judges should be appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. It is also designed to protect the French fact. It takes into account the fact that more measures must be taken to protect the French language and put it on an equal footing with the English language, since French is a minority language in North America.

The Treasury Board has a major role to play in providing that protection. Could you explain to me what the Treasury Board's new role will be with regard to the proposed measures under Bill C-32?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you very much, Mr. Drouin. I want to thank you for being an extraordinarily strong and credible representative of the Franco-Ontarian community. We are very lucky to have you in the Canadian government and in Parliament. When you speak, we know it comes from your heart and experience. I would've preferred to tell you all that in a more private setting; it's somewhat odd to speak in this fashion. Whatever the case may be, we are very pleased to have you and very proud of your contribution.

The bill to modernize the Official Languages Act, which was introduced yesterday, is a major bill. In Quebec, we will protect the right to work and be served in French. We will do the same outside

Quebec, in regions with significant francophone populations. We will invest in Radio-Canada, and in the CBC, of course, but definitely in Radio-Canada, to ensure it can cover all of French-speaking Canada. We will increase francophone immigration in all Canadian regions. We will appoint only bilingual judges to the Supreme Court. We will confer greater powers on the Commissioner of Official Languages, and we will permanently restore the court challenges program, which enables francophone minority communities, such as those in Ontario and the east, to defend their rights.

The Treasury Board will be granted new powers with which to perform its role. In particular, it will be required to monitor and verify federal institutions' compliance with parts IV, V, VI and VII of the Official Languages Act. It will also evaluate to a greater degree the effectiveness of federal institutions' policies and programs designed to support the minority language communities across the country. We will also work hard to improve bilingualism standards and outcomes in the public service to ensure that, in practice, all public servants are able to work in the language of their choice where the act so provides.

We therefore hope to be able to achieve many important things and to make considerable progress as part of this modernization of the Official Languages Act.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Thank you.

I'd like to continue along the same lines.

As you well know, it was suggested at one point that the Privy Council Office, rather than the Treasury Board, might be made responsible for the proper administration of the act. I believe it was the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada that discussed that.

Can you or your officials explain to me why it's important that the Treasury Board ensure compliance with the Official Languages Act in all departments?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: That's an excellent question, Mr. Drouin.

The objective is simple: it is to establish a Canadian government watchdog to ensure that the departments do their job with regard to official languages. We need a central agency, such as the Treasury Board or the Privy Council Office, to do that work as a watchdog in all departments.

That was the case when Stéphane Dion was with us some time ago. He set up the watchdog function in the Privy Council Office. Unfortunately, the subsequent government, which I won't name, removed the watchdog function from PCO. As a result, there was no watchdog when we came to power in 2015.

As you said so well, at the request of organizations advocating the rights of minority language communities across the country, this watchdog role will be restored and returned to the Treasury Board. The timing for this is very good because the Official Languages Act already confers authorities and obligations on the Treasury Board, such as ensuring respect for and the promotion of language rights. However, we will go much further because the act will be reinforced and the Treasury Board will have enhanced powers with which to do that work.

• (1655)

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

[*English*]

Now we'll go to Mademoiselle Chabot for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to comment first of all about how fascinating I find all the Treasury Board President's answers about a draft bill, after being unable to come up with numbers in response to the questions I asked a while ago about naval strategy, but what can you do.

I will therefore ask the President of the Treasury Board a question about compensation in connection with the Phoenix pay system.

We know that the Treasury Board Secretariat asked for \$7 million under vote 10a, to compensate former employees for damages caused by the Phoenix pay system. Agreements were reached in 2019 and compensation is now being paid. There were other agreements in 2020, and people will be able to submit claims for compensation beginning in the fall, I believe.

Have you planned for additional funds to pay compensation owing to former employees and retirees who were affected by Phoenix pay system problems?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you for the question.

To begin with, I can speak more openly about the Official Languages Act because I am a signatory to the Cabinet memorandum that led to the modernization of this act. Not only that, but the Treasury Board is very much involved, as was mentioned.

As for the Phoenix pay system, as you noted, two agreements were signed, one in June 2019 and the other in the fall of 2020. That's what led the Treasury Board Secretariat to introduce the measures needed to pay compensation.

I'm going to ask Ms. Cahill to give you the details on payment of this compensation.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Duclos, I'd just like you to tell me whether, to your knowledge, the Treasury Board Secretariat is going to request additional funds to respond to all these compensation claims.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: That's a very good question, and that's why I would like to ask Ms. Cahill to answer it.

Ms. Karen Cahill: Thank you for your question.

Under the Phoenix agreements, current funding covers the two existing agreements. We are still working with the bargaining agents on the damages caused by the Phoenix pay system.

I can't tell you yet whether we're going to have to request more funds. However, those that we have received and those that came under vote 10a, as you mentioned, cover the current agreements.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Cahill.

We'll now go to Mr. Green for two and a half minutes.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you.

A recent report suggested that Hamilton is now less affordable than Los Angeles and New York City. There are also reports that a condo developer is looking to invest a billion dollars in buying up single-family homes.

I know that the honourable minister in his prior role was responsible for the national housing strategy, so I know he'll be able to answer with some degree of specificity, hopefully, the following questions: Under CMHC's request for \$1.5 billion under vote 1a, how much of this funding would go toward female-focused housing and how many new affordable housing units would be converted and built with the requested funding?

• (1700)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you, Matthew, and thank you for the reminder that in the earlier mandate it was indeed closer to our investment strategy to make it more affordable and more inclusive and safer for Canadians to find a home. I would point out that Minister Hussen has been extremely active on that in the last year and a half.

For the precise details on the estimates number that you mentioned—the \$2.5 billion—let me turn to Glenn.

