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•(1100)

[Translation]

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Chad Mariage): Honourable members, I note that there is quorum. Further to the report passed yesterday in the House on the changes to the make-up of House committees, the position of chair of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics is now vacant.

[English]

It is now incumbent upon me as clerk of the committee, pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), to proceed immediately to the election of a chair.

I want to remind members of the committee that the same standing order provides that the chair of this committee be a member of the official opposition.

I'm now ready to receive motions to that effect.

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): It is my great honour to nominate Monsieur Pierre-Luc Dusseault as chair.

The Clerk: Mr. Angus moves that Monsieur Dusseault be elected chair of the committee.

Are there any other motions?

Seeing none, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Monsieur Dusseault duly elected chair of the committee. I invite him to take the chair.

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Welcome to this meeting of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. I would like to thank Mr. Carroll for being here this morning.

As agreed, breaks will be given to the witness upon request at the discretion of the chair. I think 10-minute breaks would be appropriate, at appropriate times, but no more than three or four during the meeting.

Before we continue, for the benefit of our meeting and for the guidance of the committee as a whole, I would like to read a brief excerpt from the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. The committee members will note that Mr. Carroll is

accompanied by his counsel, Paul Champ. This is permitted, based on page 1067-1068 of the French version of O'Brien-Bosc. I'll read from the English version.

[English]

Witnesses giving testimony may be assisted by counsel, but they must first seek the committee's permission. Counsel, when permitted, is restricted to an advisory role and may neither ask questions nor reply on the witness's behalf. Counsel is not noted in the *Minutes of Proceedings* as a witness, but rather as a participant or a person attending as an individual.

There are no specific rules governing the nature of questions which may be put to the witnesses appearing before committees, beyond the general requirement of relevance to the issue before the committee. Witnesses must answer all questions which the committee puts to them. A witness may object to a question asked by an individual committee member. However, if the committee agrees that the question be put to the witness, he or she is obliged to reply. On the other hand, members have been urged to display the "appropriate courtesy and fairness" when questioning witnesses. The actions of a witness who refuses to answer questions may be reported to the House.

[Translation]

Having said that, I now invite Mr. Carroll to make his opening statement. He has a maximum of 10 minutes.

Mr. Andrews, do you wish to raise a point of order?

[English]

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): I'd like to congratulate you on your election as chair. I think we should also recognize Ms. Jean Crowder, the former chair of the committee, for the work she has done. It might be appropriate for the committee to send her a letter thanking her for the work she has done on the committee.

I just thought I'd put that out there before we start.

Congratulations, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

I now give the floor to Mr. Carroll.

•(1105)

Mr. Adam Carroll (As an Individual): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I congratulate you on being elected chair of this committee.

[English]

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, committee.

On March 6, 2012 the Speaker ruled the Wikileaks matter closed and found no further reason to investigate. Nevertheless, despite the Speaker's ruling and the procedures of the House, some members of this committee have persisted that I appear.

Indeed, Mr. Chair, your predecessor rightly ruled against the Conservative motion initiating this inquest, but these members showed you and your predecessor the same degree of deference they accorded the Speaker, usurping his and your authority with their own. In doing so they demonstrate disregard for this committee's mandate and the many responsibilities clearly set out in Standing Order 108(3)(h), none of which include the use of House of Commons resources.

Furthermore, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, page 1048, is prescriptive when it comes to the authorities of committees. It states: [Committees] have no independent existence and are not permitted to take action unless they have been authorized/empowered to do so by the House.

The Speaker ruled, the chair ruled, the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* ruled. So let me remind everybody that under normal circumstances we would not be here today.

However, I agreed to voluntarily appear for two simple reasons. First is my respect for Parliament, and second is to bring this matter to a close.

I will provide a brief summary about what I did and what motivated me to act. I will then be prepared to answer questions related to the supposed reason for this meeting, my use of House of Commons resources. However, I want to be very clear about a few things. I am Vikileaks30. I, and I alone, am the author of that Vikileaks posting site. I was never ordered nor asked to do it. I never discussed my actions with any member of Parliament, including the interim leader of the Liberal Party. I acted on my own. All information posted was already on the public record, obtained from accessible sources.

Now allow me to recall some of the chronology for the purposes of context. On February 13, 2012 Minister Vic Toews, in addressing his online spy bill, infamously challenged all Canadians to "either stand with us or with the child pornographers." Like most Canadians I was deeply offended by the minister's aggressive and needlessly polarizing language.

The following day, February 14, 2012, Mr. Toews introduced Bill C-30, but not before changing, seemingly at the last second, the title of the bill to the Protecting Children from Internet Predators Act.

I'm not alone in believing that Bill C-30 is a sweeping piece of legislation that will allow the Canadian government to routinely invade the privacy of Canadians by monitoring their activity on the Internet. For many Canadians like me, personal privacy is a fundamental civic and human right. It goes to the very core of our personal dignity and identity.

• (1110)

I was raised in a culture that cherishes freedoms and rights, a people who have, in living memory, learned the hard way what is at risk if we do not stand up for our rights and our freedoms.

Given the haste with which bills are passed under the current government, and given its refusal to consider amendments to its bills, it seemed that this bill was all but passed. I felt compelled to urgently bring public attention to the threat Bill C-30 would pose to our rights and our privacy.

I took an approach that, put simply, argued that if the minister felt strongly that he should know everything about us, perhaps we should know a little more about the man who wants unrestricted access to our information. To make the point further, everything I posted was from publicly available documents. If publicly available information could in its retelling be uncomfortable, imagine what could be done with one's private information.

Indeed, none of the information posted was secret or private. In fact, most of it had already been published in various media. Divorce details, for example, had been reported dozens of times. This was especially the case in 2008 when the minister was rumoured to be soliciting support for a judicial appointment.

The same day the bill was introduced, February 14, 2012, I assembled publicly available affidavits, a list of notable quotes, election overspending court documents, and proactive disclosure data. From my home I set up a Twitter account called Vikileaks with the address @vikileaks30, a direct reference to Bill C-30. I transcribed portions of the affidavits and other documents. From this list of brief quotes I made five postings that evening. The record of these postings will show that these were done in the evening, after work hours.

On February 15, 2012, I quickly and easily cut and pasted a few dozen more postings from my list. I concede that these were done at work. That evening, at home, I created a spreadsheet detailing expenses as well as details from Mr. Toews' election overspending conviction. Again, this was all publicly available information.

On February 16, 2012, I made approximately two dozen postings on Vikileaks.

It was also on that day that I received an email, which I later learned was from the *Ottawa Citizen*, fishing for my IP address. The next day, February 17, 2012, the *Ottawa Citizen* published its story on the IP addresses. It was clear that a witch hunt had begun.

Innocent people were needlessly and unfairly accused, including the NDP and a specific employee of the House of Commons. To avoid further harm to them and others, I shut down the account, but not before I made it clear that the wrong people were being targeted.

It was also on that day that the Speaker's office initiated an investigation, although no laws had been broken nor was there any evidence that any policies had been breached. In fact, there are plenty of examples of House of Commons IP addresses being used to edit Wikipedia pages, both to vandalize and to whitewash them. There are also numerous examples of House of Commons resources being used to attack the actions of other members of Parliament, but to my knowledge, the Speaker's office has never investigated those activities.

The irony is not lost on me that the Speaker of the House used his powers to trace my personal IP address and my personal online activity. This is precisely what the online spying bill will do to everybody.

•(1115)

Before I conclude, I want to thank my family, my friends, my lawyer Paul Champ, and the many Canadians who have reached out to me with their support. It has been a very difficult time for me personally, for reasons known and unknown. However, I want to point out again that all of the information I posted was from publicly available documents. Everything I did was perfectly legal. I take full responsibility for my actions.

