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Chair

Mr. Tom Lukiwski

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• (0845)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP)): We will begin today's meeting of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

We have with us three organizations that are testifying on the main estimates for up to 10 minutes each.

I will begin with the Privy Council Office.

Ms. Chantal Maheu (Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, Plans and Consultations, Privy Council Office): Good morning, Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting the Privy Council Office to review our 2017-18 departmental plan and the 2017-18 main estimates.

I'm accompanied today by Ms. Kami Ramcharan, assistant deputy minister, corporate services branch, and chief financial officer.

My remarks will be brief so that we may turn quickly to the questions of the committee.

[Translation]

As you know, the mandate of PCO is to provide professional non-partisan advice and support to the Prime Minister and ministers within his portfolio, and to support the effective operation of cabinet. As a central agency, PCO exerts a leadership role across government departments and agencies to ensure the coherence and coordination of policy development and delivery.

Budget 2016 provided \$190 million over five years starting in 2016 and up to \$26.7 million per year ongoing to PCO to support the department's changing and expanding role under the new government. These resources were approved under two main categories: government priorities and new and enhanced roles, and strengthening information technology, security and infrastructure.

[English]

Specifically with regard to the main estimates for 2017-18, the Privy Council Office is seeking \$144.9 million overall. This is an increase of \$24.2 million from the amount sought in the 2016-17 main estimates, which was \$120.7 million.

This increase is mainly due to \$26.5 million in additional funding to enhance PCO's capacity to support the Prime Minister and the government in the delivery of their agenda as announced in budget 2016.

It comprises the following: \$6.5 million for improving the physical security infrastructure; \$4.5 million for space modernization to achieve a more functional workspace for PCO employees; \$3.7 million for the enhancement of PCO's communication approach and operational support for the development of the e-cabinet initiative; \$3.3 million for a focus on outcomes and results for Canadians through a new results and delivery unit housed in PCO; \$1.8 million for enhanced engagement with provinces and territories, as well as municipalities and indigenous groups, serving the Prime Minister as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs; \$1.2 million for active engagement with youth through the creation of a youth secretariat, serving the Prime Minister as Minister for Youth; \$1 million for increased policy capacity to support the democratic institutions reform agenda; \$1 million for the creation of a new non-partisan, merit-based Senate appointment process; \$0.7 million to support a more open, transparent, and merit-based Governor in Council appointment policy; \$200,000 related to a transfer from Employment and Social Development Canada to the Privy Council Office to support resources for the Blueprint 2020 initiative; and, \$3.8 million for other initiatives to support the government's agenda.

[Translation]

These increases are partially offset by a decrease of \$3 million related to the sunset of funds related to the Canadian Secretariat to the Canada-U.S. Regulatory Cooperation Council and Beyond the Border Action Plan, and a decrease of \$600,000 for the implementation of the government-wide initiative to reduce spending in professional services, travel and government advertising.

The majority of the Budget 2016 investments have started in 2016-17, and if you compare the 2017-18 main estimates over PCO 2016-17 total estimates up to the 2016-17 supplementary estimates (C), the difference is \$16 million less. This concludes my overview of the changes in PCO's 2017-18 main estimates as compared to the previous year.

I will now briefly summarize PCO's departmental plan for fiscal year 2017-18. This departmental plan represents a simplified report on our priorities. Formerly known as the report on plans and priorities, the departmental plan is easier to read with a focus on what PCO will do in the coming years and how it intends to coordinate the implementation of the government's ongoing agenda.

In 2017-18, PCO devoted significant resources to advise on and help advance policies that support growth for the middle class, open and transparent government, a clean environment and strong economy, strength in diversity, reconciliation with indigenous peoples, including the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and security and opportunity for Canadians.

Support will also be provided to the Prime Minister in the engagement of an international agenda focused on trade relations, promoting Canadian business abroad, and advancing core bilateral relationships, including the relationship between Canada and the United States.

• (0850)

In addition, in support of intergovernmental relations, PCO will organize bilateral and first ministers' meetings with provinces and territories on key priority areas, while in support of the Prime Minister's role as Minister of Youth, PCO will help advance the work of the Prime Minister's Youth Council, and support the development of a national youth policy.

Other priorities for the department will be to implement E-Cabinet, including training and support for all ministers and deputy ministers; support other government departments and agencies build a stronger focus on results; improve efficiency and effectiveness, and support renewal of the public service.

This completes the summary of PCO's departmental plan.

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide this context. We would be pleased to answer your questions.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir): Thank you for a very concise report.

We will now go to the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner, with a witness who has become familiar to our committee through our study on whistle-blower protection: Mr. Friday.

Mr. Joe Friday (Commissioner, Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada): Good morning, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to be here and to see you and the committee members once again. I'm accompanied this morning by Éric Trottier, our chief financial officer.

The purpose of my appearance this morning is to share with you information about our plans and priorities to explain how we have worked within our relatively small budget to achieve these priorities and how we will continue to do so in the coming year.

[Translation]

Our 2017-2018 annual budget is \$5.4 million, and we have a full-time team of approximately 30 employees.

I know you are familiar with our mandate, given the recent legislative review hearings, so I will not spend any time this morning providing you with information or background in that regard.

[English]

My priorities, as outlined in my departmental plan, can be summarized briefly.

The first is to focus on operational delivery and efficiency through ongoing assessment of procedures and approaches, which includes ensuring an up-to-date technology infrastructure.

The second is to continue to address the permanent challenge facing organizations such as mine: ensuring we are known and that people understand what we are able to do to help them.

The third is to ensure that we have the right people in my office to carry out our important work. This speaks to another ongoing challenge for a small organization such as mine: recruitment and retention.

A key feature of the plan is to instill a spirit of continuous improvement. The work we do is sensitive, and its impacts are broad, as we have discussed at this committee before. There will always be a better way to do our work, and we have to identify those opportunities to adapt and improve on an ongoing basis. Our approaches to our work can and must change as attitudes toward whistle-blowing change and as the culture of the public service changes over time as a result of collective will and focused collective action.

For example, in the coming year, we are going to be building on what we started two years ago as part of what we call the "LEAN" exercise. This is a thorough assessment of processes and procedures, with the goal of identifying ways to improve effectiveness, including timeliness.

You may have noted that two years ago, in 2015-16, our self-imposed service standards, in their second year of operation, were not being met. This was due not only to unanticipated staff turnover, but also to what I identified as an increasingly burdensome and time-consuming process. Following the LEAN exercise, I am pleased to report that we are back on track and will be reporting in our forthcoming annual report that we have fully met those standards in the year that just passed. I believe those statistics are in a document provided to committee members this morning. In the coming year, we will continue with this initiative, focusing more specifically on investigations, having worked on case analysis last year.

In terms of IMIT priorities, we are going to be working to update our infrastructure to improve, for example, secure remote access to operational files to ensure that staff are fully equipped with the up-to-date tools necessary to do their jobs, wherever those jobs take them across the country. In addition, we are going to be looking at options to our existing case management system, which is a core foundational technological tool and part of our infrastructure. In doing so, we are going to be recognizing that any options must put the protection of sensitive information as a top priority and that this information must be kept separate from shared or government-wide systems.

• (0855)

[Translation]

I have spoken about our communications activities in my previous appearances, but I do wish to underscore the importance of our continuing investment in this regard. Reaching out to public servants with clear, accurate and credible information about their options is not something that can be done only once; it is a permanent challenge and shared responsibility.

[English]

While we certainly see an uptake of interest in questions about our office and approaches to our office following the tabling of case reports in Parliament, our efforts to reach out have to be ongoing.

More specifically, with respect to case reports, as you know, I tabled two founded cases of wrongdoing in February. I can tell you this morning, Mr. Chair, that I expect to table another before the House rises for the summer.

Those two February case reports not only triggered significant media attention, but they also triggered an increase in general inquiries to our office and an increase both in disclosures and about reprisals, making the month of March the busiest of the past year.

[Translation]

I would also like to share with you here this morning that I will be reporting in my annual report that we launched 36 investigations in 2016-2017, which is a record number for my office. And we currently have 44 investigations underway. We are, I think it is safe to say, busier now than we ever have been.

[English]

That leaves me to touch on my final priority, which is to build a strong team capable of meeting our increasing workload. We're adding to our ranks of case analysts and investigators at this very moment. They are the heart of our operations. We're planning for further hiring in both the operational and the legal sections of my office.

I would like to share the observation that hiring and retention, as I mentioned earlier, are particular challenges for a micro-organization such as mine, given the impact of even a single departure on a small team and, further, given that opportunities for advancement simply don't exist as they do in a larger organization.

Mr. Chair, in conclusion, my office currently has a budget sufficient to carry out its work, including the ability to plan for contingencies. Those contingencies include adapting to new

technologies, changes in accommodations to respect both government policies and a growing number of employees, and those expenses that I would say are unforeseeable, such as external legal agent costs, which we have had to deal with in the past, but not in the past fiscal year.

Having said this, I note that the coming year is expected to be one in which the technology- and accommodation-related contingencies actually materialize. My projections are that we'll be able to respond within our existing budget. It's also worth noting, I think, Mr. Chair, that these projections and plans are also consistent with the concerns and desires of my office's employees as they have expressed to us in ongoing consultations with the senior management team.

[Translation]

I will end my opening remarks there, Mr. Chair, and I will be happy to respond to any questions. Thank you.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir): Thank you.