Mr. Matthew Green: It's \$1.5 billion. It's under the rapid housing initiative, to help Mr. Purves perhaps find it.

How many new affordable housing units would be converted and how many of them would go towards women-focused housing projects?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: That's a great question.

Let's see whether Glenn has the information.

Mr. Glenn Purves: Sure. The funding will support the creation of a minimum of 4,500 new affordable housing units for Canadians. At least 25% of that \$1.5 billion will go toward women-focused housing projects, and units will be constructed within 12 months of when funding is provided to the program.

Mr. Matthew Green: Does CMHC still define affordability at 125% of market value, or are we talking about real affordability, closer to the 80% range?

Mr. Glenn Purves: I don't have the answer to that. That's a question for—

Mr. Matthew Green: Mr. Duclos, in your previous role, you were the minister responsible for the national housing strategy. How would you define affordable housing?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: I believe, again, that you might want to talk to my colleague, Minister Hussen, for the current state of affairs. The right answer is that it's based on local conditions, obviously, and sensitive to local views on what is affordable, because we need to work with provinces and territories.

Mr. Matthew Green: But I believe the CMHC—

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Matthew Green: —which is responsible for it, defines it at 125% of affordability.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We'll now go to Ms. Harder for five minutes.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you.

Minister, you and Minister Anand have talked a lot about the importance of our relationship with indigenous people. Originally in her mandate letter, it was set out that she would allocate 5% of all procurement contracts to indigenous-led businesses. You've talked about the importance of that, even here today.

Unfortunately, when it comes to procuring anything, really that rate is actually only 2%. It's 2% of all procurements that is being allocated to indigenous-led businesses, which is a tremendous failure in comparison to the 5% set out in the original mandate letter. In the meantime, a sole-source contract was awarded to China for PPE.

Why wasn't there a competitive process, and why wasn't opportunity given to indigenous-led businesses?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you, Ms. Harder, for asking the question.

I suppose and suspect you were there at the beginning of the meeting when we talked about the importance of thinking about procurement in a broad way, taking into account both the important advantages of providing services and goods to Canadians through appropriate procurement and also the economic advantages, the fact that we want procurement to be increasingly green procurement—

Ms. Rachael Harder: Minister, my question is very direct, and so a direct answer would be appropriate.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: That's exactly where I was going, because past the green procurement supply chain that we want to build, there is the social impact of procurement and supporting indigenous—

Ms. Rachael Harder: Why was a sole-source contract given to China instead of an indigenous-led business? They were deliberately ignored.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Supporting indigenous businesses and workers is exactly what the objective of this—

Ms. Rachael Harder: Then why was a sole-source contract given to China?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Supporting those indigenous businesses, workers and communities is, as I said—

Ms. Rachael Harder: You're supporting them by giving a sole-source contract to China?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Chair, I'm not sure I'm able to [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] the question—

Ms. Rachael Harder: You're certainly not answering appropriately. You're right. Thank you for acknowledging that.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: —that Ms. Harder is asking because I think she needs and deserves a correct answer, but it's a bit hard to provide one while being interrupted so quickly. I can try perhaps to switch to Mr. Ermuth, who would know the details around procurement or at least be able to refer Ms. Harder to the appropriate channels and information points.

• (1705)

Mr. Roger Ermuth: Mr. Chair, in terms of procurement strategy and what was purchased in PPE, especially during the early days of the pandemic and so on, I would defer to our colleagues at PSPC in terms of what the rationale was there.

In terms of the social procurement, obviously a lot of work is going on and obviously a lot more work still needs to be done. There has been, in terms of the Nunavut agreement, some work done up north, some really big steps up north. Ongoing work with Indigenous Services Canada, PSPC and indigenous reference groups is going on to look at how we can move this forward.

Finally, I would note that the recently released Treasury Board directive on the management of procurement has also re-emphasized or refocused procurement planning to look at market access and allow socio-economic priorities.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you, Mr. Ermuth.

Let me just describe what happened here.

Minister Duclos started out with brag points at the very beginning, as if his government has done this phenomenal job with regard to indigenous relations. Then when he was asked for a proof point, he wasn't actually able to deliver it. Instead, he had to defer to Mr. Ermuth, who of course is a bureaucrat within the department.

Now, Mr. Ermuth did his best to answer that question, but still not sufficiently, because at the end of the day there is a mandate letter that was written that asks this government, asks Minister Anand, who represents the procurement process, to procure a minimum of 5% of all contracts through indigenous-led businesses. The Liberals have failed. They have not [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. Minister Duclos is not able to answer my question, which further proves that they have failed.

It's sad. It's absolutely sad.

Meanwhile, a sole-source contract was given to China for the acquisition of PPE, but Mr. Duclos would like Canadians to believe that somehow that sole-source contract with China benefited indigenous-led businesses.

It's laughable. It's a disgrace.

I'm done.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Harder.

We will now go to Mr. Weiler for five minutes.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Thank you, Chair, and welcome, Minister Duclos, to OGGO once again.

Thank you to all the witnesses for joining us today to answer questions as well.

Minister, you mentioned green procurement in your last answer, so I want to pick up on that. I saw an article recently that referenced a large bridge in Vancouver that's sourcing imported steel from China, which is obviously high-emitting because of coal power use, whereas if we could have sourced it domestically, it would have involved much lower emissions because of our 83% clean grid in Canada. The province didn't value the carbon content but rather just the bottom-line costs.

Of course, sourcing domestically would have a benefit in supporting the local natural resource sector and good-paying jobs.

I know the Treasury Board, through the greening government program, is seeking to reduce the embodied carbon of building materials by 30% by 2025. I'm also hearing often from local governments in my riding that they're looking at how they can do things like this.

