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—
Co-Chairs

**Mr. Peter Goldring
The Honourable Sharon Carstairs**

Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament

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• (1200)

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC)): Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to the 13th meeting of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament.

From the amended agenda that was circulated, you're aware that today we're looking at the supplementary estimates (B) 2009-2010, vote 10b, under Parliament.

I'm sure everybody on the committee will agree with me that this is a good-news story. It is very much in keeping with the unanimous consent of the previous report from the committee, where we were calling for the allocation of the funding for it. I'm pleased to see that this allocation has come forward.

I understand there will be a number of people here who will be asking some questions on this.

First of all, appearing here today from the Library of Parliament, we have Mr. William Young, Parliamentary Librarian, and Lise Chartrand, director of finance and material management.

Good afternoon. Welcome to the committee.

Mr. Young, I understand you have comments to continue with.

[Translation]

Mr. William R. Young (Parliamentary Librarian, Library of Parliament): Thank you Mr. Chair.

Honourable members of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you here today. With me today is Ms. Lise Chartrand, Finance Director for the library.

[English]

My role as Parliamentary Librarian, in accordance with statutory provisions set down in the Parliament of Canada Act, is to ensure the stewardship and development of all library services to Parliament and parliamentarians, including the research and analysis we provide through our PBO functions. I am on record as a supporter of the PBO functions. Getting them established was one of the three strategic priorities I set out in the library's plans and priorities report. And I am on record as saying that the library could make use of funds beyond our current \$1.8 million to support the development and delivery of these functions in line with parliamentary demand and service level expectations.

From the day of Mr. Page's arrival, the library has put its corporate services at his disposal and our staff has worked very hard to secure

and support his resource complement, while ensuring that we do not pre-empt any decision on matters before this committee. This year, Mr. Page has been operating on a budget beyond the current funding available. In its June 2009 report on PBO operations, this committee has recommended that additional funding would be appropriate but conditional upon compliance with its other recommendations.

Accordingly, I am taking this opportunity, the first since this committee presented its report, to request \$484,000 in supplementary estimates. This amount would bring our total 2009 and 2010 budget for PBO functions to \$2.3 million and would sustain operations across the organization at their current levels through to the end of this fiscal year. The amount is based on the annualized figures specified in the committee's report, adjusted to reflect forecasted requirements for the remainder of the current fiscal year.

As members know, supplementary estimates provide funding for the current year only. It is the main estimates process where ongoing funding issues are dealt with for items such as permanent staffing. The 2010-11 main estimates exercise is already under way, and our submission is due to the Treasury Board by December 7, 2009. The library is prepared to include an item to increase ongoing funding for our PBO functions in the 2010-11 main estimates and to bring that recommendation forward. But I would like to ensure that we provide the committee with the appropriate opportunity to discuss and advise on this matter.

Your June report included recommendation ten: that this committee develop a procedure that would allow it to take a more active role in examining and advising on the library's funding proposals rather than simply studying estimates after they have been tabled in the House and referred to you. The timing is tight, since submissions for the main estimates are due to Treasury Board, as I mentioned, on December 7. I would suggest that an in camera meeting to discuss our budget proposal be scheduled at the earliest opportunity in order to allow the speakers sufficient time thereafter to digest your advice and to approve the library's submission.

• (1205)

[Translation]

I thank you for your attention. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you, Mr. Young.

If we've concluded with the comments, we'll open it up to the floor for discussion.

The first person on the list is Senator Stratton.

Senator Terry Stratton (Manitoba): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, sir, for coming, and thank you, madam.

I'll get right down to it. The \$484,000 for the PBO would take him through to the end of this fiscal year. Could you describe to us what that \$484,000 is made up of? In other words, will this staffing level take him to the end of the fiscal year, without any increases in expenditures to be considered for the next fiscal year? Is that correct?

Mr. William R. Young: That is exactly the case, Senator.

Senator Terry Stratton: It would appear, then, that the Parliamentary Budget Officer will be able to operate as he is currently staffed to carry out his mandate to the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. William R. Young: That's correct.