We will now conclude our opening remarks with the presentation from the Canada School of Public Service.

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk (Deputy Minister and President, Canada School of Public Service): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning. I'm pleased to be before the committee. My name is Wilma Vreeswijk. I'm the deputy minister and president of the Canada School of Public Service. With me are my colleagues Jean-François Fleury, the vice-president of learning programs, and Elizabeth Tromp, the vice-president of corporate services and chief financial officer.

Because I don't appear very often before you, I thought I would go through our organizational context a bit to give you a frame of what we do.

The school is the common service provider for the public service in the area of learning. We equip public servants with the knowledge, skills, and competencies they need across federal organizations to fulfill their responsibilities in serving Canadians. In fact, our role is really to support deputy ministers and their HR and learning responsibilities for their organizations.

Over the past three years, we have been working on a significant transformation to make learning more relevant, more responsive, and more accessible. Most of the initiatives related to this transformation are now substantially complete.

In looking at the school now, you will see a standardized curriculum that offers learning opportunities at every stage of a public service career, including support at key transitions. From the foundations of public service, to specialized functional groups, and to the management of the executive and management ranks, the school supports the public service in serving Canadians with excellence.

● (0900)

[Translation]

We deliver this curriculum through an easy-to-access, interactive online platform. Our products cover a range of subjects, including policy design and implementation, financial and human resources management, and service excellence.

[English]

Our programming helps support public servants in delivering on government priorities, addressing such topics as indigenous relations, results and delivery, diversity and inclusion, and mental health.

[Translation]

Our curriculum ensures that public servants have access to resources that respond to their learning needs. And our flexible platform ensures that they can do so wherever they are, whatever their learning style.

[English]

As we have rolled out over the last three years new learning products, public servants have responded with enthusiasm. The total number of public service employees registering for school products across Canada has risen significantly over the last two years. GCcampus, our online, interactive learning platform, was created in April 2016. In this past fiscal year, 169,000 unique learners accessed that platform.

Across the country, we also offer three times more learning activities than we did previously, for a total of 300 learning activities across all regions on topics such as policy innovation, diversity, and inclusion.

We've also worked hard to ensure that the quality of our learning products is high and are pleased to report that the course evaluation results over the past three years indicate an increasing level of learner satisfaction. Just this past year, we were registering 87.5% satisfaction from learners reporting a positive learning experience at the school.

[Translation]

We have been able to dramatically increase our reach by putting technology to work in new and innovative ways. Over the last three years, 95% of public servants have used the school's learning products.

[English]

We are introducing more new learning opportunities, informed by extensive stakeholder consultations, such as our leadership and management programs for supervisors, managers, and executives, or the indigenous learning series that we are developing in consultation with the national indigenous organizations and which responds to the call to action on public service learning from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

While achieving these improvements, the school moved from a blended funding model based on appropriations and cost recovery to one primarily funded through appropriations.

[Translation]

At the same time, the school's base funding has gone from \$92 million in 2015-2016 to \$77 million in 2017-2018. That is a reduction of close to 16%.

[English]

We have taken a number of steps to manage with these tighter financial resources.

We've reduced our staff complement by 13%. We've used IT-enabled learning to reach more public servants in a more efficient way. We have progressively streamlined business processes to keep our corporate functions as lean and as efficient as possible.

[Translation]

The school is now a significantly leaner organization, achieving better value for taxpayers.

It has not always been easy, but we are proud of what we've accomplished. Despite reduced resources, we have made significant improvements in the responsiveness, accessibility and reach of our products, as I have outlined.

[English]

We will continue to work with our partners in the coming year to refine the school's curriculum and infrastructure, ensuring that the school stays nimble and responsive to the complex environment and the tighter financial context.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I welcome your questions.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir): I thank all of the witnesses for their concise and informative presentations.

We'll now get into questions from MPs. We will begin with Mr. Whalen, from the government side.

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

Thanks to all of you for coming today. It's great to have this opportunity to discuss not only your particular main estimates, but also maybe a bit about the estimates process, which we are also in the process of considering how to reform.

● (0905)

In this regard, my first question is for Ms. Maheu. Really, it relates to the difference we see between what shows up in the main estimates and what shows up in the department's plan. I guess we see a delta of about \$37 million. Maybe you could explain to us why and how that extra \$37 million will be spent, and why it doesn't appear in the mains. We could then get into a discussion on the appropriate use of those funds.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Thank you for the question.

The main difference between what is in the main estimates and what is in the department's plan is the expected expenditure for the commission of inquiry on missing and murdered girls and women. Our expectation is that this funding for \$34.1 million will be secured through supplementary estimates (A), so we are planning it in our departmental plans, but it wasn't approved yet or submitted for the main estimates.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Okay. Although it was our understanding that the murdered and missing indigenous women inquiry was authorized in September, it's still in the planning stage. How is the planning of that being financed within the department?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: It's currently being financed within internal resources, and actually, it's more than the planning. For the inquiry, the work has started.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Okay. How much in internal funds from PCO do you feel have been expended on the murdered and missing indigenous women study to date?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan (Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services, Privy Council Office): If I may, Mr. Chair, I will respond to that question. We haven't quite closed all our books yet, but we're looking at roughly between \$3.5 million and \$4 million in terms of spending in 2016-17.

Initially, the expectation at that point in time was that because we didn't get our resources allocated last year, we had existing resources within our existing reference levels to be able to fund that, so not coming to committee to seek those additional resources....

Mr. Nick Whalen: There was no need to seek them under supplementary estimates (B) or (C) because you had savings elsewhere.

What were the differences, then, in terms of spending on other projects where we had authorized quite a large sum of money? You haven't told me the number, but I'm assuming it's in the order of magnitude of \$16 million or \$17 million.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: We would have gotten resources in through estimates (A), (B), and (C), so we—

Mr. Nick Whalen: Yes, but that was not particularly for murdered and missing indigenous women.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: No.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Right, so how much did you spend on murdered and missing indigenous women last year?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: It was roughly around \$3.5 million to \$4 million.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Oh, okay. You had that just from general savings from other areas.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Yes, from other program funding that we would have received throughout the year, or A-base resources that we wouldn't have spent.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Great, so can you give us a sense of where that \$3.5 million might have come from, of what programs were underspent? Or is this all within the margin of error?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: The whole thing is that we haven't completely closed our books for 2016-17, so to give you a very

specific answer, I'm not able to do that, but as we produce our public accounts, we'll be able to see.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Wonderful.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: What I can say, generally speaking, is that we had an increase of significant resources over last year. A lot of it had to do with staffing of people. As my colleague mentioned in his opening remarks, it's very difficult sometimes to get people in and to retain them and keep them in the organization. A lot of those savings could have come from a number of projects that we would have been funded for, but it's probably mainly related to people who we weren't able to keep on board for the entire year.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Ms. Maheu, generally speaking, within the department, if as one of the four pillars of estimates reform we possibly move to project-based appropriations, as Minister Brison has suggested, how would that affect how we receive this information? It seems to me that you would have had to come back to us in September with a plan and specific spending in respect of the murdered and missing indigenous women. Is that not correct?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I'm not too sure that I can comment on future changes to how the estimates are going to be reformed. In the current system, we would come through the supplementary estimates to seek the funding as decisions are made.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Sure, but you've already had a plan with respect to this project. It's ongoing. We already spent about \$3.5 million last year. I'm concerned about the fact that a detailed plan on this additional spending wouldn't simply have come to us in the main estimates. It's not something that budget 2017-18 affected. It was a plan that pre-existed. I would have expected, even under our existing process, to have seen these requests and a plan included in the main estimates rather than in the supplementary (A)s.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: If I may, Mr. Chair, I can respond to that question.

For the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, it was an initiative that is set up as a commission of inquiry, which is very independent. It's something different that we in PCO haven't supported before.

In terms of developing a plan, we didn't do it internally ourselves, because it really is up to the commission to identify their work plan, to meet their mandate for the terms of reference that were indicated within the terms of reference for the commission. As of September, when it was first formally announced, we have been working directly with the commissioners to understand what is their work plan, what is the way they were going to spend their resources, what's their staffing plan, how they're going to set up, and how they're going to structure their organization, which includes setting up offices right across Canada and hiring people.

In terms of working with them—

•(0910)

Mr. Nick Whalen: Thank you very much. I look forward to discussing this further at estimates (A).

With respect to some of the other changes, on engagement with youth, there must have been some form of government spending on engagement with youth, possibly under labour and human resources development under the previous administration. Have there been any transfers of program funding across other departments to PCO in order to assist the Prime Minister in his dual role as Minister for Youth? Or are those funds being simply reallocated to other programs in other departments?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: The activities in other departments that were targeted to youth continue. Actually, there are youth initiatives in several departments. What PCO is doing in terms of supporting the Prime Minister is a kind of novel thing for PCO. The Prime Minister, as the minister of youth requires some support. He has the youth council and he has activities related to that. That's specifically what the funding is allocated for.

You may recall that we received some of that funding in 2016-17 through supplementary estimates, and now we're seeking to stabilize that in the main estimates for this year.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Okay. Just so I can understand the flow of funds, because it came in supplementary estimates last year, when we see this \$1.2-million increase for engagement with youth in the main estimates, that's the full bucket.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir): Unfortunately, we won't have time for an answer to that question, although perhaps it's a point we can return to.