Ultimately, I hope my experience prompts further awareness of the threats to our personal privacy and the critical importance of defending our freedoms and rights. Bill C-30 is not gone. The reaction of Canadians has forced this government to delay their plans, but the bill is still sitting on the table and will most likely be back. And when that day comes, I urge Canadians to stand up to this government and fight for our collective right to privacy.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carroll.

We will now start the seven-minute question-and-answer round with Mr. Angus.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the outset, I want to congratulate you on your appointment. I think you're going to be an excellent chair of our committee. Now that you're not on this side, I'm actually going to have to do a lot more work because you did so much work for us when you were a committee member, but I want to congratulate you on your appointment.

I'd like to thank you for coming, Mr. Carroll.

I'll say at the outset that there are many governments in this world that use the power of the majority to attack their political enemies. It's not normally the Westminster tradition, except under this government, and we've seen this committee misused many times. I don't believe it's appropriate that you are here, but this is the power of this government—the use of its majority and abuse of parliamentary procedure—so we will deal with the fact that the Speaker ruled this issue closed, and our committee chair ruled this issue closed, and yet we are going back before it.

From the New Democratic point of view, we are just interested in getting some facts on the record so we can put this unsavoury issue to bed.

Was the IP address that was tracked a home address, or a work address, or a BlackBerry address?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you, Chair, for the question.

The IP address that was tracked by the *Ottawa Citizen* was a House of Commons desktop computer address.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay. So you used your desktop computer for that.

Now, were you working in the interim leader's office? What was your position in the Liberal Party before your resignation?

Mr. Adam Carroll: My position with the interim leader's office was caucus resources manager.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay.

I didn't ever look at Vikileaks, but there was a huge online media backlash against Bill C-30 and, in particular, the actions of Minister Toews and the rather flagrant disregard he seemed to show for average Canadians with his accusation that anybody who believed in privacy rights was somehow a child pornographer. I think that struck a lot of Canadians and gave rise to justifiable anger by Canadians to push back, and we saw a huge online response.

What was it that separated Vikileaks30 from the massive online Twitter response that we saw? What was it that you were setting out to accomplish?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I think, going back and looking at that period, the Vikileaks postings occurred prior to the full Internet backlash, predating maybe by 24 or 48 hours the “Tell Vic Everything” hashtag and some of the other activities that ultimately became big news.

At the time, as I mentioned in my opening statement, it was simply to bring public attention to the dangers of the bill.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Okay. I see.

So it predated “Tell Vic Everything”, but there was a huge online backlash against this bill from the get-go, from the moment the Conservative government changed the name of the bill at the last minute to try to divert Canadians' attention from the fact that this was about spying on average Canadians. At the eleventh hour, they attempted to turn this into a bill that was suddenly protecting children from child pornographers. That whole response....

Now, you said that everything in Vikileaks was true. So you were providing the unsavoury details of Minister Toews' divorce. That was part of it. You mentioned his conviction for election fraud in the province of Manitoba. Where did you get these documents?

•(1120)

Mr. Adam Carroll: Most of those documents are available online. The affidavits, in particular, were in our office.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Did you point to editorial commentary, or was it just the fact of his being convicted for electoral fraud and his being involved in a very ugly and messy divorce? Did you just post from the affidavits, or were you making comments? What were you doing? Was this libellous, or was this, as they say on the old *Dragnet* show, just the facts, ma'am.

Mr. Adam Carroll: The postings were verbatim, except that there were a few instances where I removed proper names and replaced them with the terms “wife” and “child”.

Mr. Charlie Angus: You actually took out the names of the people, personally, so they wouldn't be implicated along with Minister Toews and his behaviour.

Mr. Adam Carroll: That is correct. Yes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: You mentioned that you were concerned that innocent people were unfairly accused.

One of the things that happened when the investigation started is that you began to “friend” many New Democrats, and we were dragged into this issue and blamed for your behaviour. Was this a purposeful campaign to try to divert attention from the Liberal Party and drag us into this?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Absolutely not. I think the only people making accusations against the New Democratic Party were specific Conservatives. I recall that during question period that Friday, Minister Baird was quite vocal in his accusations.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I seem to remember some key Liberal bloggers pointing the finger at us, because we were suddenly made “friends” or were being followed by Wikileaks.

Why did you start to follow us when the heat was on? It seems that we were being dragged into this whole unsavoury situation, and Liberal bloggers were blaming us.

Mr. Adam Carroll: Yes. I know what you're talking about. There is a specific blogger who's had associations with the Liberal Party who made that assumption.

The intention was not at all what that individual misconstrued as being the case. When I first set up the account, obviously I had no idea who was going to follow it, if anybody. I could never have anticipated the attention it got.

When I first started the Twitter accounts, I started following people who had an interest in Canadian politics. It's a pretty common thing to do. You follow them; you hope they follow you. The people I chose to follow were specifically those who have commented on Canadian politics. I guess I would take it as a compliment that the New Democratic Party has a lot of people on Twitter who are commenting, and are very active, on Canadian politics.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It did seem that we were being dragged into it. I just wanted you to clarify that.

Thank you very much.

[Translation]

The Chair: Your time is up.

Mr. Del Mastro now has the floor. He also has seven minutes.

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Carroll, you've indicated that you alone are the author of Wikileaks. Specifically, you were tweeting extracts from the divorce records filed in the province of Manitoba. Can you clarify for the committee how you obtained those court documents?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Yes, of course. They were available in our office.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Can you tell me how it came to be that those court documents were in your office?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I don't know.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: You don't know how the Liberal Party had court documents in your office, but you're the caucus resources manager.

Mr. Adam Carroll: From my understanding, those documents were there before I started with the office.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: When did you start with the office?

Mr. Adam Carroll: It was August 2011.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: It was August 2011.

According to information provided to the Minister of Public Safety, only two people have ever signed out that specific file, and this information has been provided to the minister by the court in Manitoba. One person connected to the NDP signed it out in February of this year after Wikileaks30 broke, but the other signed it out in April 2011, during the federal election. I can only assume that it was provided to the Liberal Party then.

You have no idea how the Liberal Party came to have this court document, which you indicate was publicly available, which it was. But you had to go to the province of Manitoba, specifically, to obtain it. You've never been to the province of Manitoba, or you haven't been there specifically to retrieve this file.

● (1125)

Mr. Adam Carroll: Sadly, I've never had the pleasure of being a visitor to Manitoba. I intend to be soon. I've flown over it a lot of times. Again, I don't know how those documents were originally obtained.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Is this common for the Liberal Party? They have files on ministers and MPs? They collect dirt they can release when they see fit?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I don't know if I can answer if it's common or not. I don't know. I know that every party has what's called opposition research. There are files. I wouldn't characterize it in the way you have. We're talking about quotes and biographical data. If there is something extra—some other information—sure, that might be in the file too.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Okay, but the Liberal leader said that personal lives are out of bounds. He said that we have crossed a barrier. When he apologized in the House of Commons after saying that he had just learned of this, he indicated that personal lives were out of bounds. But the Liberal Party has a copy of the Minister of Public Safety's divorce record on file. If it's out of bounds, why do they have the file? Who is responsible for gathering these documents? Who manages these documents? Who in the Liberal Party office is responsible for them? I assume you must have gotten them from somebody. Whose position is this? If it's not yours as caucus resources manager, whose is it?

Mr. Adam Carroll: The documents and the files are updated and added to by many people.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Who? Give me some names.

Mr. Adam Carroll: You can go on to our government directory and you will see a whole list of individuals.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: You can't dodge the question, Mr. Carroll. Who manages these documents? Who would you have to go to? If you wanted this file, you would say you were going to go see—fill in the blank—to get a copy of this file. Who would the blank be?

Mr. Adam Carroll: We don't have a librarian. The files are available in a fully accessible filing cabinet that everybody in our office is able to access.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Which office? Whose office?

Mr. Adam Carroll: The Liberal Research Bureau.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: The Liberal Research Bureau. Who runs the Liberal Research Bureau?