Senator Terry Stratton: Thank you.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Trost.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Looking through some notes here, I see that the Parliamentary Budget Office was starting to post travel and hospitality expenses, and also contracts over \$10,000. But *The Hill Times* has quoted Mr. Page as saying that he doesn't plan on posting last year's expenses. That's my understanding from the research notes I have.

I was hoping that, as the Parliamentary Librarian, you could undertake to provide the committee with a full listing of all the expenses of the Parliamentary Budget Office, going back to its inception. This could also be posted on the website. Would that be possible?

Mr. William R. Young: Yes.

Mr. Brad Trost: Thank you.

• (1210)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Mr. Malhi.

Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Thank you.

How much has the Parliamentary Budget Officer spent so far? What will be the total spending by the end of the current fiscal year?

Mr. William R. Young: For fiscal 2009-10, we have \$964,000 in salaries, \$164,000 for the employee benefit plan, and \$733,000 for the goods and services budget. This comes to \$1,861,000, plus the requested \$484,000, for a total for this year of \$2,345,000.

Hon. Gurbax Malhi: Will this total exceed the planned total budget? Also, where is that money coming from?

Mr. William R. Young: The \$1,861,000 was approved in my last main estimates. I'm now requesting the additional \$484,000. So the forecast would be for \$2,345,000.

Hon. Gurbax Malhi: Thank you.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Monsieur Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The question was asked as to whether the Parliamentary Budget Officer will be able to function as desired for the current fiscal year. The answer, as I understood it, was yes.

Mr. William R. Young: Yes, he will be able to continue functioning at the current level.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Does the Parliamentary Budget Officer concur? Internally, we had suggested that there be a plan put forward that would reflect some semblance of collegiality and would allow him to function within the current legislative framework as it is mandated by the Parliament of Canada. Is that the case?

Mr. William R. Young: We pro-rated the amount that the committee suggested in its report as the appropriate amount to cover the last few months of the fiscal year, from the time the supplementary estimates are tabled. So the amount is the amount that the Parliamentary Budget Officer had agreed to.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: If there were to be a need beyond that, would it come from the overall budget of the library?

Mr. William R. Young: It would have to, or it could come from, for example, transferring money from the goods and services budget to cover salaries.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: That's in the realm of possibility.

Mr. William R. Young: That is correct.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Okay.

You suggest that this group meet in camera in sufficient time so that the budget request for the fiscal year 2010-11 be submitted to Treasury Board by December 7.

Mr. William R. Young: That's correct.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: At that point, there would be an in camera presentation of the budget suggested for the next fiscal year.

Mr. William R. Young: Yes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: If it is appropriate, Mr. Chairman, I'd move that we do proceed in that fashion, with an in camera meeting next week to discuss the budget.

We're facing an interesting situation here, one that I think is constructive, in that we'd be involved in the budget submissions. Although the authority would still reside with the speakers, and that's as it should be, they would be seeking our advice to that effect. I think that is indeed what we were looking for.

So I would propose we move in that direction and convene such a meeting, and deal with the PBO's budget for the next fiscal year as well.

• (1215)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): At the same time as this; is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: No, next week.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Mr. Christopherson, on a point of order.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Chair, my only point of order is to request that the member be good enough to hold off the motion so we can continue talking about—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Absolutely, yes.

Mr. David Christopherson: Okay, good. If you were moving it, we'd have to move to that debate, and I'd like to stay here.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I will hold the motion until we're done.

Mr. David Christopherson: That's cool.

Thank you.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): You took the words right out of my mouth.

Thank you very much. We will reserve that motion for the end of this meeting.

Mr. Christopherson, you were next.

Mr. David Christopherson: How about that? Thank you.

Thank you very much for your presentation.