We'll continue our round of seven minutes with Mr. McCauley.

While he's beginning, I'm going to turn the chair over to Madam Ratansi so that I may ask the NDP's questions subsequently.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): I'm glad you're with us today. Welcome back to some of you.

If you have a very quick answer, you can answer Mr. Whalen's question.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Sure. In 2016-17, we got \$1.5 million in supplementary estimates (B), and in 2017-18 it's \$1.2 million.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: All right.

I'll stick with you on the million dollars for the Senate appointment process. It seems that every time we have the Privy Council with us, we come back to this, because we never seem to get clear answers. It's a million dollars. How much was spent last year and how much are you spending this year? I'd like to have the breakdown, please, of what that million dollars is going towards.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Last year, through supplementary estimates (A), we sought \$1.4 million. As Kami mentioned, our accounts are not closed yet, so I cannot report exactly how much was spent of that \$1.4 million.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Is it close to it?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I don't know....

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Unfortunately, I can't give it to you, but we would have spent a significant amount, probably to the tune of 85% of that money, but again, that's something that—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That's a close enough answer.

There is a million dollars again for this year.... It's funny that it says "new", but it's not new. What exactly is this million dollars going to, please?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Thank you for your question.

The funding is to support the advisory—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I realize that but, please, what is it going to? Is it going to staffing? Is it going to travel? Is it going to cocktail parties? What is it going to? I'm sorry that I'm sounding a bit cynical, but at previous committees we've heard answers like, "We're hiring staff to print resumés", and then we'd hear at the next committee meeting, "No, they're doing this, this, and this". I'd like to find out what the breakdown is. How much is going to staff? How much is going to the activities of the advisory committee? If you look at the website, you see that we are not hiring anyone. The resumé process is closed till next winter. The support staff aren't taking resumés. I'm just curious about where this million dollars is going.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Maybe I can help and sort of give you the *grosso modo*. We have added four new people to PCO to support the resources. That would be roughly a cost of \$450,000 to \$500,000 in terms of the overall costs. The other amounts of money are related to the advisory committee that they support. There are secretariat services, where we would pay for travel, the accommodation associated with it, and the meals and incidentals for the members to come together.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: So it's \$400,000 for staff and \$600,000 for the advisory committee. We are not actually hiring or appointing any new senators now. The system is closed.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: We do have vacancies right now that we are in the midst of trying to fill.

•(0915)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay.

I'm just curious, though. We are not taking any applications. We're doing no work. We are not doing anything till the winter of 2017, six or seven months from now. Is it really a million dollars—the same as last year, basically—when we are not filling any extra roles?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: As Kami mentioned, there are vacancies now. There are currently six vacancies. Between now and the end of the fiscal year, we are forecasting four additional vacancies due to normal retirement, so the advisory board will have to provide recommendations to the Prime Minister for suitable candidates for these vacancies. They will convene and assess the existing stock of resumés and—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. If we have six to fill and we are expecting four more, who would have made the decision on your website to cut off any more applications?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Well, my understanding is that—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm not saying it's you.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: No, it's not me—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm just curious as to where it would have come from. If you don't know, we can get the answer later. That's fine.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Sure.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: You don't know?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I don't know for sure.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: No? Okay. Thanks.

I'm just wondering about the website. Last year we discussed it. Someone in the Privy Council Office said it was \$400,000 to develop the website. I'm wondering if you know—or if you can get back to us—whether that was an accurate cost, and whether there are any more costs we are expecting for the website.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: With regard to the website, we would have put in a pilot project with regard to looking at it. We wanted to move very quickly, so we invested roughly \$400,000. That's what was in our estimates for last year.

This year, what we're planning to do is further support the website and make sure that it's robust and has the right supporting function underneath it, so we will be investing a little more into the website, probably not at the same level as we did last year.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Does that come through a separate request through supplementary estimates?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: No. It would be included in the current \$1 million that we have for Senate reform.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. Thanks.

Welcome, Ms. Vreeswijk.

With all the training, do you do any training to explain any of the protections for whistle-blowers under the public service disclosure act? Is there any training for any new employees, etc.?

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: We do provide training, and there is mandatory training at orientation as part of our authority delegation in and around values and ethics. The core responsibilities of public servants in terms of the values and ethics code are taught to all public servants when they enter—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Perfect.

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: —as well as managers. We've integrated that into our manager and executive training.

Particularly related to Joe's area, I do not believe that we provide training related to that.

I think that's in your area, Joe.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. You've had amazing success with the e-training platform. What is the next step? Do you need more resources to expand that or are you fine for the next couple of years? Do you have plans on where you're going next with that?

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: We've substantially completed the transformation of and the shift onto the online platform. As for what we're looking at in the coming year, overall our budget is coming down. That was something that we expected to do and we're managing within that. We've converted a lot of our learning products online, and in the coming years we will deepen and enrich that

learning platform over time with new information and new programming.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm almost out of time, so real quickly, you noted that there's a 9% increase for out-of-Canada training. Is that for the diplomatic corps or...?

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: A 9% increase in out of Canada...?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Yes, in the amount of training for employees out of country.

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: I don't know the statistic that you are referring to. However, I would say that the school provides common learning to all public servants, including employees in Global Affairs and the immigration department who have international appointments.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That's probably what it is.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)): Thank you.

We'll go for seven minutes to Mr. Weir.

Mr. Erin Weir: Thanks very much.

I'd like to follow up on Mr. Whalen's line of questioning about funding for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. I'm curious as to why funding for this important work was not requested as part of the main estimates.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Thank you very much for the question.

The reason why it wasn't requested as part of the main estimates... If you understand the process, you get your main estimates from 2015-16, you add your supplementary estimates (A), (B), and (C), and there's a reduction for things that you do, and then you end up with your mains. Because we had existing funding in our reference levels last year in order to fund the needs of the commission of inquiry into the missing and murdered, we didn't need to seek it. That's why we're going to be seeking it in supplementary estimates (A) for this upcoming year.

• (0920)

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay, but was there a reason that you decided to use the leftover funds for that purpose as opposed to any other purpose that you might otherwise be requesting them for?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: We did not stop any of our other activities within our department in terms of funding that. What we do in terms of good financial management is make sure that we don't ask for money we don't need, so we had enough in terms of what didn't get spent in our department that we could be able to fund the requirements for the missing and murdered.

The other complexity was working with them to develop the plan to make sure we understand what they wanted to achieve last year and for this year and the subsequent year in terms of their activities, and to make sure that they were comfortable with what they were proposing. When we took our request to Treasury Board, which we did last year, it was to make sure that we got funding for this upcoming year for them.

Mr. Erin Weir: Not to belabour the point, but my sense is that with the funding that you had left over, you could have chosen to use it for any number of initiatives. On some of them, you decided to put forward specific requests in the estimates. For some reason, you chose this one to receive the leftover funds. Is there any particular reason for that or did it just work out that way?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Thank you very much.

We did not stop doing any of the work that we had intended to do last year in order to do that, but just in the way plans happen, you expect that you're going to spend, for example, at the beginning of the year, \$10 million on an initiative. Sometimes you're very good at being able to spend that. Sometimes things happen in terms of your procurement being delayed or your staffing getting delayed, and you don't spend that much money. In terms of looking at the overall activities within the department, we were able to say, yes, we can fund the missing and murdered for the given year, given the fact that the project we were currently doing didn't fully use the funds we had provided for it.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay.

Go ahead, Ms. Maheu.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Just to add to that, the inquiry was launched in September. Maybe we could have guessed at how much we were going to spend, but that would have meant coming here with estimates that had not been worked through with the commission itself. Because they serve at arm's length and they are deciding on their work plan, we need to work with them to be clear about the cost needs, the funding that's needed.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay. It just seems to be something that's a relatively high priority for the government, so the way it's being funded is interesting.

I also want to ask about the funding in the main estimates for the youth secretariat. Would this secretariat be permanently part of PCO? Would it operate more independently?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: At this point, the secretariat is within PCO and will remain so as long as the Prime Minister is the minister responsible for youth. The funding has been sought with that perspective: to support the Prime Minister in that role. If a different minister were responsible for youth, you could envision that the funding would be associated elsewhere.

Mr. Erin Weir: If the Prime Minister decided that the minister of youth wasn't performing very well and decided to allocate that portfolio to someone else in a cabinet shuffle, would it be possible for that secretariat to operate as an independent entity or to be combined with another department?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I won't comment on his performance or how he is going to assess his performance—

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Chantal Maheu: —but funding will go to support the functions.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay. I'm curious about the possibility of this secretariat operating separately from the PCO if the cabinet were organized in a different way.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Any change in the ministry and cabinet can lead to changes in funding, but at this point it's pure speculation.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay, but it's being structured in such a way that it could operate outside of PCO. It's not being set up on the premise that the Prime Minister will always be the minister of youth?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Well, no. No, the funding is there to support the current function, and that's how the funding was sought.

Mr. Erin Weir: Thank you.

I want to ask the School of Public Service about online courses. It seems that there's been a large increase in uptake across Canada, but it seems that there has been less use of online learning by public servants working outside of Canada, which is a bit counterintuitive. I wondered if you could you perhaps shed some light on this trend.