I was hoping you could share with the committee how you plan on accomplishing this target and what potential changes to criteria and procurement decision-making might be able to feed into it.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you, Patrick. We're very proud and privileged to have you around the group. In just a few words, you summarized both the environmental value of green procurement and its significant economic benefits as well.

We are at the start of an incredibly important revolution from economic, environmental and social perspectives. What we are currently seeing across the world, both in financial and in economic terms, is something that will transform our economy and will make the Canadian economy and Canadian industries in many cases more competitive than they were before.

As you suggested, we took into account the impact on the environment of our economic and procurement activities. This is particularly important in the context of our relationship with the new American administration, which is focused so much on connecting the environment and the economy. I've personally had several meetings with the chair of the Council on Environmental Quality at the White House. She and her team have been extremely clear that we should be working jointly together, in part to reduce the temptations of protectionism south of the border and to build stronger supply chains along steel, along aluminum, along the production of cars and other goods requiring increasingly clean and green input and processes.

We are extremely well positioned, as you have suggested, to use procurement in part from Canada. We procure \$18 billion every year in goods and services. In the United States, they procure close to \$600 billion of goods and services. You can see how important it is to work with them. The White House and our government have included 23 other governments. We had meetings a few weeks ago.

If we add other governments, we are in the trillions of dollars of green procurement over the next years.

It's really a revolution, and I'm glad that you're interested in that personally, Patrick. Obviously our government is going to be key in being part of driving that revolution in the years to come.

• (1710)

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Thank you.

I want to continue on that area. I saw the news a couple of months ago about the agreement with the U.S. and I was hoping we could get into some of the specifics of what that would look like.

How do you factor that into procurement? As you mentioned, \$18 billion in procurement is a huge amount. How do we effectively measure the cost and the value of embodied carbon when we're doing that? What are some of the different criteria angles we're considering?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Thank you again, Patrick, for that question.

We have both a greening government centre and a greening government strategy. The greening government strategy is part of the renewed and enhanced climate strategy that we announced in December. It's obviously complementary to the many other policies and investments we're conducting. It's part of a big exercise.

Within the secretariat, we are currently developing with the scientific community the measures and the procedures that we must use, as you said, to value, monitor and eventually enforce the green supply characteristics we want to see as we go along that revolution.

We have a lot of work, however, first to define and then to measure, monitor and eventually influence and even enforce the ways in which we want to procure goods and services in the future.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister and thank you, Mr. Weiler.

We've now come to the end of the minister's time here. We want to thank the minister for coming.

We are about to continue, but before we do that I believe we have one witness who hasn't had a chance to do a sound check.

Mr. Clerk, if we can do a quick sound check for that witness, then we can proceed.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm prepared to do that now.

Hello, Mr. Greenough. Welcome to the meeting.

Could I ask you to speak briefly into your microphone, please?

Mr. Rod Greenough (Executive Director, Expenditure Strategies and Estimates, Treasury Board Secretariat): Hello. I do apologize for wasting everyone's time with my late sound check due to my problems logging in to the meeting. It took the classic "restart the computer twice", and then everything worked just fine.

Here I am, a little late, but in for the time.

The Clerk: Thank you very much, Mr. Greenough.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. You may continue.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

We will now start our second hour. Our first round is for six minutes each.

We will start with Mr. McCauley for six minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Purves, can we go back to the questions I was trying to ask of the minister earlier about the Treasury Board approval process for the \$650 million?

You have it written right in your summary that it's for funding to be "used to purchase, store, deploy, operate...mobile health units". It's gone through the process. How much of that is going toward SNC-Lavalin and for what purpose, if they're not being used and aren't requested by anyone?

Mr. Glenn Purves: Thanks very much.

It's an item that was actually in the estimates last year. It's a re-profiled amount. In other words, the authority expired at the end of the period. It is coming back for the purchase of those items.

Mr. McCauley, it's a great question. I don't have details specifically on how much went to SNC-Lavalin. We would have to follow up with the department on that.

• (1715)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Who from the Treasury Board would have sat at the table when this went through the process? Someone surely would have said, "Well, wait a moment; no one wants these. Why do we need another \$651 million?"

Is that not the process for Treasury Board to challenge some of these spending requests?

Mr. Glenn Purves: Re-profile decisions are made from the Minister of Finance. In terms of consideration of being in the estimates, there are Treasury Board authorities that are established. As it pertains to the specific question about that initiative, a lot of that's under cabinet confidence.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay.

I want to go back again to the horizontal line, the \$30 million to support regional air transportation. Can we be guaranteed that none of this money is going to Air Canada to eventually maybe make its way into their C-suite pockets?

Mr. Glenn Purves: Let me just explain to you—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: We're being asked to approve this money, but we don't seem to know what it's for.

Mr. Glenn Purves: I do have details on what it's for. I can walk you through that really quickly.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Just how much of that is going to airlines—of the \$30 million—and is it going to Air Canada?

Mr. Glenn Purves: They are contributions to municipalities, provinces and territories, non-profit organizations, businesses and indigenous organizations—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Yeah, I read that line where it says businesses. What businesses?

Mr. Glenn Purves: That would be a question for the department to be able to answer. We do know that these are transfers that would be going through the regional development agencies to these organizations—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: But, again, my understanding—

Mr. Glenn Purves: —and it would be—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Purves, I'm going to interrupt.

I know we should ask the department, but of course the departments don't show up for the estimates half of the time. They refuse to. I know that ACOA and some of those have not shown up. It would go to the Treasury Board process. The Treasury Board's role is to, in a way, protect the taxpayer and make sure that the funding is used appropriately. Does anyone at the Treasury Board look and say, "Hold on. What's this money for?"

What's the point of the Treasury Board if we're just going to get, "Well, ask someone else"?