I have one question. Assuming this is approved and the money flows and knowing we're into a new world with the new procedures, the new main estimates, which we'll get into on the motion from Monsieur Bélanger, with all that understood, would I be correct in saying, then, that once we approve this we're good to go until the beginning of the next fiscal year, that there are no other major issues you're aware of right now that we need to be involved in to further facilitate the efficient operation of the PBO? Once we do this, we're good until we get into the next procedure, but this really does finalize our work to the end of the current fiscal, and our work after this meeting begins on the next fiscal year.

Is that correct, sir?

Mr. William R. Young: Yes.

Mr. David Christopherson: That's really good to hear.

Thank you.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you, Mr. Christopherson.

Senator Jaffer.

Senator Mobina S.B. Jaffer (British Columbia): Thank you very much.

I appreciate your presentation, and I read it.

The last time you appeared in front of us—correct me if I have the facts wrong—you said that you would be approving the senior people working for the PBO. Maybe those weren't the words you used, but that's the gist of it.

I understand that four people are still waiting for approval from you. Is that because you are waiting for the budget? I just want to understand why there's a holdup.

Mr. William R. Young: Well, as I think I explained, the supplementary estimates do not provide for permanent staffing at this point, and the money that has been requested for the PBO is continuing the status quo until this committee has a chance to examine the main estimates.

Senator Mobina S.B. Jaffer: Just so I understand, if the committee is able to some way find the moneys for you, you would be approving those four staff people?

Mr. William R. Young: We'll be looking at the HR plan again, yes, in light of the additional funding that's provided.

Senator Mobina S.B. Jaffer: I don't understand what that means.

Mr. William R. Young: We'll be looking at the human resource requirements in light of the additional funding that may be granted in the main estimates.

Senator Mobina S.B. Jaffer: I have understood that he has already been refusing certain requests because he doesn't have the staff, and I understand he needs these specific skilled people. Apparently there have been independent...the Hay resource people have said that these people have the skills he needs.

What other steps would you have to take to make sure?

Mr. William R. Young: My understanding is that the current staff are in place and that the additional funding will be used to provide additional staff as required. I haven't looked at the HR plan in light of the current circumstance. We'll look at that in light of the main estimates, once they come before this committee.

Senator Mobina S.B. Jaffer: Is it true that there are four people on secondment who are waiting for you to approve their hiring?

Mr. William R. Young: I think there are three. One has been given an offer of employment at the library, and then there are three secondments. Only one of those secondments expires during this fiscal year; the other two expire after the end of this fiscal year. The one that expires during this fiscal year will be indeterminate after the end of the secondment.

So there are no secondments expiring during this fiscal year; no employees at risk.

Senator Mobina S.B. Jaffer: Thank you.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you, Senator.

Go ahead, Monsieur Asselin.

● (1220)

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ): When the committee studied the Parliamentary Budget Officer's file, there was unanimous consent to grant him an additional amount of \$2.8 million.

I do not understand why, if this amount was given as recommended by the committee, there are unforeseen expenses at the end of the fiscal year, and why are you asking for almost a half million dollars more, or \$484,000? Did the parliamentary budget officer receive the \$2.8 million?

He did not. Why? This was in the recommendations.

[English]

Mr. William R. Young: We have pro-rated the requirements from now until the end of the fiscal year. In fact, we were trying to avoid a lapse of funds.

The current staffing has been covered off until the end of the fiscal year. We had this shortfall. We were confronted by a situation in which I was going to have to transfer funding from other areas or freeze staffing in other areas or delay staffing in other areas. This money actually covers the current requirements of the PBO.

As I think I mentioned, there are three opportunities in a year to supplement the current year's budget. The first was supplementary estimates (A), which were tabled and approved before your report was prepared. Supplementary estimates (B) actually represent the library's first opportunity to adjust our budget for this year and to secure additional funding.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Asselin: Since you have been the Parliamentary Librarian, have you regularly asked for additional funds?

It could be a strategy to table the estimates on December 7, knowing that during the fiscal year you could receive additional funds.

Could we also see your budget estimates for the year 2010-2011?

Is this the way the Parliamentary Library works, to table the estimates for the current year and think that it is not a big deal if there are not enough funds because, throughout the year, you can ask for more funds?