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: Actually, I will be able to answer the question asked by the previous member at the same time. GCcampus, the interactive platform, is accessible globally and within Canada. There is a 9% increase in take-up for missions abroad. That is a significant level of increase. I guess I would say that we see this as promising. We don't see it as an issue.

It's important to note, too, that the school provides the common learning platform that's required for all public servants, but individual departments provide mandate-specific training. Global Affairs and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship provide mandate-specific training. To get a complete picture, you need to put those together.

● (0925)

Mr. Erin Weir: Is it true, though, that the 9% increase for public servants outside of Canada is quite a bit less than the increase among public servants within Canada?

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: I don't have that comparison. I think we consider that significant in both areas.

Did you want to comment on that, Jean-François?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury (Vice-President, Learning Programs Branch, Canada School of Public Service): Yes. I would just add that the platform is quite new and there's an awareness lag the further you are from Ottawa. I think this is a positive increase. We're working with GAC on the awareness of this platform. That increase is a positive step, but there is work to do to ensure that international awareness of this particular platform continues to increase.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you.

We go now for a seven-minute round to Ms. Shanahan.

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

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here this morning.

I must say that I joined this committee last year during the estimates. Being from a banking background, I was very perplexed as to why we were talking about estimates on items that had been decided after the estimates were made and about having to come back for supplements. As a banker, that would have been a red flag for me, but apparently it's the system we have. It's a system that I think needs changing going forward, and not only to make your work easier. When I hear that we have to make wild guesses, this is not exactly reassuring.

In the intervening period, we've had a chance to hear about how the estimates and budgeting process has been revised in other jurisdictions, notably in Australia and elsewhere. The idea is that governments have projects, they have ambitions, and they have a platform that they want to realize, and the public service is there to do all the necessary grunt work to get the cost estimates and to see if we have the revenues and so on in order to make it happen. That would be the logical way for things to happen. We're not there yet, but we hope to be there.

I do like the main estimates document that gives us, in a very succinct way, the *raison d'être* for the Privy Council Office, for example. The *raison d'être* states:

The mandate of the Privy Council Office...is to serve Canada and Canadians by providing professional, non-partisan advice and support to the Prime Minister, the ministers within the Prime Minister's portfolio and Cabinet.

It's the Prime Minister who's responsible for this organization; hence, what the Prime Minister requests you to do, you must carry out to the best of your ability.

This does not come from just anywhere. It's not plucked from the sky. It has to do with the platform, programs, and policies that the Prime Minister has come into office with. That's where we see in the highlights exactly what the projects were. You gave a very good summary of them: the creation of a new youth secretariat, supporting an open, transparent, and merit-based Governor in Council appointment process, the senator appointment process, and so on.

I just wanted to put on the record that we're not talking about spending that just happens randomly, that grows here and shrinks there, and then it's "Oh, what happened there?" We could do it better, yes, but it is based on a set of priorities. That's what we're talking about here today: the gaps we see. We can't possibly know what priorities are going to be before they've been enunciated, yet we have to estimate the costs anyway, right?

Let's talk about the Governor in Council appointments. This is something I've seen in one of my other committees—public accounts—where this was this huge.... The process had been starved. There was a huge number of vacancies, but I'm encouraged that there have been improvements made.

Can you talk to me a bit, Madam Maheu, about what actual changes were made to the appointment process and how much the PCO expects to spend on these changes going forward?

• (0930)

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Thank you very much for the question.

The government announced a new approach to ensure open and transparent merit-based selection processes for GIC appointments, with greater access for Canadians. The new approach now applies to

more than 1,500 positions, including heads, vice-chairs, members of agencies and boards, chairpersons, chief executives, and agents and officers of Parliament. All in all, it's a tripling of the appointments that are done, using a competitive process.

Funding has been sought to help support this. We came through supplementary estimates (B) in 2016-17 to seek some funding, and in the main estimates—if you compare it to the last mains—we're seeking \$700,000 to support that. It is mostly for staff, for salary purposes, and some minor O and M in terms of the postings. The positions are all posted now on the public website. The process is working with the key departments in terms of identifying candidates and going through selections on a merit basis, and open....

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Thank you for that, because I want to be clear too: we're not talking about just staffing and putting people in positions like it's a perk.

One of the Auditor General's most scathing reports was on how the Canada Pension Plan disability program application and approval processes had been delayed in some cases for up to two or three years for people making disability claims, because there was nobody sitting on the tribunal who could hear the claim. That's called "starving the pipeline" and it's something that you can't switch overnight. You definitely have to put the resources there ahead of time to make sure you have those people in place going forward.

I probably don't have much time left, Mr. Chair, do I?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir): You have about a minute.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I'm very interested in performance measurement as well, so talk to me about the results and delivery unit, how that is staffed, and what its key functions are.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Thank you.

That activity was announced in the budget, too, and got funding through supplementary estimates. In the mains, compared to last year, we're seeking \$3.3 million, which is about 16 employees. Those are new functions within the PCO. They cover a number of things, such as support for the agenda, results, and communications cabinet committee, the committee that is looking at priorities and how we're making progress on key files.

It is also supporting departments as they are putting in place the infrastructure for their own results and delivery approaches. Departments have all been asked to have a chief results and delivery officer. We're providing guidance in how this is done, so that across departments people are tracking similar things, are able to report in similar ways, and are equipped to report to Canadians on how we're making progress on government activities.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir): Thank you.

That concludes our seven-minute round. We'll now move to a series of five-minute interventions, starting with Mr. Clarke.

[Translation]

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

Good morning, everyone. Thank you for being here with us this morning.

I want to address my remarks to Ms. Maheu and Ms. Ramcharan.

I want to talk about the Youth Secretariat. First of all, pardon my ignorance, but could you tell me how many young people are a part of that secretariat?

An hon. member: 26 young people.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: 26 young people. Fabulous!

I tried to find their names, but I was unable to. Would it be possible to have the names of these young people, as well as their province of origin?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I don't have the list, but it is public. We can send it to you.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: So the list is public. Is it available on the Internet?

[English]

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: I'm not exactly sure if it is public, but we can find out, and if we do have it available, we will definitely—

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Okay.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I would like to consult the list if possible, even if it is confidential, since I am a member of this committee.

Where do these young people come from? Is their distribution equitable throughout Canada? Are there young people from each province and territory?

• (0935)

Ms. Chantal Maheu: We received 80...

An hon. member: The list is public.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: You have the list. Perfect.

Are there young people from each province and territory?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I am not certain if there are young people from each territory, but I think there are from each province. We could print out the list to find out.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Fantastic! I am happy to know that the information is public.

Up till now, how often have the young people met?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I think they have met three times. In fact, they are meeting today and tomorrow. This will be their third or fourth meeting.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: And how many hours does a meeting last?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: The meeting lasts one day. Today and tomorrow's meetings will be two half-days, because people have to travel.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I understand.

Is the Prime Minister present at each meeting? I imagine that he must at least make an appearance.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I am not sure, but I think so. I know that he will be present at today's meeting.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: So the young people have to travel here, and as you said, a meeting lasts one day.

Are there any related activities to develop their knowledge of Canada? Do they take part in workshops? In short, do we do anything to help these young people learn more about Canada?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: First, today and tomorrow's meetings will take place in Montreal.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Ah, yes. I see.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: There was one in Calgary and I was there.

In general, the agenda includes meetings with certain ministers, or people from the communities. There is a definite program.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Fine.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Since these meetings take place in different provinces, the participants are exposed to different realities, and meet with representatives from various organizations.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: That's good; I'm happy to hear it.

Aside from their related activities, what work do they do on the Youth Secretariat committee? What do they do, exactly, when they are sitting around the table with the Prime Minister?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: The objective of the council is really to find out about young people's points of view on issues that matter to them. They discuss topics like employment, mental health, poverty among young people, which allows the Prime Minister to be more aware of young people's concerns.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Do they follow a set agenda, and if so do they take part in choosing the topics that will be raised?

If not, does the Prime Minister choose the topics that he would like to be advised on?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: The agenda of the meetings is not part of my responsibilities, and so I cannot answer your question in a specific way. I know that there is an agenda, and that it is communicated to the young people prior to the meeting. We could however confirm to what extent they contribute to the agenda.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Very well. What is the age range of the participants?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I'm not sure. I can't find that information here.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Are they students or are some of them working?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Both; some are students and some are already working.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Are they remunerated in any way?

[English]

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: They would be receiving some form of stipend or honoraria in order to participate, so it wouldn't be that they would just do this freely. They would be compensated for their time.

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Fine. Outside of these meetings, do they have other duties?

For instance, if there is a three-month lapse between two meetings, are they asked to accomplish certain tasks in the meantime in order to be accountable?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Yes. They engage in certain activities between the meetings, and they determine their priorities themselves. Since the members of the group have varied interests, they may decide together to prioritize a particular topic, or to accomplish certain tasks and get involved in the community. Most of them in fact act as ambassadors in their school or their group.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir): Thank you.

We're now going to go to Mr. Ayoub.

[Translation]

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

My questions are for Mr. Friday and concern the Office of the Commissioner.

Mr. Friday, you are getting ready for a quality assurance audit that will take place by June 2017. Could you remind us of the quality criteria that will be examined during this audit of the Office of the Commissioner?

Mr. Joe Friday: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm happy to share with the members of the committee all of the details of our quality assurance project, even though it is an internal process.