Mr. Glenn Purves: It's two years of support for regional businesses and airports, subject to contributions and grants that are defined by the regional development agencies. For me to know where the end result will be... I don't have that information. That is something that the regional development agencies and Industry Canada would be better placed to respond to.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: However, it would be part of the Treasury Board process when they have their application process, I would assume.

Let me move on.

The Department of Finance... This is more of a simple question, I think. There's \$49 million for the International Finance Corporation. It's put as an L10a vote, so it's a loan.

I'm curious. Why is that as a loan? I think it appears elsewhere as buying a share.

Mr. Glenn Purves: Mr. Greenough can correct me on this one, but when you deal with international organizations, you're buying shares of these international organizations, and they—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm just curious. Why does it show as a loan?

Mr. Glenn Purves: It's because it's funding that they would receive back. It's effectively money that you give to an international organization, but it's callable capital.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Let me ask a last question, and you can get back on this. I've asked this before, and we haven't heard a response, so I'll ask it again.

How many exemptions have been granted on Treasury Board submissions over the last year, and how does that compare to previous years? How many conditional Treasury Board approvals have been granted over last year compared to previous years?

The reason I'm asking is that—I'll be blunt—I don't have a lot of confidence that the Treasury Board is doing its role of oversight of taxpayers' money. We asked Minister Duclos very clearly about the oversight of the \$100-billion wage subsidy that we saw go to wealthy hedge fund managers. We saw it go to share buybacks and company payouts. He's like, "Uh, I don't know. I didn't oversee it." It's kind of like the *Watchmen* comic: Who is watching the watchmen? The Treasury Board is not watching. Who is?

Again, I'm out of time, but maybe you can get back to our committee on those four specific items, please.

• (1720)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McCauley.

Thank you, Mr. Purves. As always—and I know I've repeated this to you many times over the years—when you reply, if you can send that to the clerk so that then he can distribute it to the members, it would be appreciated. Thank you.

We'll now go to Mr. MacKinnon for six minutes.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

I'd like to thank all the Treasury Board Secretariat representatives who are here with us.

I'd like to begin by saying once more how disappointed I am with the questions from the opposition parties. We have had Minister Anand, the President of the Treasury Board, and Minister Murray here several times, and they are the three members of Cabinet whose areas of responsibility fall to our committee. Each time one of them is here, they are asked questions about areas that are someone else's responsibility, that person usually having been here the previous week. We see them repeatedly, so I'm guessing that's part of the opposition strategy. It's not very productive. I thought I might mention it.

I have also taken careful note of the fact that Mr. McAuley was critical of the assistance offered to businesses under the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, which nevertheless made it possible for millions of Canadians to keep their jobs.

What I'm concerned about is all of our public servants. Human resources is of course a responsibility of the Treasury Board Secretariat. I will therefore ask a question that is appropriate for the officials here with us today.

The public servants I represent, and the entire federal public service, are concerned about returning to work. As this happens to be National Public Service Week, I would therefore like to thank and pay tribute to all public servants, including those here today.

Could you update us on the return to work? It's a question that's of concern to many public servants in my riding of Gatineau, and of course elsewhere.

Mr. Tolga Yalkin (Assistant Deputy Minister, Workplace Policies and Services, Treasury Board Secretariat): Thank you for the question.

I referred to this the last time we met. We work with all departments on return-to-work plans. The departments are responsible for managing their employees, and for their welfare. The support we give them consists of clarifying certain things and guiding the departments on how to envisage their working environment following the pandemic. In other words, the Treasury Board Secretariat's role at the moment is to clarify matters as required, so that the departments are in a good position to provide guidance, with a relative degree of certainty, on the return to work of their employees, and on how those who might continue to work remotely are going to do so. We are currently handling this with our partners.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: That happens to be what I was going to ask next.

How are these plans progressing, particularly the strategy for a remote work framework following the pandemic? Can you tell us a bit more about how this strategy is developing?

Mr. Tolga Yalkin: It's going very well. You might call it a strategy, but in fact what we are providing to the departments is support. This support focuses mainly on technical aspects, such as how to administer the various issues surrounding data security, or how to reach decisions about the workplace for every public service position. What we're doing now is developing guidelines for the departments so that they can implement their own plans for the return of employees to the workplace after the pandemic.

• (1725)

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: The unions appear to be raising these issues as just as negotiations on collective agreements are approaching.

How are you going to handle these negotiations with the public service unions?

Mr. Tolga Yalkin: Thank you for that question.

It's difficult for me to discuss the approach taken by the bargaining agents, and the claims being made, but we know that it's a priority for the unions and we are proceeding collaboratively on this matter.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Thank you.

That's it for me, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. MacKinnon. We will now go to Ms. Chabot for six minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I agree with the last part of Mr. MacKinnon's comments. Public service employees definitely deserve to be congratulated on their resilience and their work throughout the period we have just lived through.

The other comments from my colleague will not really prevent me from asking questions. If we occasionally happen to address a question to the wrong department, it's certainly not meant to be devious, but rather intended to get some answers.

My question is a follow-up to one that I asked the President of the Treasury Board earlier, about the \$7 million to pay compensation to former employees. You replied that for the time being, there was enough. That's what I understood.

Can you tell us how many employees covered in these agreements will receive compensation through these funds?

Could you also give us a breakdown for the 2019 and 2020 agreements?

And lastly, how many people will still have to be compensated?

Ms. Karen Cahill: Thank you for your question.

To begin with the 2019 agreements, we had estimated that approximately 17,000 former employees or public service retirees would request damages claims under 1B of the agreement. To date, approximately 9,000 have done so.

For the 2020 agreement with the Public Service Alliance of Canada, we estimate that 54,000 former employees or retired employees would make a claim. However, as you know, we haven't yet set the process in motion, so it's difficult to come up with a number.