Mr. Adam Carroll: The director of the Liberal Research Bureau.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: His name is? Give me the bare name.

Mr. Adam Carroll: It's actually a female. Marci Surkes is the manager of the LRB.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Marci Surkes. Thank you very much.

So Marci Surkes, I would assume, undertook to get a copy of the public safety minister's divorce record, presumably based on the information we have from the NDP.

Mr. Adam Carroll: I don't think that's a fair statement at all. I think you are making a very gross generalization, and an assumption that is completely baseless and without fact.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Do you agree with the interim Liberal leader that personal lives are outside the bounds of play in politics?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I'll tell you what I do agree with. That is, and I'll quote,

I know it's a difficulty even for members to accept that your personal life is fair game. That's the world we live in, and I'm not going to try in any way to suggest that somehow aspects of my life are off limits.

Who said that? Minister Toews. He said that at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs on March 27, 2012.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: So you don't agree with Bob Rae, then. Okay. That's good. All right. I don't always agree with him either.

It surprises me that you thought it was really extraordinary that the Speaker would use the resources of the Speaker's office to investigate you. It sounded as if you were playing the victim a little there. I'm a little surprised by your tone.

I did have one final question for you, because I assume I'm probably running out of time.

You indicated when it was clear that everything was coming down on you that you sent a note to say that it wasn't the NDP. You were pretty deceptive in how you did that, because you said you were not in Ottawa. You were not whom they thought you were. More than one person had access to this email account. More than one person was posting these things. More than one person had this information.

Were you just being dishonest then, or are you being fully open and honest today?

• (1130)

Mr. Adam Carroll: No. I didn't say the specific things you just said. I said, and I'll quote, "I am not in Ottawa. Many people have

access to the email address. The *Ottawa Citizen* in particular is targeting the wrong person".

At the time I posted this, I was not in Ottawa.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: But you said that many people had access to the email address.

Mr. Adam Carroll: Well, in that respect the password was pretty easy to guess, so I assumed that if anyone wanted to guess what that email password was, they could pretty well go on there and get access to it.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Del Mastro, your time is up.

Mr. Andrews now has the floor for seven minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Andrews: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Champ, and Mr. Carroll, thank you for coming today.

Before I get to my questions for you, I'd first like to address a couple of the assumptions the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister addressed in his comments. He's trying to make aspersions that political parties don't do research on their opposition opponents and wouldn't have that information lying around.

I would suggest to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister that he should show up about 15 minutes before question period and listen to some of his own members' statements in the House of Commons in the proceeding question period. He would see it's quite evident that parties do research on other members and are not afraid to use that in the House of Commons. So let it not be some deep, dark secret that this doesn't go on in this place.

Mr. Carroll, thank you for coming. As a former political staffer myself, now fortunate enough to sit in the House of Commons, I can appreciate that sometimes you get wrapped up in the moment and in your job because you're trying to do the job to the best of your ability.

One of the things you've said is that you have respect for Parliament. I'm just wondering if you would care to elaborate on your respect for Parliament.

And do you consider that in the ongoing personal attack none of the tweeted information was private?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you very much for your question.

You asked two questions. One was to elaborate on my respect for Parliament, and the other was to discuss whether I felt that the information I posted was private information.

With regard to my respect for Parliament, all I can say is that as a kid who grew up in this town, there's nothing bigger than Parliament. Any time you're going out, any time you're getting out of the house, inevitably you'll pass by this place, and it will take your breath away every time. As a kid that was the case and still is to this day.

It's not just that I'm a fan of architecture. It's that I understand what goes on in this place and I have deep, deep respect for it. That is why, after graduating university and being a self-employed businessman for awhile, I had an opportunity to come and work on Parliament Hill. I gave up everything to do it and I've never regretted that. Working on the Hill, to me, is truly an honour, and is probably the best calling I could ever have asked for.

With respect to the tweets being private, I would have to say, no, I'm sorry, the particular information that was published, as I've repeated numerous times, is public information.

You know what? There's a particular policy, and I'll just quote this policy if what you're talking about is specific to the affidavits. The Manitoba court's policy on access to courts' records states:

An open court that permits access to both court proceedings and court records is of fundamental importance to a free and democratic society. This ensures that justice is not only done but seen to be done.

Now, as a trained lawyer, Mr. Toews would have known that every document that was submitted in his court case would be available to the public. There was no publication ban. There were no extraneous circumstances that would have made those documents not available to the public.

In that case, they are as public as anything else that you could access at your fingertips. The very fact that you need to go and pick up a copy does not in any way suggest that those documents are not any more public than accessing an encyclopedia at the library.

• (1135)

Mr. Scott Andrews: I would agree that Mr. Toews is a very easy target for criticism, because he says some pretty stupid things. Just recently he made an announcement about shutting down prisons, and claimed that there was no need for the prisons because they had just enacted legislation less than two months ago that had cut down on the crime rate. So Mr. Toews is a very easy target for criticism.

Today we also see the hypocrisy of the Conservatives, who are calling a staff member before committee. In previous parliaments when their staff members were called before committee, they wouldn't have anything to do with it, but now they like to rake other staff members before committee on a witch hunt.

You're just human, Mr. Carroll, and we work in a very intense environment here on Parliament Hill. You stated that it was a very difficult time for you personally. What toll has this taken on you personally?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you very much for your question. I'm not one to get into too much detail about myself and my life, but generally, because I did mention in my opening statement that it has been a difficult period of time, there were some circumstances that coincided with the events of this Wikileaks situation that made the period of time very difficult for my family. The greatest medicine in the world, I believe, is time. Time heals. So I appreciate that but—

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Unfortunately, your time is up. You will be able to continue with another question, if you wish.

Mrs. Davidson, you have seven minutes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and congratulations on your move to chair of our committee. I look forward to working with you.

Mr. Carroll, thank you very much for appearing before us this morning. I certainly know that everyone has a lot of questions. We've heard your testimony thus far, and I just want to be very clear that I understood what you told us. I think you told us that the IP address that was tracked was for a House of Commons desktop.

Is that correct?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: You said that most of the documents you referenced were available online, but affidavits were available in your office. You didn't know how they got there, but they were available in the office.

Is that correct?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: You also said that the information in the office was updated and added to by many people, and the manager in that office was Marci Surkes.

Is that correct?

Mr. Adam Carroll: There are several managers in that office. I wouldn't say she was specifically responsible for those documents; those are your words.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Okay, could you please give me the names of those who were responsible for them, if it wasn't Ms. Surkes?

• (1140)

Mr. Adam Carroll: I think what you're trying to do here is—

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Angus is raising a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Objection, Mr. Chair. I believe the Conservative Party is using our committee to gather intelligence on the Liberal Party. That is none of the business of this committee, and I think you should refrain from that attempt to turn our committee into a mockery.

Stick to the facts. I don't believe he has to answer any questions about what happens within the Liberal Party office in terms of their staffing. It has nothing to do with this.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: On the same point of order. Mr. Del Mastro, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: That was very interesting, but of course it wasn't a point of order. I'll allow you to rule on that, but I ask that it not be taken from the member's time.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: I can allow Mr. Carroll and Mrs. Davidson to continue, but they must stay on topic. It is important to mention where the information comes from, but it is important to stay on topic.

You may continue.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Andrews: Mr. Chair, I believe if you go back to look at Mr. Del Mastro's motion for Mr. Carroll appear here today, it explicitly asks about his use of House of Commons resources to undertake this attack. It had nothing to do with other members in the office. He has already stated that.

I think these questions are out of line or the purview of the motion that's before the committee.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you for mentioning that. However, it is important to stick to the information that was published on the website and not to all the information collected by the Liberal Party.

You may continue, Mrs. Davidson. I did stop the clock. You may continue.