This project is the outcome of an audit that was done by Deloitte & Touche in 2010, an audit that had been requested following an audit done by the Office of the Auditor General.

• (0940)

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Do you know the evaluation criteria?

Mr. Joe Friday: Yes. The objective of the audit is to ensure that each closed file is complete. It is an internal audit of case analyses or completed investigations. The purpose is to verify if all of the documents are in the file, and thus to see whether it is complete, and whether the decisions were entirely supported by the facts and the processes.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: You say that Deloitte & Touche are helping you, or are doing this audit for you?

Mr. Joe Friday: In 2010, the former commissioner...

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: He asked Deloitte & Touche to carry out the audit at that time?

Mr. Joe Friday: Yes.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: So this audit will be done internally, correct?

Mr. Joe Friday: Yes. The same criteria and the same process will be used to determine if each file is complete, as I said before.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: I see. Why did you not, in this case as well, call on a firm such as Deloitte & Touche, or another one? Why did you decide to do an internal audit?

Mr. Joe Friday: The 2010 audit was done following an audit by the Auditor General. It was quite a long and costly process. We think we are in a position to conduct a complete and fair internal audit.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Fine. So it is a self-evaluation.

Mr. Joe Friday: Precisely. The results will be made public, of course.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Fine. Thank you.

In the course of this self-assessment, are you going to consult disclosers to find out about their evaluation of the quality of services?

Mr. Joe Friday: The quality assurance project is a sort of paper exercise. In my opinion, it differs from a satisfaction survey. We are, however, considering the possibility of conducting such a survey. I discussed it with my American counterparts, and I asked them to share their experiences with us and the lessons learned.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: So you will not be questioning any disclosers during your internal audit process. Is that correct?

Mr. Joe Friday: No. That is not a part of quality assurance. It's more an audit of processes and steps.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: I understand quite well. Thank you.

I would now like to discuss your awareness-raising activities aimed at letting employees know about your services. You asked for an additional amount of \$40,000 which is \$20,000 more than last year, although the same amount was requested for four or five years.

If you make employees aware of your services, is there not a risk that this will increase the needs, and your financial needs, in consequence? In other words, could the fact of receiving more disclosures have an effect on your budget, eventually?

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir): Unfortunately, we won't have time for an answer to that question, but perhaps we'll have an opportunity to return to that point.

We'll now go to Mr. Clarke for five minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Thank you.

I had promised to ask the most important question on the Youth Secretariat. I read the young people's biographies, and they were very interesting.

Ms. Maheu, can you tell us the exact amount of the expenses related to the very diverse activities of this council, up till now?

•(0945)

Ms. Chantal Maheu: We obtained \$1.5 million for these activities in the 2016-17 main estimates. As I said previously, we are now in the process of closing last year's accounts. Consequently, I cannot really tell you how much money was spent. In the 2017-18 main estimates, we ask for \$1.2 million.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: So the job of these young people is to advise the Prime Minister and to share their vision with him.

The information is probably on the Internet and perhaps I didn't do my homework, but are the specific objectives established by the Prime Minister? Can he, as the leader of the government, ask for advice on specific issues and demand results?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Several government priorities are touched on in discussions at the council. Employment and growth are among them, of course, but the young people also suggest other topics. As I mentioned earlier, mental health, poverty, the environment and climate change are among the topics that are discussed.

In addition to youth programs, this initiative allows the Prime Minister to be aware of young people's concerns.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I understand.

The Results and Delivery Unit is a new mechanism, correct?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: This unit was set up about a year ago.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: There has never been anything like it since 1867. I think that Canada's performance compares well to that of other countries. All of the governments, both Liberal and Conservative—never New Democrat, unfortunately—managed to keep most of their promises.

According to the Polimètre program, a tool created by the former director of the Department of Political Science at Laval University—whose name I have unfortunately forgotten—governments meet 90% of their promises, even if the public does not always agree with that assessment.

Could you explain why it would be useful to have a Results and Delivery Unit, which is quite costly, although Canada is an extremely rich and well-functioning country? All of the governments managed to implement their programs. Why do we need that?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: You are correct. We already have performance assessment policies that are managed by Treasury Board. The government really wanted to focus on the performance of programs, and results in the short and medium term, especially as concerns data and measurements.

In this regard, this unit completes what was already being done concerning the presentation of reports to Parliament or to Canadians. This will exert some pressure to develop the way in which we measure programs and present their results.

Among other positive elements, this will facilitate work within government, harmonize the work done by departments regarding common indicators, and encourage the collection of accurate data so that we can measure results in a much more concrete way. This work will be ongoing, and will demonstrate that the data is necessary to improve communication and the way results are measured.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Okay. I have one last very quick question, because I think my colleague also has some questions.

I would like Ms. Ramcharan to clarify something.

It says that you are the assistant deputy minister, Ms. Ramcharan, but you report to Clerk of the Privy Council, who reports to the prime minister. Why is your title deputy minister? Is there a minister of the Privy Council?

[*English*]

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: I'm an assistant deputy minister. The Prime Minister is the minister responsible for this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I understand. That's fine.

Over to you, Mr. McCauley.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir): You have a whole 30 seconds.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Well, for 30 seconds I'd like to ask... Thank you. We will go on.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Erin Weir): Thank you. We'll now go to Mr. Drouin for five minutes.

I'll again turn the chair over to Madam Ratansi.

[*Translation*]

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

I'm sorry, Mr. Clarke. You and I are in our early thirties, but we could still not be part of the prime minister's youth council.

•(0950)

[*English*]

I have questions for you, Ms. Vreeswijk, with regard to the Canada School of Public Service. I'm just wondering if you're thinking about the challenges of the future.

I was reading a report by the World Economic Forum, which says that 65% of children in primary school will work in jobs that don't even exist today, which leads me to this. As you're planning ahead, how does what future jobs are going to look like impact your organization? Do you constantly think about that and how to make sure people access your services? You've mentioned that 169,000 access the platform, but have they gone through some sort of course or do they just access the platform?

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: In terms of the first question, the public service, just like any other organization, has to be aware of what the trends are and the advances and the pace of change that is happening from a technological, communications, etc., perspective.

We do hold the 300 learning events, which I referred to at the beginning. That is a very dynamic platform that allows us to bring in a whole range of different speakers. Some are from within the public service, but many are from outside to ensure that we are as aware as other organizations are of the trends and the changes that are affecting the labour market and the country as a whole, and that have global effects as well.

We take that role very seriously to ensure that the public service continues to grow and develop. That's very important for all workforces, whether you're in the private or public sector. That is part of what we do.

I was asked the question of how the online platform will change. Part of that is continuously ensuring that the programs we provide reflect the changes that are happening in society overall.

Mr. Francis Drouin: That's great.

Another report I was reading says that over the past 30 years we've spent a lot of time developing talent management at the senior level, but not so much within the lower levels. Are you spending more time with some of the lower levels of the public service to ensure that they have access to leadership courses as well?

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: Yes. The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer administers the performance management and talent management programs. It does run through all the executive ranks.

As the service provider on learning, we have training for people throughout their careers. When people come into the public service, there is public service orientation. As they advance, we will provide training for them. When they enter ranks of the supervisors, the managers, or the executives, at each stage we will provide the training so that they have a clear understanding of what their obligations, their roles, and the expectations are at the more senior level. It is a continuous process.

Speaking as a deputy—and I've had experience in a number of other departments—I can tell you that we meet a couple of times a year and do performance management and talent management through our organizations as a whole.

Mr. Francis Drouin: That's great.

In your opening remarks, you mentioned that our programming helps support public servants in delivering on government priorities. One of the items is diversity and inclusion. Can you talk to me about that? What is it that you do with regard to diversity and inclusion?

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: We've integrated the government priorities into our learning program, so diversity and inclusion as a key government priority is reflected there. We've integrated it into our management and executive development programs to ensure people are aware of what the obligations are.

More than that, more than seeing this from an employment equity perspective, we have events where we have discussions in terms of what diversity means, how you go from understanding the reality of diversity, and how you ensure that we create an inclusive public service. Whether it's the values and ethics training, respectful workplaces.... In fact, I can tell you that respectful workplaces is one

of the most important parts of our curriculum, and public service has responded incredibly well. They take that course.

I'll turn to Jean-François. He can perhaps you tell the number, but it is there.

● (0955)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): I'm sorry, but we don't have much time, and anyway, the time is up. Thank you so much.

We now go to three minutes, and because I don't want to be a jack-in-the-box again, you'll sit there, Mr. Weir, and I'll continue.

Three minutes, Mr. Weir.

Mr. Erin Weir: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Friday, your departmental plan mentions a continued use of LEAN to review processes. That approach has been quite controversial in the Saskatchewan public service, partly because it involved flying in Japanese senseis—which I assume your office is not doing—but more fundamentally because it's a process that was developed by Toyota for manufacturing and was often deemed inappropriate for human service. It involved cutting corners and reducing the time that officials were spending with people who needed help.

I wonder if you could speak to how LEAN is being used in your office.

Mr. Joe Friday: Thank you very much.

First of all, we're using some local expertise, so we're not flying in experts to provide us with the information and guidance we're looking for.

I guess I could describe it as a facilitated review by members of my office about their own processes and the procedures and identifying barriers to efficiency and effectiveness. That goes to everything from timeliness to the nature of the work we do. There have been some very interesting opportunities for us to look at our overall goals and the shared understanding of the mandate that has been given to us under the act.