It's important to note that claims under these agreements are on a voluntary basis. There are no automatic reimbursements. People need to file a claim. We are trying to contact as many former employees and retired employees as possible.

The \$7 million is not the only amount that has been set aside. Funds have been earmarked in other supplementary estimates or in the main estimates. Based on an average of *Technical difficulty* per employee, we estimate that 5,000 employees would be covered by this amount.

Ms. Louise Chabot: You said that 9,000 out of 17,000 employees have made a compensation claim for for 2019. Why so few?

Ms. Karen Cahill: As I said, making a claim is optional.

Ms. Louise Chabot: It's important to be able to contact them, at least.

Ms. Karen Cahill: We tried all kinds of things to get in touch with them, including social networks, regular mail, or through the Association of Public Service Alliance Employees. When all is said and done, that's how many claims we've received so far.

• (1730)

Ms. Louise Chabot: To your knowledge, are there any other agreements that have not yet been signed for this portion of the compensation, or have all the agreements that could be signed with the bargaining agents been signed already?

Ms. Karen Cahill: The two agreements in place have, to my knowledge, been signed.

Ms. Louise Chabot: My other question is about Phoenix pay system stabilization.

We know that it's going to be expensive. On April 1, 2020, to be precise,^x the NextGen team was transferred from the Treasury Board Secretariat to Shared Services Canada, whose mandate is to test solutions that would provide the Government of Canada with a reliable and integrated human resources and pay management system.

How will the funds requested be allocated between Phoenix pay system stabilization, and human resources and pay initiatives?

Ms. Karen Cahill: The amount I mentioned was only for Phoenix pay system stabilization. Unfortunately, I do not have information about funds for the implementation of the new public service pay system, which is being called the next generation human resources and pay system, because these funds will be requested by Shared Services Canada, which is now the department responsible for the next generation system.

Ms. Louise Chabot: What is the Treasury Board Secretariat's role in this project?

Ms. Karen Cahill: Our role at the Treasury Board Secretariat is to work with our Shared Services Canada colleagues to ensure that policies and processes are transferred into the new pay system. Our role is human resources integration. Our team will therefore work closely with the Shared Services Canada team on this.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Chabot.

[English]

We'll now go to Mr. Green for six minutes.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you very much.

I want to begin by replying to Mr. MacKinnon's comments that perhaps some of the questions we were asking were not in line with the responsibilities of the Treasury Board. I respectfully disagree, and in fact I will state on the record my disappointment. While I have a great amount of respect for the President of the Treasury Board, and indeed a friendship, I don't feel that he in fact answered any questions that were put to him from opposition. Of course, it's always easy to answer questions that are coming from government when they're written by government.

I want to note that the mandate letter to the President of the Treasury Board says that his responsibility is to "lead the management agenda of the Government and oversee the implementation and effective delivery of Cabinet-approved initiatives."

It states he is to "work to instill a culture of evaluation, measurement and evidence-based decisions in program and policy". In relation to some of the comments that Mr. McCauley brought up—to which, it appears, Mr. MacKinnon took some exception—the mandate letter goes on to state that his responsibilities are to "Continue to work to strengthen the oversight of the expenditure of taxpayer dollars and the clarity and consistency of financial reporting, and to exercise due diligence regarding the costing analyses prepared by departments for all proposed legislation and programs."

Unless I'm missing something two years in.... I'm going to go back to the Hansard and review the questions that were here. However, to be an hour with the President of the Treasury Board and not get answers to basic questions is a frustrating process. It's not often that I agree with Ms. Harder, but she was quite right in her assessments of the government's failures.

To the senior staffers who are here: If in the briefing notes and the opening statements and comments of the President of the Treasury Board you are highlighting and touting things that you consider to be successes within the purview of your work, then you ought to be open to fair questioning and you ought to be able to provide fair responses, given how far we are into this year.

I want to put on the record that I'm happy to hear any further comments from my friend Mr. MacKinnon and that I'll continue to ask questions that are pertinent to these supplementaries. He's not the only person who's asking pertinent questions as they relate to these estimates.

For instance, the Public Health Agency of Canada is requesting \$1.5 billion under vote 1a for medical research and vaccine developments. The funding would support the acquisition and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines. Now, I've had an ongoing issue with the way that our government has spent close to \$1 billion on vaccines, yet it appears that in all the contracts, contributions agreements and funding announcements, we seem to never receive any kind of preferential purchasing or procurement agreements or equity positions. I would think that for almost \$1 billion, we should be well positioned to have our own nationalized production of vaccines. However, that's for another question.

As a simple question, how much of the funding that has been requested will be allocated to vaccine purchases that have already been negotiated? The negotiations have happened, contracts have

been signed, and now you've come back to look for additional funding.

That's through you, Mr. Chair, to Mr. Purves, please.

• (1735)

Mr. Glenn Purves: Thank you, Mr. Green.

In terms of support for vaccine purchases and so forth, the funding is going to go towards the COVAX facility agreement in securing options to purchase vaccine doses for Canadians as they become available.

The one thing I would say is that authorities typically work within a fiscal year, and viruses and the development of vaccines don't often respect fiscal year-ends. That \$1.5 billion you're looking at was given authority by Parliament already last year, but given the delay in the actual payments—

Mr. Matthew Green: To be clear, we're still continuing to take from COVAX. This isn't to contribute to COVAX but for us to procure from COVAX, correct? Is that what we're doing?

Mr. Glenn Purves: This is ongoing procurements that are going on, on the vaccine side, but it's all about the payments. These are to support payments that have to be made for the purchase of vaccines after royal assent to the supplementary estimates (A).