[*English*]

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Actually that's what my questions were related to, the information that you, Mr. Carroll, were accessing. I'm not concerned about all the kinds of information the Liberal Party has. I could imagine that they have a tremendous amount of information that they've collected on people. What I'm interested in is how you got the information that you accessed.

You have told us that the information was available through affidavits that were in the office. I'm just trying to determine who was responsible for that information, how it got there, and who may have allowed you to access that information, if it was part of your job to access that information. I'd also like to know who else saw this information. Was this all public information? Did everybody in the Liberal leader's office see it, or the research bureau, or the Liberal caucus?

[*Translation*]

The Chair: One moment, please.

Mr. Angus, did you want to raise a point of order?

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Sorry, I have an objection. The point of this study was to bring Mr. Carroll to talk about his use of House of

Commons resources, not to talk about the Liberal filing cabinet and who ran the Liberal filing cabinet.

You were on a political intelligence fishing expedition. That's not why we asked Mr. Carroll to appear on his use of House of Commons resources, which would seem to me to be his BlackBerry and his computer. How those documents came about is none of your business.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Del Mastro, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: It's just very interesting that Mr. Angus sees fit to bully Ms. Davidson, but he never saw it fit to bully me during my question, Mr. Chairman. I'd ask that you bring him into line.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you for your comments. For the moment...

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

I just want to be really clear: I felt I was being really mean to Mr. Del Mastro over the last few months when he ran some kangaroo courts. So today I have given gave him a bit of time and little bit of slack.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: That has nothing to do with the topic being discussed today. So I give the floor to Mrs. Davidson. I'll remind you that we need to stay on the topic being discussed. I hope that she will continue by staying on the topic of the affidavit that Mr. Carroll had access to and nothing more.

[*English*]

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I go back and refer to the comments that were made by Mr. Carroll in his opening remarks. I think he stated that everything he posted came from publicly available sources, or he said something very close to that. I believe that was his intent. I may not have the exact three words but they were there.

He's told us that many of those documents were available online. He's told us that affidavits were in the office. My question just is, who all then would be able to access these records? Could you name those people for me please, or give me an indication.

Mr. Adam Carroll: The purpose of this meeting is supposedly to examine my use of House of Commons resources.

About a year ago, Madam Davidson, you were acting chair of this committee when a very similar motion came to the floor that Linda Duncan and Shawn Murphy should appear to be examined on their use of House of Commons resources. You ruled that the motion was completely out of order. Not only did you rule that motion was out of order based on the advice you got from the clerk, you specifically said that you agree—

• (1145)

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Mr. Chair, I would ask that the witness please answer the question that's before him. We have specific questions that we have asked, and I have not received any answers to this point.

Mr. Adam Carroll: You've had your answer.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Are you telling me that you can't tell me who has seen the copy of these records, or who may have viewed them?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Mr. Chair, I pride myself on being a pretty knowledgeable person, but I don't see how I can be expected to answer a question about who has seen a piece of paper in our office over the period of time that the piece of paper would have been in our office.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Mr. Carroll, who would have had access to it then, whether they had—

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Angus is raising a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Given that this committee has been turned repeatedly into a circus by the Conservatives, they cannot use this as an attempt to squeeze out information about what is done in the Liberal office. My job is not to defend the Liberal Party in any manner, but to establish the basic rule for this Parliament, which is that we brought him here to talk about his use of resources. He cannot be compelled to answer for or implicate anybody else for any of their work in their offices, so I'd ask Ms. Davidson to stop using our committee as a political fishing expedition for Mr. Harper's war room.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

This is the same point of order that was raised previously. I will remind committee members to remain on topic and not talk at length about how the Liberal Party may collect information. I will give the floor to Mr. Carroll provided he thinks he can answer your question.

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: On the point of order, Mr. Chairman, that is actually absolutely false. The witness must answer the questions. We have gone through this before.

The only person making a circus of this committee is Mr. Angus, so I would encourage you....

This is within the scope of this study. Ms. Davidson has put a question forward that is entirely valid, and the witness must answer that question.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, you cannot compel testimony especially when this testimony is off topic.

I know Mr. Del Mastro wants to squeeze the life out of this poor guy, but you know what, that is not why he brought him here. He brought him here on his use of resources. So if Ms. Davidson wants to use her time to ask questions, she must ask about the fundamental question. The Conservative Party cannot compel him to give testimony that has nothing to do—

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Angus, we are discussing that now. I will remind the committee of the rules I read at the start and that are on pages 1067-1068 of the French version of O'Brien-Bosc. It reads as follows:

Witnesses giving testimony may be assisted by counsel, but they must first seek the committee's permission. Counsel, when permitted, is restricted to an advisory role and may neither ask questions nor reply on the witness's behalf. Counsel is not noted in the Minutes of Proceedings as a witness, but rather as a participant...

There is also the important point that follows:

There are no specific rules governing the nature of questions which may be put to the witnesses appearing before committees, beyond the general requirement of relevance to the issue before the committee. Witnesses must answer all questions which the committee puts to them. A witness may object to a question asked by an individual committee member. However, if the committee agrees that the question be put to the witness, he or she is obliged to reply. On the other hand, members have been urged to display the "appropriate courtesy and fairness" when questioning witnesses. The actions of a witness who refuses to answer questions may be reported to the House.

I will come back to what was said at the beginning. I never challenged Ms. Davidson's question, but it is, of course, important that Mr. Carroll stick to the question. So I will let Ms. Davidson continue. We haven't allowed Mr. Carroll to finish giving his response. You may continue, but remain on topic, as I mentioned at the beginning. The same goes for the witness. He needs to answer as best he can.

• (1150)

[English]

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will ask the question one more time, and if you are not able to answer it, then I think you need to tell us that clearly.

All I'm asking is who else in the Liberal leader's office, the research bureau, the caucus, or any Liberal MP's office would you think has seen a copy of these documents?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Mr. Chair, anybody who has ever set foot in our office has the potential of looking at these documents.

I find the question pretty absurd, and I thank you for bringing up *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. There is another section that you didn't mention, Mr. Chair, but I'll just take the opportunity—and I've highlighted this part—to do so. It's with regard to the relevance of questions. There is a general requirement of relevance to the issue before the committee.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you, Mr. Carroll. I do think the chair has read the regulations.

I have another question for you.

It's been several weeks since you resigned from the Liberal research bureau. During that time, have you been questioned about your role in these tweeting extracts by anyone employed by the Liberal Research Bureau or the Liberal leader's office?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you for the question. The answer is no.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: No one at all has questioned you regarding the situation that you found yourself to be in.

Mr. Adam Carroll: Absolutely not.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: You've been identified as the individual responsible for the Wikileaks Twitter account. You told us about the password, saying that you thought others could have guessed what the password was.

Mr. Adam Carroll: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Do you know whether anyone besides you knew that password or had log-in access to the account?

Mr. Adam Carroll: No. I do know that nobody was able to guess it because there are access logs. To me, it was a pretty easy one: strong stable national majority Conservative government, but no one seemed to guess it.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: It's a very good choice.

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Davidson, I'm sorry for interrupting you, but your time is up.

The first round of questions is now finished. Since Mr. Carroll said that he would like to take breaks, I will ask him if that is still the case.

Mr. Adam Carroll: Yes. Thank you.

The Chair: We are going to take a 10-minute break.

• (1150) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1200)

The Chair: Now that the 10-minute break is over, Ms. Borg has the floor for the five-minute question and answer round.

• (1205)

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to begin by saying that, as my colleague pointed out, I am against the fact that we are studying this matter. We are using this committee, which is supposed to be considering issues that are useful to Canadian society, to study a partisan matter. I think this is another example of the deplorable tactics that the Conservatives have been using.

I would also like to correct something the parliamentary secretary said. He suggested that the NDP might have played a role in this matter, since we had sent someone to consult documents in Winnipeg. I would just like to say that we were blamed in this matter for no reason.