For example, when we were looking at our internal case analysis, one of the outcomes of the LEAN project was a group meeting among case analysts with their manager as soon as a reprisal file comes in, so that there could be a discussion of issues such as consistency, for example, and fairness and effectiveness. The LEAN project has not resulted in us cutting corners per se. Given that I have flexibility or room in my budget, what we are doing is hiring more people to support core operations, rather than looking to cut people from the investigative and intake process.

Mr. Erin Weir: Certainly timeliness is very important, but I'm wondering, in implementing LEAN, how you balance the focus on saving time and doing things as efficiently as possible versus taking the time to really speak to whistle-blowers. They have often been through very harrowing experiences and are really in need of help and support.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you, Mr. Weir, but the answer may be given to somebody else, if Mr. Peterson is interested.

We've come to the end of the first round. Now we go to the second round, beginning with Mr. Peterson.

You have seven minutes.

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

Thank you, everyone, for being here today with your insights.

Mr. Friday, you explicitly mentioned in your comments, and I think Madam Maheu might have mentioned this fact a bit in one of her answers, the problem with recruitment and retention. I'm not sure if they have the same problem at the school of public policy when it comes to staffing.

We don't see any requests for new resources to address that problem. Is it a problem that can be addressed by investing funds, is it a cultural issue, or are there other causes for this problem?

Mr. Joe Friday: I can speak to our own specific experience. One of the issues we face as a micro-organization of 30 people is that there are very few opportunities for advancement. We have tried to provide as much diversification of experience as possible. For example, we created hybrid positions this year. Someone can work on a policy initiative and at the same time help with an overflow of case analyses. Having said that, there are only so many places a person can move internally, in our case.

Another factor that's facing us specifically is the fact that we're looking for a specific skill set that I think there's generally a shortage of within the federal public sector, and that is for skilled administrative investigation. I know that a number of organizations are battling over the same limited resources. For example, a few years ago we created what I think was the first standing list of pre-qualified administrative investigators that we could dip into.

Specific to PSIC, with the kind of work we do and dealing with the issues we deal with, to follow up on Mr. Weir's question, it can be very tiring and very difficult. We do provide training in dealing with difficult people. We have a mental health strategy in place. But there is, to a certain extent in the work we do in our office, sort of a natural time limitation.

I'll turn it over to my other colleagues at the table, if they have something they'd like to add.

• (1000)

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I think every organization faces different challenges in terms of retention and recruitment, but those are priorities of the clerk in general for the public service. If we take the micro-organization and then the general public service, in part because of expected retirements and the need to ensure knowledge transfer to the next generation of recruitment, but also in terms of having a skill set that's needed for the next 50 years and that may be different from what we needed 50 years ago, earlier when we spoke about PCO staffing we were really referring to increased capacity and increased new functions that required us to do staffing. Those processes take time in terms of finding the right talent that we need for jobs.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Thank you for that.

Mr. Friday, I want to talk about a particular line item you have in your estimates. It deals with the contributions for access to legal advice under the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act. I see that your estimate is a nice round number. What analysis do you do to come up with that number? Do you base it on the number of cases that you predict and then divide it by the \$1,500 maximum amount? What process do you use to get to that number?

Mr. Joe Friday: For the record, it's \$1,500 up to \$3,000, so \$3,000 would be the maximum amount.

The act requires that we create a grants and contributions program to provide access to legal advice. My understanding is that it was an estimate based on general caseloads when we first created the grants and contributions program a few years ago. It varies from year to year. I think this year it will be closer to the \$30,000 than the \$20,000 that we actually spent in 2016-17.

We identified the \$40,000 as being what we thought was a safe and reasonable prediction. My understanding is that we can change that number in the future if we have to, but the grants and contributions program as "registered", if I can use that word, with Treasury Board is currently set for \$40,000. We have not been over \$40,000 yet.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Okay. I raised that just because we heard from witnesses on that study that the amount of legal support available is an obstacle sometimes for people participating in the—

Mr. Joe Friday: Yes, and one of my recommendations that I tabled before this committee is to actually increase that amount.

I can also tell you that in every notice of investigation we remind or advise people of the availability of access to legal advice, and also that funding is available not only to whistle-blowers but to witnesses and people alleged to have committed wrongdoing or reprisal.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Thank you for that.

How much time do I have, Madam Chair? Two minutes? Okay.

I have a couple of questions for you, Ms. Vreeswijk. I note that you've achieved some savings over the past fiscal year, and obviously some significant savings, and we thank you for that. Do you see that trend continuing? Or is this where we're going to be for the next little while?

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: The savings actually reflect year-over-year reductions that have gone on for about five years. The amount that the school has accessed in terms of funding has been on a downward trend for a number of years.

Where we're focused is on ensuring that while the funding is coming down our learning platform is as efficient as possible. That's why we've moved to a technology-enabled learning. Even for the learning events we hold, we webcast across the country so that public servants in all regions can access them. What we've done is on a per public servant basis; our numbers have come down because our platform is so much more efficient than it was.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): You have 30 seconds.

• (1005)

Mr. Kyle Peterson: I'll leave you with a comment.

I understand that Mr. Friday has not an issue but an ongoing concern with training his employees or public servants about whistle-blower legislation. You say that you don't explicitly train for that. Is that something you would consider doing?

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: I was thinking about this afterwards. Other parliamentary agents have come to us to support training in their area, and we do support the Information Commissioner in training ATIP officers. We're quite happy to support Mr. Friday in terms of the execution of his mandate.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Mr. McCauley, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Ms. Ramcharan, there's \$3.3 million mentioned for operational support, with \$400,000 mentioned for the e-cabinet initiative. Can you give me a breakdown? In estimates last year, we heard ridiculous numbers to support the Prime Minister's web presence. I think it was \$600,000 for a website, with 24-hour staff to maintain his website just in case he needs a selfie post at one in the morning.

Is this additional money? Is this continual money? What is it exactly?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Thank you, Chair.

The \$3.3 million comprises a couple of things. It's money that we would have talked about in our estimates last year. It's not new money that we're getting. It's money that's continuing from the increase that we would have received last year.

It relates to three main areas. One is our public opinion research, at roughly \$2 million. That's not for people. That's just to go out... What we've found with doing the public opinion research is that it gets us much more effective in terms of the ongoing stuff, and we make it available—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: On this research, who's deciding what topics to go out and poll on?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: We look at topics that would be—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: No. Who is deciding that?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Who...? It would be related to our assistant secretary for communications, who would work in conjunction within the department, as well as within our Prime Minister's Office.

We also have \$1.2 million, which was specifically resources put in to help support the people to do the posting on the web, to do the 24-hour support, and to improve the overall web presence.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Let's just stick with that \$1.2 million. You're saying that it's support for the existing website. How many people does that involve?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: How many people does it involve? Just give me one second.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Also, what exactly are they working on besides the PM's website?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: In budget 2016, which is included in our mains, we received an additional eight people in terms of supporting the Prime Minister. Their functions—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm sorry. Supporting his website...?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Supporting the overall communications functions, to help support—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. What would that be doing, then, please?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Those would include publishing requirements for the website. The volume of publishing has increased significantly with regard to that. It would include the complete overhaul of the website, as well as making—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Which we did last year, though, right?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Yes, but the whole thing is that we still have to continue to make sure... Technology, once it's put in, doesn't stay static. You have to make sure it's patched, maintained, and upgraded. There would be a component that would always be involved in making sure of the robustness of the website. It will be in terms of making sure that we do our posts on social media. We use Facebook and Twitter, those types of accounts, in terms of publishing new things.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: So it's eight people and \$1.2 million for his Twitter, the PM's site, and his Facebook site?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: It wouldn't be just for the Prime Minister. It would be for the overall communications functions we have within PCO. It supports a number of things as well. It will include the clerk as well.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: We have \$1.2 million for that. Where's the rest of the money, please?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: As I said, we have \$2 million for public opinion research, \$1.2 million for digital by default, which is the new approach we're taking for communications, and roughly about \$100,000 to support—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thank you.

On the \$4.5 million for space modernization, we saw that last year as well, and I think previously. Is this a new \$4.5 million every year? What exactly are we doing for space modernization?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: We had a significant increase in resources in the Privy Council Office due to budget 2016, so we had to look at our existing space, which had not been modernized for a number of years. The government standard right now is moving to a Web 2.0 type of standard.

It was resources to start and to continue to help us look at our floor plan, and to update it to make it more modern and more mobile for the individuals who work at the Privy Council.

• (1010)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: We saw this money spent last year as well. This will be \$4.5 million of new money. Will we see this continue every year, with more and more money put in for modernization?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: I think that for the next few years we have that. We have about \$400,000 ongoing, but we will have roughly \$4 million per year in terms of upgrading our workspaces.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Wow.

I want to get back very quickly to the Senate issue. Again, it's a million dollars, and I assume that we spent the same amount last year.

Very quickly on the website issue, I recall this as quite a gas last year when we found out that it was \$400,000. I questioned that. I got quite and enthusiastic response that it was a great amount of savings because they were using existing templates. I was kind of stunned: \$400,000 was a great savings. You say we're going to spend more on that website this year?