Mr. Matthew Green: Mr. Chair, was it not just recently announced, I think maybe even at the G7, that we're going to be also providing additional funding towards the COVAX facility? This is where.... I think within this committee you've heard me talk quite a bit about international patents, TRIPS waivers, our hoarding of the [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] with the highest portfolio. Are we taking from COVAX? Are we actually giving doses to COVAX or are we still taking doses from the COVAX facility even as we seem to be touting being in a surplus position of vaccine procurement?

Mr. Glenn Purves: Again, I could speak to the fact that this is for the payment authority to be able to continue to contribute to that facility.

Mr. Matthew Green: Is that on top of what we've taken from it in the last fiscal year?

Mr. Glenn Purves: In the last fiscal year, effectively, because of the delay in payments on vaccines, the authority that was provided in the last fiscal year is being re-profiled to this fiscal year in order to be able to make those payments.

Mr. Matthew Green: I understand.

That's all I have. Thank you, Mr. Purves.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to our second round. We will start with Mr. Paul-Hus for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question is for Ms. Cahill.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, local managers have been approving special 699 leave claims.

Has the Treasury Board standardized these claims? Have clearer guidelines been given with respect to who is entitled to this leave?

Mr. Tolga Yalkin: I can answer that question, if I may.

The Treasury Board gave guidelines to the departments to help them answer any questions pertaining to 699 leave claims. It's important to emphasize that decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Each public servant is in a different situation. That's why managers need to take each individual's special circumstances into account in determining whether or not to grant this leave.

• (1740)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Did you define the reasons for claiming this leave more clearly?

Mr. Tolga Yalkin: Yes. An update was posted on the Canada.ca website in November.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I believe that you would agree that there is unanimous committee consent on resuming discussion of the motion I introduced at our last meeting. The motion asks the committee to require that the government send it all documents pertaining to contracts for personal protective equipment, tests, and vaccines.

I'd like to ask our committee to put the motion back on the agenda.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Paul-Hus.

I'll look around the room and see if there is agreement to continue the debate on Mr. Paul-Hus's motion.

Mr. MacKinnon, I see your hand is up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Chair, I would ask you to rule on the appropriateness of proposing this motion, which deviates from the subject at hand. I don't think that Mr. Paul-Hus's motion has anything to do with the subject we are discussing today.

Can you tell us whether the motion is admissible?

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. MacKinnon, the order would be that the motion can be brought back if there is agreement among the members to bring it back up. That's why I'm asking if there agreement from the committee members to do so.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: No.

Mr. Matthew Green: On a point of order, I believe due notice was provided on the motion, was it not? If so, why would we need to have unanimous consent?

The Chair: We don't need unanimous consent. We just need agreement to retable it. We suspended the motion at the last meeting. It sat in that situation, and it's open to being brought up at any time by anybody and brought back to the table. Mr. Paul-Hus has brought it back up, and now it's before the committee to determine—

Mr. Matthew Green: Just to be clear, it's a debatable and votable motion.

The Chair: At this point in time, it's to see if there's agreement. If there's a majority, then it is. If not, if it's on division, then we would go to a vote.

Mr. Drouin, I see your hand is up.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Chair, I would defer to the clerk or the analyst, but when we left off, I believe we were debating an amendment, and Mr. MacKinnon had the floor at the time. If it is brought back, I just want to make sure that Mr. MacKinnon gets the floor back, because we were debating that particular amendment to the motion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Drouin. I think you are correct on that, but I'm just going to check for a second with the clerk.

Go ahead, Mr. Paul-Hus, and then I'll go to Mr. MacKinnon.

• (1745)

The Chair: Mr. MacKinnon, you also have your hand up. I quickly want to hear from you before I rule.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair, could the clerk inform us about what procedure to follow? I don't think we need to have a debate on this matter. We can go directly to a vote.

[*English*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Chair, please rule, but I do agree with Mr. Drouin that I had the floor.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to ask the clerk to comment briefly on whether that is a motion.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My understanding is that Mr. Paul-Hus is moving a motion that the committee retake up the debate on his motion that had been moved on June 7, but the debate had been adjourned on that day on the motion, which means that the motion basically stays where it is until the committee takes a majority decision to take up the debate again.

The mechanism for doing so is what we call a dilatory motion, which is what Mr. Paul-Hus has moved. He has moved that we proceed to consideration of the motion he moved on June 7. A dilatory motion is traditionally non-debatable. Actually, the question is put immediately and decided by a majority decision.

If you want, pursuant to the order adopted on January 25, any decision that is not unanimous or decided on division has to be decided by a recorded division.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Let's go to a vote.

The Chair: That said, I do not see agreement, so I will call for a vote.

Go ahead, Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The question is on the dilatory motion, in the name of Monsieur Paul-Hus, that the committee resume consideration of his motion moved on June 7, 2021.

I'm not hearing any vote from Ms. Harder.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: She's absent, Mr. Clerk. You must move on.

(Motion negatived: nays 5; yeas 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The motion is defeated.

We will not resume the debate, so we will continue with the round of questioning.

We'll go to Mr. Kusmierczyk for five minutes.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, who's calling the Conservative whip?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: It's silly season, not bad humour season.

The Chair: Mr. Kusmierczyk, your time is running.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I think we should agree to allow Mr. Kusmierczyk to have his full time and not take Mr. MacKinnon's intervention away from his time.

• (1750)

The Chair: Mr. Kusmierczyk, you have the floor.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Thank you very much, Chair, and I appreciate it.

I have a question for our witnesses. The Public Health Agency of Canada is requesting about \$1.1 billion under vote 1a, operating expenditures; vote 5a, capital expenditures; and vote 10a, grants and contributions for border and travel measures and isolation sites related to COVID-19.