Furthermore, when I asked a question of the Minister of Public Safety on Bill C-30—I wanted information for Canadians—I was personally accused by the Minister of Foreign Affairs for being partly responsible for or for playing a role in that situation.

Mr. Carroll, I would like to ask you whether the NDP was involved in the matter.

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you for your question.

The answer is simply no.

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Thank you. I hope that clarifies things for everyone.

I would like to continue on the topic of having the committee study this matter. It's a perfect example of the political and childish games that are being played in this Parliament. Instead of studying real issues and using this time in committee to consider true parliamentary matters, we are playing childish political games. I hope the government members realize this.

I would like to ask Mr. Carroll another question. I was personally very disappointed in the response provided by the Minister of Public Safety with respect to Bill C-30. I think that this will pose serious problems. It may create serious problems with respect to privacy.

Mr. Carroll, do you think that, with Wikileaks, the focus of the debate was diverted from the real issue, which was Bill C-30 and not Wikileaks?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Once again, thank you for your question.

I will answer in English, if I may.

[English]

I understand the question to be whether Wikileaks potentially distracted attention from the real issues and real dangers of Bill C-30.

I would say no. The reason I would say no is that I did an analysis of media mentions over the past two years, using key words such as "lawful access" and a number of the bills that had previously been introduced along these lines, to get a full picture of how much was being driven in the media by this exact issue.

When it came to Wikileaks, I'm not making a total suggestion that it had a bigger impact than it might have, but I believe that it helped draw attention to the bill and some of the more superficial aspects of the bill, such as privacy and having the government able to access.... They're not superficial in the sense that they're not important. There's, of course, a lot more substance to the bill. It was just to give people an idea of what the bill was about. I think that, through that, it drove people to investigate a little bit further, and by the end of that week, a lot of people were talking about the bill.

[Translation]

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Thank you for your answer.

However, I would like to emphasize that, rather than talking about the privacy implications of Bill C-30 today in a committee that specifically studies the right to privacy, we are studying the Wikileaks matter. Along those same lines, I have another question for Mr. Carroll.

You shut down the Wikileaks account and then, a week later, you revealed that you were the one behind the account. What happened during that week?

• (1210)

The Chair: You can answer very quickly.

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you very much.

[English]

The simple answer was that the Speaker's investigation took place—and I've made comments on how I feel about that Speaker's investigation and the basis on which it was conducted—and my computer was the one that they discovered.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you. Your time is up.

Mr. Calkins now has the floor for five minutes.

[English]

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Carroll, for coming today.

I've heard a few contradictions in your testimony and I just want to clarify a few things.

You were the caucus resources manager. Do I have that right? Was that your title that you gave to us?

Mr. Adam Carroll: The specific title was adviser caucus relations or caucus services.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Whom did you report to? You weren't the big fish in the pond there, right?

Mr. Adam Carroll: No, I'm a really small fish.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: You reported to somebody. Who was it? Was it Marci Surkes?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Yes.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: But because you said you were a manager, that means you probably had people reporting to you as well.

Am I correct on that? Did you have people whose activities you were directing in the office?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Well, I was not a manager. I misspoke earlier. I inadvertently gave myself a promotion for a job I don't have any more.

I managed the files but I was an adviser caucus services.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Is this the only time you've misspoken today, just so that we're clear? You told us you were a manager. I remember your saying the word.

Is there anything else that I should be aware of that you haven't told the truth on, Mr. Carroll?

Mr. Adam Carroll: No, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Okay. That's great.

I can imagine you sitting at the office. You must have been quite giddy with what you were about to do. I mean you spoke quite passionately about what motivated you.

You had an email account that you started a Twitter account with. They would have sent a confirmation back to you. You said that somebody should have had the ability to guess what the password was. You shared with us that it was humorous. Thank you very much for doing that.

You told nobody about this. Is that right?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I'm sorry, what was your question?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: You told nobody about what you were about to do. Nobody else in the office knew. You weren't sitting around your computer discussing this with your colleagues, with any of the people you worked with. Nobody knew what you were about to do. You acted alone in this; that means you weren't directed on it.

You didn't share any of what you were about to do with anyone in the office. Is that right?

Mr. Adam Carroll: You're confirming what I've said already.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Okay. If that's the case, then how is it that with two followers of your account, in a very short time span Justin Trudeau retweeted your tweet? How did that happen?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Listen, I've never met Justin Trudeau. Before this he probably couldn't have picked me out of a lineup. I've never had any conversations with him. If you're trying to suggest that Justin and I are buds and we concocted this whole thing, it's absurd.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Let's face it, Mr. Carroll, we can go on and see how many followers everybody on Twitter has. We know that Mr. Trudeau has a lot of followers. It would only make sense from a planning and strategic perspective for somebody in your position to get this information in front of as many people as possible. It would seem like the logical thing to do.

You say you acted alone on this, that you have no knowledge of Mr. Trudeau. Please fill in the blanks for me, Mr. Carroll. How can I connect the two dots?

[Translation]

The Chair: Could you please address your remarks through the chair?

[English]

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You're asking me to connect two dots that don't exist. I'm sorry, I can't.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Well, the dots do exist. You said that you put the tweet out there. It was retweeted by Mr. Trudeau. Yet you have no idea how that possibly happened.

I think you had a grand total of two followers on your @vikileaks30 account, and yet it managed to somehow appear on the most popular Liberal member of Parliament's radar screen to be retweeted. I think that leaves some questions to be asked.

I understand that you've played the victim card here today. I get that. I understand what it's like. But when you push the send button out into the multiverse or the twitterverse, or whatever it happens to be, you take those masks off. Your contention is that nobody should have to, that we should have free rein to do whatever we want in complete anonymity on the Internet. I think that was where you were coming from with Bill C-30. But I digress.

I would agree with you, Mr. Carroll: you are a victim. You were thrown completely under the bus by your party, by your leader who said that this information had absolutely crossed a line.

I just want to know, had anybody communicated with you before being told such that affidavits on people's personal lives should be in an unlocked filing cabinet in an office where, I would assume, staffers come and go rather quickly? You were only there from August until February. My guess is that you were not the first one to come through that office or the last one to go who had access to this information. I don't know who would have a catalogue of all of this information or how you would come to magically know about these affidavits being there.

It bothers me to know that any information about any particular individual member of Parliament is being researched to this level of detail. You've somehow tried to minimize it by stating that the quotes we take from the public media and rebroadcast during members' statements are somehow the equivalent of making a trip to a courthouse in Manitoba to get an affidavit for somebody's court proceedings.

It's a little bit different, Mr. Carroll.

Am I out of time, Mr. Chair?

•(1215)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calkins. Your time is up. You do not have the time for another question.

Your turn, Mr. Cullen. You have five minutes.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Congratulations on your new position and welcome to this committee.

[*English*]

I had some interest earlier today in what was happening in the House of Commons, where we were debating a potential breach of privilege with respect to the F-35s and whether the Minister of National Defence in this case has been telling Canadians the truth or not. That debate is now before the Speaker of the House.

This conversation was initially brought up on whether a breach of privilege of Mr. Toews' rights as a parliamentarian was invoked. The Speaker did not rule that way.

The question comes before us and so I'm curious, Mr. Carroll, if you have any advice for staff. You've been through something that was of your making. You chose to create what became a very powerful tool that went far and wide. Do you offer any advice to other staff who are in the business of research in Parliament?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you very much for your question.

Since we're congratulating people, I also offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Cullen.

I have some advice for staffers. I suppose that when engaging in personal activity they should refrain from using their computers at work. Clearly, everything can be tracked, and even if you're not doing anything wrong, they'll be able to point a finger at you.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Carroll, I haven't followed your case closely. Have you been accused of breaking the law at any point?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you for your question.