Look at the Senate website. It's your typical bland government website with a bunch of other links. We're not talking about some massive incredible display. It's just a simple website. We spent \$400,000, and you're saying we are spending more money on it again this year?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: IT is one of those things that can be somewhat misleading. When we talk about a website, the people who apply to the website put in their personal information. We have to make sure that information is secure. What we would have done in order to stand up the website last year was to put forward a pilot project in terms of looking at how we make sure the website's there. Yes, it's not a complicated website, but what's behind that website is somewhat more complicated.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: So it would be no different from any of our other government websites that are receiving resumés, taxes, or any information? It's nothing special.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: But we will use the existing platform. What we need to do is work with our partners to do this. We don't say that it's \$400,000. We go out and get cost estimates to do it. What we're going to be doing this upcoming year on that website is just making sure that it is robust, because it was a pilot website that we launched last year. We wanted to do the initial design, make sure it worked, and then make sure that it will continue to be updated.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How is it a pilot website? It was just a simple website. It only went up about six or seven months ago to accept applications. It had a couple of other links.

If you look at the website—and I encourage you to do so—you see that it's a very simple website. How is it that we spent \$400,000 on making it more for robustness when it's...? If you go through all the government websites, there are a lot more things there that require robustness. This was just a very simple website. Again, maybe I'm missing something, but it seems very bizarre that we would spend almost half a million dollars to spruce up an existing template. It's not like we created it from scratch. All the behind-the-scenes stuff and the protection were already there.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Unfortunately, you have used up your time in asking the question.

We'll now go to Mr. Weir for seven minutes.

Mr. Erin Weir: I would like to continue that line of questioning. I want to clarify whether the money spent on this website is part of the million dollars for the new Senate appointment process.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Last year, we would have received \$1.4 million, and part of that \$1.4 million would have been the initial pilot project for the Senate website. What we need to do is put it on a more robust platform, so we will be using resources out of the \$1 million that we're receiving in our mains to do that.

If I could just respond, Madam Chair, to the question, it seems simple, but we have to really ensure the security and the privacy of the information. We take that as very significant. We need to make sure that information is housed in the appropriate place and managed in the appropriate way.

That's what causes a little bit more complexity on the costing. It's not just the front face; it's what's behind the information.

Mr. Erin Weir: Should we expect that this Senate appointment process is going to continue to cost \$1 million per year going forward? Or once this website is sorted out and once the vacancies are filled, should we expect it to taper off?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: The million dollars isn't just for the website. It's supporting the advisory committees. Those advisory committees are set up in the provinces where there are vacancies. That will be something that's ongoing. We do have resources that are into the future, but once the website is up and running, then it will just be the maintenance of the website that would be needed, not the increasing of the functionality or improving the security.

Mr. Erin Weir: Should we anticipate about a million dollars every year going forward for the Senate process?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Erin Weir: Even when the vacancies are filled, that infrastructure and those committees will continue to be maintained?

• (1015)

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Yes.

Mr. Erin Weir: Would there be any possibility of using that personnel to do other work within PCO if there weren't Senate vacancies?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Absolutely. Whenever there is downtime for any position, people are reassigned or provide support to other areas that might be seeing an increase in workload. It's not like they just wait until they have the Senate appointment and are working on it. There are a lot of other activities that are under way within the department.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay.

Mr. McCauley also asked about a few expenditures of PCO in support of the Prime Minister. I would like to ask if you can indicate to us the overall budget of the PMO itself for 2017-18 and what it's expected to be for the next few years.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: The budget of the Prime Minister is similar to what has.... I'm sorry. I'm just going to find my page. It has been the same amount for the past number of years. It's \$10.5 million per year. It's expected to be the same.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay. That's helpful.

Can you also tell us how much is being spent on this new results and delivery unit within PCO?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: That's \$3.3 million.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay. Thanks very much.

I would like to come back to Mr. Friday on the question I asked before about balancing the focus in LEAN: saving time versus really spending the time to provide help and support to whistle-blowers, who have often had extremely difficult experiences.

Mr. Joe Friday: One of the challenges—or perhaps guiding principles—that we've identified is balancing the rigour and completeness of our work with timeliness. We're quite conscious of the fact that we are doing more than simply processing files that do not have human faces or human consequences.

That does form, I can assure you, part of our discussions around LEAN, and it informs our continuing discussion concerning our service standards. Are they realistic? Are they achievable when we are looking at goals that are more than simply closing cases? Yet that still is an important part of our work....

Timeliness also has, in our world, an emotional component as well. Many people who come to us have been through a number of other processes or have been waiting to come to us for a long period of time. When they muster up the courage—if I can use that expression—to come to us, they're hoping, in many cases, for a timely result. I can assure you that we are, on an ongoing and constant basis, aware of the need to balance those potentially competing interests.

Mr. Erin Weir: Do you have any kind of estimate or a sense of how much your office is spending on the LEAN process itself?

Mr. Joe Friday: I do not have that information.

I'm not sure if my colleague has it.

Mr. Éric Trottier (Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada): For the LEAN processes, we hire an external company to do the process with us. I believe it's about \$25,000 that we pay a consultant to work with us.

Mr. Erin Weir: Okay, understood. Thank you.

To go to the Canada School of Public Service, your departmental plan indicates that you intend to conduct a horizontal audit of the cost of information for decision-making in departments. I'm wondering if that's something that you would also be doing for any federal agencies or crown corporations.

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: I'm sorry. We are trying to locate that within our departmental plan.

Mr. Erin Weir: I believe it's in the supplementary information tables, but if it's not something that you have at your fingertips, it's certainly something that you could—

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: We'd be happy to follow up on the question.

Mr. Erin Weir: Yes, that would be absolutely fair enough.

I'll come back to PCO, then, about the results and delivery unit. How will its performance be measured?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: There are a number of indicators that would show that results and delivery have made an impact. As I mentioned earlier, all departments have been asked to have a chief results and delivery officer.

How we're proceeding in developing what are called “charters”, which allow us to assess progress, will give an indication that the approach is taking hold throughout the government. Also, the government is reporting—or will next year—through new streamlined performance reports, and that will also inform those reports. There are a number of places where the government, in its communication and in its reporting, will have more robust data and more consistent approaches to reporting to Canadians.

• (1020)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you.

Mr. Whalen, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Madam Maheu, how long have you been involved in the estimates process within PCO? How many years have you been in a role that would allow you to participate?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Actually, the building of the estimates would be done by my colleagues, the chief financial officers, so I'm not personally involved in my responsibilities with developing the estimates.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Okay. How long have you been involved in overseeing plans and priorities with the PCO?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: My role in PCO is one that looks at plans and priorities generally for government. In that role, when PCO puts together their report, I provide a sense of the overview of priorities for government and how PCO is contributing to that.

Mr. Nick Whalen: For how many years have you been doing that?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Since September.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Okay. Is there someone here with us today who has a little more institutional knowledge of the process?

Ms. Ramcharan, have you been doing this longer? I just want to get a sense of the communication function within government, certainly out of the Prime Minister's Office, but also generally. It seems that there has been a transition to moving some of the function within the Prime Minister's Office, but under the previous government they seemed to do a lot of public communications and outreach through the action plan. I'm wondering if you had any sense of how that was financed and through what department.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: I've been a chief financial officer in PCO since June of last year, but I was a chief financial officer for Natural Resources Canada prior to that, for three years.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Okay.

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: I've had some experience with regard to the estimates process. What I can say in terms of the process is that the process is very similar. You start out with a budget, and the budget announces what a department is going to do. How you actually access those resources is done through your supplementary estimates, be that (A), (B), or (C), which then comprises, in terms of going forward, into your main estimates.... If I understand your—

Mr. Nick Whalen: I'm sort of trying to get a sense of... We have almost \$3.7 million for communications and e-cabinet, and we have a million dollars, some of which is going towards digital infrastructure in the background to assist PCO in selecting senators. Not all of it might be used. I'm trying to get a sense of where the work is actually being done. Is this being outsourced, then—the technology portion—to Shared Services Canada? How might this money have been spent? These functions would need to have been done by the previous government. How would they have engaged in these functions and this community outreach?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Some of these functions are actually new functions. If we go to digital by default, we would not have been doing that kind of function prior to 2016. We would have gotten additional resources to do it. In order to spend those resources, it would have been a combination of a couple of things. For certain, Shared Services Canada would be part of our partners working with us in terms of developing the technology, as they have a lot of the responsibility right now for infrastructure within the Government of Canada. We would also have our existing people who will come in. Then we would also have professional services contracts to augment some of the additional capacity that we might need. It's spent in a number of different areas.

Mr. Nick Whalen: You said a bit about how maybe the full \$1 million might not be used on the Senate. It's sort of earmarked for employees for that purpose, and they might be repositioned. Will we see in the public accounts later this year how much the website actually cost at the end of the day, even if \$400,000 was earmarked towards it? Or would that money have been transferred to Shared Services Canada to develop the website, and then, if they had any savings associated with it, they would be the ones who would get it? How is that going to play out in the estimates?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: On the public accounts, what you'll see is how we've spent our money in different categories. You will also see, in our departmental results plan, how we've used our money very broadly in those various categories. You won't see something specific that says "\$400,000 on a website". We wouldn't be that specific in our departmental plan, but in our public accounts, as we post every single quarter, you see where we spent money in contracts. If we transfer money to Shared Services Canada, they would then have an accounting of how they've spent the money in terms of doing that.