The funding would be used to implement enhanced border and travel measures relating to COVID-19 travel restrictions for individuals entering by land or at the four designated Canadian airports, and for federally designated quarantine sites across Canada. It would strengthen national border and travel health programs, including enhanced compliance and enforcement, such as home checks; safe voluntary isolation spaces in municipalities; and enhanced surveillance initiatives to reduce COVID-19 importation and transmission at points of entry.

This funding request is interesting. In Windsor—Essex, we received through the safe voluntary isolation sites program about \$18 million from PHAC for an isolation and recovery centre, and it was used for temporary foreign workers who were working on farms.

Windsor—Essex receives about 10,000 temporary foreign workers per year, so this was a critical piece of our COVID-19 response. We had large outbreaks on our farms during the year, so this isolation recovery centre provided us with a bit of breathing space. It took a lot of pressure off our ICUs, our hospitals and our health care system. It allowed us to safely quarantine and isolate temporary foreign workers who were COVID positive or who had been in contact with folks who were COVID positive.

First and foremost, how many isolation sites were federally funded in Canada?

It's an open question. I'm not sure who it's directed to.

Mr. Glenn Purves: That's great. Thank you, Mr. Kusmierczyk.

We will have to get back to you with the number of vaccine quarantine facilities that we've funded. We have more information on testing and so forth.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Okay, that's not a problem at all.

This was a success story for our region. I have to tell you that this program was absolutely critical, and I have to tell you as well that another piece of good news for our region is that we were able to provide about 6,000 vaccines to those temporary workers, those migrant farm workers. That was a great success.

That was great collaboration among all levels of government, but also among the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, the migrant worker community program, the workplace wellness for agri-food workers task force and 16 organizations. I just wanted to share that with the committee. Those isolation sites were a critical piece of our COVID-19 strategy.

I want to ask about home checks; I think you raised the idea of home checks. What are PHAC's compliance targets for home checks?

Mr. Glenn Purves: Thank you, Mr. Kusmierczyk.

I think that PHAC would be best placed to respond to that question, and we'd be happy to follow up with them on it.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: That's not a problem at all. I understand that some of these more specific questions would probably require consultation directly with PHAC, so that's not a problem at all.

Can you tell me something just in general? I know that the minister said that health and safety measures and COVID-19 measures made up the bulk of the requests in the supplementary estimates. Can you provide us with some of the highlights in some of the health and safety expenditures in the supplementary estimates?

The Chair: Mr. Purves, I'm going to give you a couple of seconds to answer that, if you could, just to reflect for Mr. MacKinnon his point of order. Mr. Kusmierczyk gets a couple of extra seconds, although his time is up.

• (1755)

Mr. Glenn Purves: Very briefly, of the \$24 billion voted, about \$11.2 billion is related to COVID. On the statutory side of the \$17 billion in statutory adjustments that we forecast, about \$9 billion is related to COVID, so that takes it to about \$20 billion. About half of the total voted in statutes is related to COVID, and those items are earmarked clearly in these supplementary estimates.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Purves.

We'll now go to Ms. Chabot for two and a half minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have a very brief question about \$1.5 billion in supplementary funds for the Public Health Agency of Canada for vaccines. Are some of these funds for initiatives to develop vaccines in Canada or Quebec, like the Medicago vaccine?

Mr. Glenn Purves: Thank you for the question, Ms. Chabot.

[English]

I don't have a breakdown of how much that would be specifically for domestic production. With respect to Quebec in particular, we would have to.... The Public Health Agency of Canada would have a better line of sight on that.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Would it be possible to provide this information to the committee at a later date?

[English]

Mr. Glenn Purves: The Public Health Agency of Canada would be better placed to be able to provide the answer to that question.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Okay. I'll move on to another topic.

We know that some Government of Canada departments and agencies will be authorized to carry over 5% of their unused funds to the next fiscal year. According to a Treasury Board Secretariat document, it would be possible to request that a higher percentage of unused funds than is usually allowed be carried over from one fiscal year to the next.

To your knowledge, our many federal organizations likely to request a carryover of more than 5%?

[English]

Mr. Glenn Purves: Thank you very much, Madam Chabot, for the question. It's a great one.

You are correct. A portion of it that is funding that the government had authority for from Parliament last year that has been moved over into this current fiscal year. Then there's a portion of it that is dedicated to new initiatives. Of course, everything that is seeking payment authority on a voted basis in these supplementary estimates has been approved by Treasury Board already.

Typically, what happens in a cycle is that normally departments that are seeking re-profiles will do so in supplementary estimates (B), but given that many of these re-profiles have to do with COVID, there are more than normal, and as a consequence it's important to have them in supplementary estimates (A), given that they're vital for COVID.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Purves.

We'll now go to Mr. Green for two and a half minutes.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you very much.

When folks back home in Hamilton are tuning in to this and trying to follow along, they're looking for easy ways to have access to what's happening with the spending. I'll try to end this on a good note.

The PBO noted that while there had been a lack of publicly available information published by the government on the actual spending, there had been some improvements worth highlighting. It identified the TBS as providing monthly estimated expenditure reports to OGGO and that it incorporated data for the measures to include in the estimates process. As was noted in the opening comments, it was added to InfoBase.

My question is very simple. Will the Treasury Board provide regular updates of COVID-19 measures in one central document along with the actual spending data?

• (1800)

Mr. Glenn Purves: We'll continue to work with the committee through the motion that has been established. Of course, we always frame it as estimated expenditures, Mr. Green, because it's not actual until such a time as it's in the public accounts. We'll be working with departments to try to finalize estimated expenditures alongside the work that our colleagues at the comptroller general's office and finance and so forth are doing to finalize the actual expenditures.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you.

I will yield the rest of my time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Green.

We'll now go to Ms. Harder for five minutes.

Ms. Harder, I see you, so your telecommunications have been fixed and you're back on.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Chair, thank you.