Absolutely not.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Okay, let me ask you this, if you're comfortable answering it. Do you regret what you did?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I think regret is a very subjective and personal emotion. You'll have to indulge me when I say that I have no regrets about anything in my life.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Okay.

I suppose, as parliamentarians, there seems to be a learning gap between the traditions of this place and how things are communicated and the new tools that are available to anybody with an email account. One of the tools that you used was characterized—and forgive me, I don't want to impugn you—as a form of character assassination. A minister of the crown's personal life was put into a very public space, at which point it could not be very well controlled. These tools are incredibly powerful.

What connection do you make back to the legislation that was being discussed in the context of this controversy, specifically Bill C-30?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I agree there is information that is more on someone's personal life than a public life. Mr. Toews himself has said regarding personal life, private life, that it's all fair game. He said that afterwards. But with respect to why I used this publicly available and accessible material in this way, it was because the government was proposing a bill that would have them access our private, personal information.

•(1220)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Do you think it is fair game? You worked in a parliamentary context. You worked for members of Parliament who engage in public life. Do you think the exposure of someone's divorce documents, as in this case, is fair?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I think any information that is available to the public should be public. That's my personal opinion. I'm a great believer in access to full information. People can make their judgments themselves.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Chair, do I have time?

[*Translation*]

The Chair: You have a few seconds in which to wrap up.

[*English*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen: That's interesting. There may be lessons that you have learned, but I suggest there might be lessons for all of us on just where that line is, as parties increasingly engage more in personal attacks than substantive attacks regarding legislation or a party's position. Character assassinations by certain parties in particular have become the norm rather than the exception.

Thank you for the time.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Dreeschen has the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Earl Dreeschen (Red Deer, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I too want to congratulate you on your new position.

Mr. Carroll, I have a couple of questions. I want to go back to part of what was taking place with the NDP and the situation that occurred there. I'm sure you appreciate the support you are getting today. However, I'm just curious about how closely aligned with, or what you know about, the Liberal blogger who thought that having the NDP take the heat for this was in your party's best interest. That is what took place. Maybe we want to take a different look at it right now.

Do you have any association with the blogger?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I'm sorry, but you haven't mentioned anybody's name.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Neither have you. You said that there was a Liberal blogger who had taken the NDP to task. That's what I'm asking about, that is, if the person you mentioned as this Liberal blogger was someone you knew. Whether you do or you don't, I just want the answer.

Mr. Adam Carroll: There were a number of people who posted their own theories. You're asking if I know that individual. I don't know what individual you're talking about.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: That's fair enough. You did mention it as well; you brought that up. I assumed that you might have some idea what you were talking about earlier in that regard.

I have a couple of other questions. You were let go by the Liberal Party. The Liberal leader told the House of Commons that you offered your resignation and he accepted it.

Was your resignation voluntary?

Mr. Adam Carroll: No.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you for the honest answer.

Are you getting any severance pay or separation pay?

Mr. Paul Champ (Lawyer, Champ and Associates): I would object to that, Mr. Chair. I'd ask permission to address that.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Champ, you cannot answer the question unless you have the unanimous consent of the committee.

I will let Mr. Carroll answer the question. You can also consult each other if you have the committee's permission.

A point of order from Mr. Andrews.

[English]

Mr. Scott Andrews: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That question is totally out of line. It has nothing to do with what we're discussing here today. I would suggest, Mr. Dreeshen, that you go and read the procedures and House affairs manuals of your own staff. That would explain how separation pay is awarded. You know the answer to that question. You don't need him to answer that question. I would suggest that you go and read your own staff manual. It would be similar.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Mr. Chair, I'd like to continue.

Actually, just going back to what Mr. Cullen had talked about regarding advice for staffers, I suppose it has something to do with the treatment you would possibly get.

So my question is, who asked you to resign, if it was not voluntary?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Bob Rae.

• (1225)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: I'll give the rest of my time to Mr. Del Mastro.

[Translation]

The Chair: You have two and a half minutes left.

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Thank you very much.

Mr. Carroll, prior to February 26, were any of Jordan Owens, Geoff Hall, or Adam Goldenberg aware that you were involved in the release of the minister's divorce files?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I met Adam Goldenberg when I was living in Vancouver, and that was the extent of our connection. I don't know the other two people you talked about.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: You indicated that you were a small fish, but when the Liberal Party got knocked all the way down to 30 seats, presumably a lot of Liberal staffers lost their jobs, but you maintained your position. You couldn't have been that small a fish. The fact that you don't seem to know very many people, or know who could have been in charge of an office, or who might be in charge of a file, or how a file got there is really striking.

How do you square the circle? How did you maintain your position with the Liberal Party when a lot of people lost their jobs, if you're so insignificant in the office, insignificant to the point that you don't really know any MPs, you don't really know who Liberal staffers are, and you don't really know who runs the office? How did you maintain your position?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I thank you for that pep talk. The truth is that I did lose my job. Brad Butt saw to that. I was unemployed for a number of months. I was fortunate enough to get a new job with the leader's office.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: You were fortunate enough to get a new job, based on work, I am sure, that you had done in the past and what people understood you were capable of doing. I assume you worked with people. You worked as a resources individual providing resources to caucus.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Andrews, on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Scott Andrews: If Mr. Del Mastro would like to be on the hiring committee for the Liberal Party, I'm sure I could ask if they would like his advice on how we hire people. I don't think there's any relevance at all in what Mr. Del Mastro is asking. Could we please keep this relevant to why the individual is here today.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you for the point of order.

Clearly, I remind committee members once again to stick to the topic, even though I gave Mr. Andrews some latitude at the outset with some questions to Mr. Carroll that were very personal in nature. I would ask you once again to stick specifically to what happened with Wikileaks rather than to Liberal Party processes in general.

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: No. What I'm getting at here, Mr. Chairman, with due respect to Mr. Andrews, is that I think the Liberal Party could use some advice on some of its more recent hires, its selection of its past leader who has made some rather ridiculous comments this week. I think they could use some advice. I would be happy to advise them on that.

Of course, the point is—

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Andrews, on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Scott Andrews: I'd like to know if Mr. Del Mastro has a file on our past leader in his office.

[Translation]

The Chair: That has no connection with today's topic. I would remind Mr. Andrews as well to stick to the topic of Wikileaks.

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not. I wouldn't want a file on their former leader in my office. It might be contagious.

The point here, Mr. Carroll, is that I think you have been a good soldier. I think you have taken a bullet. I think you are prepared to accept all of this. I don't know what you may have been promised for accepting all of this. You have been thrown under the bus and dragged through the mud. It's clear that someone in your position could not have undertaken all of these things on his own. You didn't have the files. You have indicated these weren't your files that you used; somebody provided them to you. Mr. Calkins has correctly pointed out that this was retweeted by someone with significant followers on Twitter, someone who could push it out. That took some organization. It is very clear that in your position, you were put into a position of trust and provided files with that you acted upon to push out information on the Minister of Public Safety, who, quite frankly, I think you would have to acknowledge was bringing forward a bill that was in the public interest, a bill that the Liberal Party sought to bring in. It is a bill that Marlene Jennings sought to bring in twice.

This was nothing but a partisan activity with coordination from the Liberal leader's office. I believe you have taken a bullet for the team.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Del Mastro, your time was up 30 seconds ago.

I will give Mr. Carroll a few seconds so that he can answer the question.

[English]

Mr. Adam Carroll: I disagree with everything that Mr. Del Mastro said. To use his words, they are baseless smears, or to use the acronym, BS.