• (1025)

Mr. Nick Whalen: Okay. To go a little further on Mr. McCauley's question, then, with respect to the website design and money allocated for these processes, will we see transfers to Shared Services Canada to assist in that development or is that all done in-house?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: I can't be very specific with regard to that, but it's likely that we would have our colleagues at Shared Services Canada involved in doing that. We would also have contracts related to professional services in addition to that, as well as our internal folks working on those websites.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Okay.

Under the previous government, then, in terms of public outreach, there were items that were related to the economic action plan. Would they have been sourced and communicated through

individual departments such as Natural Resources, where you were, or would they have been paid for out of PCO or PMO?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: With regard to the previous government, I'm not absolutely certain in terms of what the process would have been. For example, if I would have been responsible for the financial resources for the development of a website under the previous government, we would have done it very similarly. We would have had an opportunity to work with our colleagues in Shared Services Canada and made sure we got their expertise.

Mr. Nick Whalen: I have so many questions related to this, but there's something that Ms. Ratansi and I have been discussing. It relates to the goal of our government in the promotion, training, and advancement of indigenous people with the civil service.

Ms. Vreeswijk, I'm hoping you can assist in telling us how your current plan and the estimates process will support the advancement and training of indigenous people within the civil service, and whether or not there's any role to be played by your organization in also providing training services to territorial governments and bands should they request them.

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: I can answer the second question first, if I may.

In our mandate, we have governing legislation. Our focus is primarily within the federal public service.

In terms of the priority on indigenous awareness and relations, Truth and Reconciliation recommendation number 57, which was to raise awareness, understanding, and cultural sensitivity of public servants towards indigenous people, and also an understanding of obligations, is one of our top priorities in the coming year. We are consulting heavily right now with indigenous organizations to ensure that they can assist us in the design of the training that we will be providing to public servants. We feel that's an important part of that development.

While we're doing those consultations, we're holding a number of different events and inviting indigenous leaders to speak to the public service, so that over time there is a greater awareness and understanding of indigenous issues. We're also working with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to develop training in and around the obligations of the public service with respect to treaty obligations, etc.

It is a whole curriculum and it will be embedded in all parts of the common service curriculum: during orientation, during training for functional groups, and during leadership training. As a case in point, this year, the Treasury Board Secretariat has been leading an initiative to recruit indigenous interns. Our role is to support those indigenous interns over the course of the summer with orientation and support overall. We will hold a number of different events to ensure, first of all, that indigenous interns feel welcome, but also that they understand the opportunities presented to them by the public service.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you.

We go now to the five-minute round.

Mr. Clarke, you have five minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Ms. Maheu or Ms. Ramcharan, very quickly, is there a budget or a budget limit for the prime minister's travel, regardless of who it is?

[English]

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: No.

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I am somewhat familiar with the Langevin Building, having done a work term at the PMO in 2013. I know how the space is divided up. The PMO occupies the first two floors, and the PCO is above it.

Can you tell us exactly how many employees the PCO has?

• (1030)

Ms. Chantal Maheu: There are just over 950.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Okay, very good.

Is the PMO a separate entity from yours or not, specifically with regard to budgets?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: The PMO, like any minister's office, has a separate budget. The question about our financial contribution was asked earlier: the PMO receives \$10.5 million from our budget.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Can you tell us exactly how many employees the PMO has?

[English]

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: Unfortunately, we don't track the numbers of staff at the PMO.

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I think I read somewhere that the PMO was created in the 1970s.

When was the PCO created?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: It was 150 years ago.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Okay, very good.

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Yes, this is our anniversary.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: In the past, did the PCO's responsibilities include the use of the prime minister's time, preparing his international trips, and so forth?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: The PCO provides support to the prime minister with respect to his travel.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: I am simply trying to understand how things worked before the PMO was created. Was the PCO alone responsible for the affairs of the prime minister?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: I cannot comment on how things worked 20 years ago.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Okay, I would like to get that background information, if you could send it to us.

Here is my last question. Your total annual budget is approximately \$145 million. Of that total, approximately \$10.5 million goes to the PMO. Is that correct?

Ms. Chantal Maheu: Yes.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Okay. Thank you very much.

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Ms. Ramcharan, I want to get back to the \$2 million for public opinion polling. Again, give me a breakdown of who is deciding that polling. You said the PMO. Is that direction from the PMO to...?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: I didn't say that. I would say that the lead person who is responsible for our public opinion polling research is our assistant secretary for communications. She is responsible for the overall budget of \$2 million and, based on consultations and discussions within PCO, as well as within the PMO, will decide what kind of public opinion research would be undertaken.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. This is different from any other polling that we do throughout the government for other departments, then?

Ms. Kami Ramcharan: This is specifically within PCO.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. Great.

Mr. Friday, I have a very quick question, because I don't think I have much time.

On page 18 of your department plan, you note that there are "reduced project spending" and "delays in projects". What projects are those? Also, does the reduction or the delay affect your ability to investigate wrongdoing and to support whistle-blowers?

Mr. Joe Friday: Those project delays are not interfering with our ability to do our operational work.

I'll turn to my colleague to supply details.

Mr. Éric Trottier: An example of a project is the LEAN project. We started with phase one last year.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. Great.

Mr. Friday, again very quickly, on page 1 of your plan, you talk about "reaching out to public servants" about whistle-blowing—

Mr. Joe Friday: Yes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: —but then section 4 of the act says that the president of the Treasury Board is responsible for that duty. We heard in a previous committee from the head of HR who made it very clear that she really doesn't do that. Are you doing this because Treasury Board is not doing their part? It's an important question—

Mr. Joe Friday: Yes—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: —because we've heard so many are not—

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Mr. McCauley, your time is up, but I'll allow Mr. Friday to answer the question.

Mr. Joe Friday: I'll preface my remarks by saying that I don't think there is such a thing as too much outreach, engagement, and sensitization to the work we do. Section 4 of the act does identify a specific responsibility for the Treasury Board to promote the act.

I have a staff of 30 people. Three of those people are devoted to communications and parliamentary relations. As the external option for whistle-blowing, I can speak certainly with authority about my own views and my own work. In some cases, Treasury Board and I disagree on certain things, such as anonymous complaints, which we spoke about at an earlier committee hearing. There's an entire internal regime that I can speak about, but I can't speak on behalf of Treasury Board, which is responsible for that internal regime. Certainly, in my position, I would like to have all the support that is humanly possible from Treasury Board, or any other component of the federal government, to help me in my work.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Thank you.

•(1035)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm very glad you're doing it. Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): Monsieur Drouin, these are going to be the last five minutes.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Thank you, Madam Vice-Chair.

Before I go on to my line of questioning, I get the sense that the committee is asking questions about the Prime Minister's website. I just have to recall for the committee and remind them of where we were in terms of the prime minister's communications before 2015. I know that not all of us were here, but I was on O'Connor and Queen Street, close by in Ottawa, and I was paying attention. I remember a reality TV show. It was the prime minister's *24 Seven*.

I know that Mr. McCauley is concerned about the costs, but to produce those videos we had four staffers. Do you know how many people we reached with those videos? We reached 21 people.

An hon. member: It was a bargain.

Mr. Francis Drouin: It was also used to communicate very important government policy. Let me quote what those videos showed on one occasion: "On Thursday, the Prime Minister was in Calgary, where he celebrated Christmas with his family."

I understand the concerns, but on the Prime Minister's current website, I think they're unfounded.

Madam Vreeswijk, I am concerned about millennials and what your organization is doing to attract millennials. We heard a few meetings back that the average age for new public servants is 37, which leads me to believe that we're going to have a gap at some point in the public service. What are you doing to attract and train millennials within the public service?

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: Last year and this year, we undertook a large student orientation process, which extends to all regions of the country, because 60% of public servants are outside of Ottawa. We do the student orientation. Part of that is explaining what we do, but it's also about making sure students understand the opportunities within the public service, so we profile the range of different employment opportunities.

As my colleague indicated earlier, I can tell you that we take recruitment very seriously. It is a priority of the clerk. As well, every deputy, as part of their responsibilities for HR, is focused on recruitment and also, this year, on student orientation.

We also support managers in understanding how millennials are different from others. They are the generation who have spent their entire life with technology and the Internet. We ensure that they know how to attract and engage with millennials.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Great. Thanks.

I have another question. You also mentioned that you help support government priorities. One of them is mental health. Can you talk to me about that? I do have a lot of public servants in my riding, and mental health questions are raised once in a while. I'm just wondering what's changed over the past six months or year or so with regard to mental health.

Ms. Wilma Vreeswijk: Last year, in his annual report to the Prime Minister, the clerk underscored his commitment to having public servants and deputies make mental health a priority. We at the school support that.

We work with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety to develop and provide training and support to public servants. We also work with the Mental Health Commission of Canada in ensuring that it has an opportunity to support departments as they develop their own mental health and wellness strategies.

The school provides a place for dialogue in and around mental health issues. We focus on reducing stigma. Our events are opportunities for public servants to have a dialogue in and around mental health, as well as creating respectful workplaces, as I indicated earlier.

•(1040)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): You have 30 seconds.

Mr. Francis Drouin: I have finished. Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi): I'd thank the witnesses for being here. If you have any further information—sometimes we cut you off because we have to maintain time—do send it on a timely basis to the clerk, as well as responses to any of the questions you have been asked that you have not been able to provide the answers for.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.

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