I actually will raise a point of order, because I wasn't able to turn on my camera to vote earlier. I was going to let it go and allow us to continue discussing with the department officials; however, Mr. MacKinnon found it very funny that I wasn't able to vote, and I take issue with that, so I am going to raise a point of order and I'm going ask that you accept my vote as yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Harder.

We would have to have unanimous consent to re-entertain the vote.

Is there unanimous consent to redo the vote?

I am not seeing unanimous consent, unfortunately, so I can't—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are currently near the end of a parliamentary session and I would like to officially state, particularly for Mr. MacKinnon, who made fun of us by hinting that we can't keep our MPs in line, when in fact we were having technical problems. If the member was unable to have her vote counted on a motion proposed at a meeting of a House of Commons committee, it was because she was sitting virtually. This simply demonstrates the limitations of a virtual Parliament.

We need to remember that there are limitations on what we are doing. We should also remember that my colleague was not allowed to vote afterwards on an important matter.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Paul-Hus.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Chair—

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: It's on the same point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Is there another point of order?

The Chair: Mr. MacKinnon, do you have a point of order?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: No, it's on the same point of order. It's on Mr. Paul-Hus' point of order.

I would just simply remind you, Mr. Chair, with great respect, that the Speaker has repeatedly reminded us that we are to be available with a secure connection and at all times attentive to parliamentary proceedings as we navigate this extraordinary—

Ms. Rachael Harder: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

We're getting into debate here, Mr. MacKinnon.

Ms. Rachael Harder: We certainly are.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: No, but you—

The Chair: Order.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Chair—

The Chair: Order.

Mr. MacKinnon, it has to be respectful, and so I will ask you to be respectful of every committee member here in your response.

Mr. MacKinnon, you have the floor.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: As I was concluding, Mr. Chair, we have been reminded to speak with a secure connection and be attentive at all times to parliamentary proceedings. This is an extraordinary time, but Mr. Paul-Hus' point of order is in fact not a point of order because of those directives and that convention that has been set down from the Speaker of the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair...

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Drouin—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Drouin was first.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Drouin: I'd like to say something with respect to the issue for which the point of order was raised, Mr. Chair.

I understand that some members may occasionally experience problems with Internet connections or other similar difficulties. If we had been in April, May, or June 2020, I would have felt some sympathy for them, but we are now in June 2021. All MPs should by now be familiar with the procedures.

I would also remind the members that last Friday, several of them used dilatory tactics to vote in a non-traditional way.

I would also remind everyone...

● (1805)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Drouin—

Mr. Drouin, we are entering into debate. Mr. Drouin, order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Drouin: ... that several members reported having had trouble...

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Drouin, order. Order, Mr. Drouin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Drouin: ... getting to the House because the bus wasn't on time. So a little maturity in this debate is required.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Drouin, order. Order.

This is becoming a debate. We are going to end this debate. They're not points of order, so we will move on.

There is not unanimous consent to have another vote. The floor is to Ms. Harder.

In light of the time, as we look at the time and being respectful of our services, we will go with four minutes for Ms. Harder and four minutes for Mr. Jowhari.

Ms. Harder, you have four minutes.

Mr. Matthew Green: I have a brief point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I will quickly let you have this, Mr. Green.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Just for my own clarity—and I apologize if I don't know—is it against procedural Standing Orders to introduce a motion twice, or could Ms. Harder—

The Chair: No, the motion can be entered at any time by anybody. The motion was about coming back to debating Mr. Paul-Hus' motion. That was what it was about, and the vote was to not reintroduce it at that point in time—

Mr. Matthew Green: All right. Thank you.

The Chair:—so another vote could be done.

Ms. Harder, you have four minutes and you have the floor.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you, Mr. Kitchen.

Mr. Kitchen, I appreciate the clarifying point that Mr. Green just made. I would wish, then, to bring forward the motion that Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus brought forward earlier.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Harder.

We will call for a vote on the motion that is being brought back to the table.

Go ahead, Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The question is on the motion by Ms. Harder to resume consideration of the motion in the name of Mr. Paul-Hus moved on June 7.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. I believe a review of the rules would reveal you cannot move the same dilatory motion twice in a meeting.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. MacKinnon.

Ms. Chabot, your hand is up.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Beyond the matter of whether or not we can retake the vote, my concern is that our time for debate would all be used up, because the meeting needs to end in a few minutes. I have to leave at the end of the meeting, as planned, because of work in the House. I therefore request that the meeting be adjourned. That will not prevent us for voting again, if required, but I just want to say that we cannot debate it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Chabot, we cannot adjourn on a point of order. I'm not aware of any impediment for the motion being moved again, however.

Mr. Francis Drouin: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I would ask you to revisit the rules and consult the clerk. You cannot move the same dilatory motion twice during a meeting. You cannot ask the committee to adjourn twice during a meeting. It's the same type of motion that was introduced by Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Drouin.

We'll suspend for a second.

• (1805)

(Pause)

• (1810)

The Chair: Thank you, everybody. I call the meeting back to order. I appreciate that.

We've had some discussions, and there's sort of a right and wrong answer on where we're at. That said, I think at this point in time, because of the lateness, I'm going to rule in this case that the motion can't be re-entered today, but we'll get further clarification on that.

Ms. Harder, you have the floor.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Chair, thank you for consulting with regard to that matter.

I move that we adjourn.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Harder.

We have a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Matthew Green: Wait a minute. On a point of order, is that dilatory?

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Matthew Green: Never mind, never mind....

Ms. Rachael Harder: Thank you, Mr. Green.

The Chair: Thank you.

With that, I'd like to thank the witnesses for being with us today. I appreciate it.

That said, I'm not seeing any discontent, so the meeting is adjourned.

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