• (1230)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Angus is next on the list. You have five minutes.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

We see how this started out on a low point and has deteriorated. My poor friend Mr. Del Mastro's penchant for conspiracy theories has turned this committee to ridicule time and time again. I understand it, because there's a man who on the daily news has to defend widespread voter fraud as being something that hey, never happened on their watch. I'm sure it's difficult for him to go home and explain to people why the Conservative Party is being investigated for widespread voter fraud. We have Christian Paradis not once, not twice, but now three times being investigated for ethical violations. We have Bev Oda and her thousand dollar limo ride—

[Translation]

The Chair: To be fair to everyone, Mr. Angus, I remind you as well to stick to the topic of Wikileaks.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Exactly, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The question that is paramount here is that this is a party whose members, throughout their deteriorating set of questions, are attempting to throw as much muck as possible to divert attention from the widespread corruption that is happening in their ranks and the misbehaviour of their ministers.

I would just like to reiterate the following for the record. We asked if you received support. You said no. Did you work alone? You said yes. Did you break any laws? You said no. Did you attempt to implicate the NDP? You said no. We don't tend to believe. We believe that we were dragged into this—but hey, that's for the record.

Mr. Dreeshen said that you are getting support from us today. Mr. Carroll, we told you that we didn't think you deserved to be here, that it wasn't an issue for our committee. We've asked you the questions. Do you believe that we are here to support you in any way, or are we here to just ask the questions? What is your opinion of our line of questioning?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I think your line of questioning has been fair and to the point. I don't see any suggestion of what Mr. Dreeshen indicated.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I want to go back to the question of the Conservatives seeming to believe that there's something unsavoury. I find it unsavoury, people's personal lives being dragged into politics.

I personally disagree with you, Mr. Carroll. I think people's personal lives need to be set aside somewhat, unless there's something extremely egregious. However, you had access to these documents. You released these documents. These documents are accurate. Correct?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Correct.

Mr. Charlie Angus: So why in God's name is our committee investigating Minister Toews' unsavoury divorce? Does it have anything to do with the work of this committee? You've been on the Hill, and so do you believe that we need to know any more about Mr. Toews and whom he was sleeping with? Does that have anything to do with the work of this committee or do you believe this is just a sideshow?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you very much for your question.

I've also been wondering about that same question. Why are we here? What are we doing here? We're not even in the right place. We're not even talking about something that is with respect to any laws or legislation.

No. I agree with what you said earlier: I think this is a sideshow; this is a distraction. The circumstances and events came out right when their robocall scandal was just beginning to break, and this seemed like a very convenient way to turn the "channel", as it's called.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I want to finish off because I think we should be close to putting an end to this affair.

Mr. Del Mastro believes that Bill C-30 is in the public interest, a bill that would allow the minister widespread discretion to spy on the activities of ordinary citizens without any real, clear indication that this is justifiable. There is widespread opposition to it across Canada, particularly in western Canada.

Given this minister's disregard and his attacks on average Canadians in calling them child pornographers if they speak up for the issue of privacy rights, do you believe that we as Canadians do need to stand up to this government on Bill C-30?

Mr. Adam Carroll: I wouldn't have done what I did if I didn't fully agree and support that position. Bill C-30 will eliminate the need for judicial oversight of searches and "fishing expeditions", as they're called. I don't believe that's right, and I believe we have to protect our privacy, and that was what I was trying to do.

• (1235)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you very much.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Angus, your time is up.

We have 10 minutes left, enough for two five-minute turns around the table. You have the floor, Mr. Mayes.

[English]

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

Mr. Carroll, I appreciate your being here today.

You stated earlier that you hadn't committed anything illegal. We are a committee here, and the chair is not a judge and we're not a jury, but we're the ethics committee.

The question really is are your actions ethical, and is it ethical to use an office that's funded by taxpayers, and a computer that's funded by taxpayers, and your salary that is funded by taxpayers to do what you did? I think that's a serious question, and it's the question that needs to be answered here. Do you feel that what you did was ethical? That's my first question.

The second question is that Mr. Andrews correctly pointed out that there are funds given to interns for severance, but there's also the question of separation. Are you receiving or did you receive discretionary funds from the Liberal leader's office?

The first question is do you feel that you were being unethical?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you for your questions. I'll answer them in order.

I think this actually gets to the bottom of my question earlier, why are we here? I think there are some people who think that because this is called the ethics committee, we're here to judge ethics. There is no forum to discuss what is ethical or what is not ethical. I have no answer to your question because I think that it is for every individual to answer for themselves.

Mr. Colin Mayes: And what's your response to my second question?

Mr. Adam Carroll: In the second question you're asking about my severance. I'm not sure why, or where you're trying to go with that. I assume it's because you're trying to build up a storyline that doesn't exist, but I assure you that....

You know what? I'm just going to simply say that I will not answer that question because it's completely inappropriate.

Mr. Colin Mayes: Okay.

I don't have any more questions.

[Translation]

The Chair: You have two and a half minutes left, Mr. Del Mastro.

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Thank you very much.

Mr. Carroll, as you'll know from your decades of political experience.... I believe you've worked for a number of MPs—Bonnie Crombie, you mentioned, and Joe Volpe, whose leadership campaign raised people from the dead....

Many Canadians in public life have gone through family breakdowns, and I'm proud that my party, the Conservative Party, has maintained a high ethical standard. We've never engaged in circulating divorce records of our political opponents—never—but there have been many.

If your smear campaign has served any purpose, I hope it will be to shame the Liberal Party into demanding better from its staff and, more importantly, reflecting on its own internal culture of rot, which produces activists who undertake things like you did.

I want to thank you for your appearance today. I think we've gained a number of answers today. But I'm left with an awful lot of questions as well, because it's very clear to me that you've indicated, for example, that everyone in the Liberal office—you said everyone—had access to these files. I can't see what purpose a file like this would serve in the Liberal Research Bureau other than to be used for the exact purpose that you used it for. I would think it was done with the full knowledge of the leadership of the Liberal Party, that files like this were being compiled with the intention of at some point turning someone like you self loose with them, to use them in the fashion you did. I'd also suggest that if the Liberal Party truly wants to demonstrate....

You know, I read a file from 2002, a newspaper story, from when Kevin Bosch first arrived on the Hill. It talked about how Mr. Bosch came with files full of personal information, attack information, on opposition MPs.

I believe this has been a culture within the Liberal Party for some time. I think you were picking up on that culture. I think you were using resource materials that, you've indicated, you don't even know where they came from, but they were readily available to every staff member in the Liberal office.

I can't help but believe, and I don't think anyone who's impartial in this room can help but believe, that those files were compiled in the Liberal Research Bureau for any reason other than to do exactly what you did with them.

As I pointed out, the Liberal Party itself in 2005 brought a bill similar to Bill C-30 to assist police in tracking this kind of crime that we see in our streets. Marlene Jennings twice championed it as a private member's bill, and I believe Francis Scarpaleggia demanded that the government support that bill and bring it forward at the time.

The Chair: Monsieur Del Mastro—

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: I don't remember your using this information, or using this kind of information or attack.

• (1240)

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Del Mastro, unfortunately, your time is up.

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: This is the exact kind of faceless, bullying smear campaign that we see other governments in other parts of the province are trying to put an end to and stop. Frankly, I would expect better from the Liberal Party, and I think Mr. Rae needs to come clean on this.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Del Mastro. Your time is up.

Can you answer quickly, Mr. Carroll?

[English]

Mr. Adam Carroll: I didn't hear a question in that sermon, but I do want to point out that I think you used the word "hypocrisy" in there at least once. Are you suggesting that the Conservative Party of Canada's opposition research files are just perfectly clean, with encyclopedia-level information about every member of Parliament in the opposition? Is that what you're suggesting?

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carroll.

[English]

Mr. Adam Carroll: Will you be willing to invite the media over to take a quick look?

Voices: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carroll, but your time is up. If you want to continue that answer, you are going to have to do it by using your own speaking time.

Mr. Andrews, you have five minutes.

[English]

Mr. Scott Andrews: Thank you very much.

I just have a couple of questions.

First, on the mysterious files parties have and where this information comes from, I would suggest to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister that after being in power for over six years, we often get delivered to our offices a lot of brown envelopes with a lot of information from government departments and people who have information. So this information does appear in our offices. It's nothing new. It's nothing that didn't happen before and nothing that won't happen again.

It's interesting to talk about the ethical part of this particular discussion.

My final question to you, Mr. Carroll, is about ethical funds from taxpayers. In the particular affidavits on Mr. Toews, were there any allegations that he used House of Commons resources?

Mr. Adam Carroll: Thank you for your question.

Yes. The parliamentary secretary asked an open-ended question about why we would have these files.

There is information in those affidavits that is very relevant to the work of the House of Commons and to members of Parliament, in particular with respect to the discussion of meal expenses. It's been a little while since I've had the opportunity to go through each and every one of the postings, but if I recall, there seemed to be a couple of postings. One in particular said:

Vic claims the maximum allowable in "per diems" for food (\$83.30 per day) because no receipts are required.

This is what amounts to a tax free allowance for Vic, in the past, while we were living together, of approximately \$10,000.00 per year.

There is another point in here that says,

Vic receives approximately \$25,500 tax free annually from the government in order to pay for his accommodation and meals while in Ottawa.

Then we get into the next section, which I term Viki eats, where we talk about how that money was spent, or whether these per diems were claimed while he was also out spending over \$500 on pancakes.

• (1245)

Mr. Scott Andrews: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Do I have any time left, or are we done?

[*Translation*]

The Chair: It is 12:45 p.m. We are going to have to interrupt the discussion and suspend our work for a few minutes. We will then resume with a discussion on the committee's future work.

I thank our witness for being here. Have a good afternoon.

• (1245) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1245)

The Chair: Order, please. Let us resume.

As you know, we have had discussions about our future work. Unfortunately, what we need to do in the long term has not yet been determined. Today we had Mr. Carroll with us.

[*English*]

This Thursday we have a meeting with Jennifer Stoddart about the main estimates and the PIPEDA law.

[*Translation*]

The French acronym is LPRPDE. It is about a report on the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act. Then we have to study the main estimates.

Next week, we have Ms. Karen Shepherd scheduled to appear. She is coming to talk about the main estimates; that's next Tuesday, May 1st. After that, nothing has been planned.

It has also been suggested that we continue drafting the report on lobbying which is already underway and for which we set a deadline of two weeks during the Easter break. We can do that after the study on the main estimates with Karen Shepherd.

I do not know whether committee members are in agreement with that. It would happen next week, in the second hour of the meeting on May 1st and during the meeting on May 3rd. Is the committee in favour of continuing our study of the report on lobbying?

Mr. Del Mastro, I think you want to say something about it.

• (1250)

[*English*]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm in agreement with the schedule that is before you. I'd just ask that when the committee returns to considering the report on the Lobbying Act we stay on it until it's ready to be submitted to Parliament.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Agreed. That was the intention. So we will take the time we need to do that study. Nothing is scheduled on our calendar afterwards.

Last April 2, I made a motion about privacy and the Canada-US border. There seemed to be some informal agreement on the motion. Unfortunately, since I am now chair of the committee, I cannot introduce that motion again. Someone else would have to introduce it, if we have the unanimous consent of all committee members. If not, we will have to have a notice of motion to introduce it two days later. I do not know if we have consent on that.

Ms. Borg.

Ms. Charmaine Borg: I will ask for unanimous consent to consider that motion.

By the way, Mr. Chair, congratulations on your election.

Given your election as chair of the committee, I think it would be only fair to ask for and to give unanimous consent for that motion.

The Chair: It looks like we are asking for unanimous consent to change the name of the mover of the motion and put Ms. Borg's name instead. Do we have unanimous consent to proceed in that way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: The motion is now in Ms. Borg's name. So she does not need to present a two-day notice of motion. We can discuss it today. You should read it to start with. Then we can discuss when and how the study can be undertaken.

Ms. Charmaine Borg: The motion reads as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics calls the Privacy Commissioner of Canada as well as the provincial and territorial privacy commissioners to testify with regard to concerns expressed in a joint resolution published on April 2, 2012 regarding the application of privacy protection laws to the Canada-US perimeter security action plan, and that the committee reports its findings back to the House.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Angus, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

The only thing I am concerned about, having read it, is about our bringing in all the provincial privacy commissioners. I don't know if we necessarily need to do that at this point. I'm offering this as an amendment because I think it's important that we hear from the commissioner, because this joint resolution is a good document. It is interesting and a lot of issues are being raised. We are talking about increasing security and increasing trade, and how do the privacy rights of Canadian citizens play in to it, because we have two very different regimes. I think this might open up further study down the road if we have questions out of it.

I think if we're going to do the work of this committee, we need to be apprised of these issues when they come forward. They've just released this document. It would seem incumbent upon us to at least hear from the main or national privacy commissioner. We could invite the others if they wanted to participate by teleconference. I would like to hear what they have to say, and then we can reflect on that as a committee on whether further follow-up needs to be done.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Del Mastro.

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate Mr. Angus's comments.

We did want to have a conversation about this, which is why we wanted to bring it forward. It would seem to me, and one of the things the chair will recall I indicated, that we need to have a little more discussion as to where we want to see this go and what we want to see undertaken with it. My initial reaction or feeling is that the specific agreement with the United States is probably more appropriate before the foreign affairs committee, since that's where this is being considered at present, or certainly where it should be considered.

Rather than calling a vote on this today, which we can force, I wonder if the NDP would be interested in having some additional conversations about this to determine exactly where we want to go on it, so I can have a better understanding as to what Mr. Angus has proposed as an amendment. Perhaps we can have some discussions between now and Thursday or, indeed, next Tuesday. We have a schedule here for a while anyway. It's not urgent.

As I said, my initial reaction to the motion, the way I read it, was to recommend it for the foreign affairs committee—or perhaps Mr. Masse, as the critic in your party for borders.... But perhaps in the interim we can have a conversation about it. I move that we set this aside for the time being to allow the parties to discuss it and determine whether this is the right or wrong forum, and give me and the members on this side some indication as to exactly where you see it going.

• (1255)

[Translation]

The Chair: We have been asked to take a little more time to decide which committee should consider this matter. As I understand it, the Privacy Commissioner is quite closely connected to our committee, but, if I see that we are not ready to vote on the motion because she is not quite prepared, or that members of the committee have not had prior discussions, we could see what we can do about it.

I give the floor first to Mr. Angus.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

I can't say what was in the mind of our chair when he originally came up with this, but I feel this issue is for our committee because there are many issues at the foreign affairs committee in terms of perimeter security, which is a huge undertaking. The Privacy Commissioner has expressed a concern that the issue of privacy was not going to be looked at, which is in the purview of our committee.

We had tried not to be too definitive in the motion so that we would not create a sense among our Conservative colleagues that we're coming in here with a fixed agenda. We've been meeting with a number of people who have various pieces of the puzzle, but we felt that perhaps the first thing would be just to hear from the commissioner. Then we can decide as a committee whether or not this requires further steps and further witnesses. That's why we did not throw in any other witness names.

So if you want to hold off on this until Thursday and we can talk meanwhile, we'd certainly be fine with that. We do need to find areas within our committee to provide something positive to Parliament and to the public. Certainly the issue of privacy in these deals is something that I think we can work on together. So if we want to find time to talk, we can come back Thursday and discuss it more and people can think about it. I'm perfectly fine with that. I think my colleagues would support that.

[Translation]

The Chair: We are agreeing here to give the two parties a little more time to get together and come up with a motion that is worded in a way that suits everyone. Do we have a specific date for that discussion? Perhaps it could be May 1st. We would have more time to discuss it in the second hour, that is, after Ms. Shepherd appears to talk about the main estimates. So we would have up until that date to come to an agreement before moving forward along those lines.

As I see nothing further on the agenda and as our time has expired, I thank you for your attendance at the committee and I will see you at the next meeting.

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