Ms. Lise Chartrand (Director, Finance and Material Management Division, Library of Parliament): No.

Normally, the procedure for supplementary estimates is the following. We ask for supplementary estimates only if there really are expenses that were not forecast at the beginning of the year. Normally, when collective agreements are signed during the fiscal year, there is a retroactive application. In that situation, we have to ask for supplementary estimates. Other than that, since I have been at the Library of Parliament, we have tried to manage our activities with the funds that we have.

Mr. Gérard Asselin: Okay. So does the amount of \$484,000 correspond to retroactive payments for collective agreements?

Ms. Lise Chartrand: No, the \$484,000 will allow the Parliamentary Budget Officer to sustain his current level of activity until the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Gérard Asselin: If we had given him the \$2.8 million...

Ms. Lise Chartrand: At the beginning of the year?

Mr. Gérard Asselin: Yes. If he had received this amount as planned, then we would not have had to...

Ms. Lise Chartrand: There would have not been a need for the \$484,000.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you, Mr. Asselin.

Senator Stratton.

Senator Terry Stratton: I want to follow up on an earlier question regarding the operations of the PBO itself and the problem that he states he has due to the lack of staffing. You're familiar with the report.

I want to refer to recommendation nine. I will read it, if you'll excuse my cataract eyes:

In order to justify future increases in the budget allocation of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, that the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons instruct the Parliamentary Budget Officer to establish a management system similar to the one already in place within the Library of Parliament for all requests from parliamentarians and committees.

Given this recommendation, I'd like to read to you a section of a letter, dated September 18, 2009, sent by the PBO to Mr. James Rajotte in his capacity as chair of the Standing Committee on Finance in the House of Commons. I quote:

I am writing with respect to a recent inquiry by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance regarding the cost of adopting legislative provisions contained in Bill C-288, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for new graduates working in designated regions). I specifically want to confirm the timelines and Terms of Reference for this project.

This is the interesting paragraph: While the committee issued its request in June 2009, it was not brought to my attention until last week.

A reliable cost estimate of the proposed legislation would require several months to prepare and could only be ready by early December 2009. I hope this timeline would be consistent with the committee's needs.

So the question has to be this: would the management system, as established in the library, allow for a request to go unanswered for the better part of three months?

• (1225)

Mr. William R. Young: No.

Senator Terry Stratton: Absolutely no.

Mr. William R. Young: Absolutely no.

Senator Terry Stratton: Would you be able to supply the committee a list of all the projects undertaken by the PBO, including the date the project was received, the date the work was undertaken on them, and the date when they were completed or are going to be completed?

Mr. William R. Young: I will do my best—which means we have some information, and I will ask the PBO for that.

Senator Terry Stratton: You could ask the PBO to please forward all requests and the dates they were received, the dates they would have been completed, and the dates they would anticipate to complete.

Mr. William R. Young: Yes.

Senator Terry Stratton: Thank you very much.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you.

Mr. Christopherson.

Mr. David Christopherson: Thanks, Chair.

I guess this is as much a comment as a question. I just want to raise a small concern about some of the questions. They're in order, but I wonder to what end. We've had questions about expenses, and any time they're raised, there's always the underlying implication that there's something not quite right. Now we're getting a question about unanswered letters, gaps, and management procedures. You know, it feels like a bit of a set-up; my words.

We were here to deal with the \$484,000. I asked if there were any major outstanding issues. If we've got operational issues, it seems to me we ought to be dealing with those separately from this, at the very least, but as part of the next fiscal year. We've been working really hard as parliamentarians to try to keep the PBO alive and as healthy as it can be under this system, which some of us don't support, but to keep it going. Those are all fair-game questions when we get into that kind of thing, but what it looks like is a resurgence of some of that angst that government members have shown in the past. That's not the tone we've been taking and that's not been our approach.

I don't expect you to comment. This is more of a comment than anything.

If this continues, it just starts to feel as if there's a bit of a...“witch hunt” is a bit extreme, but certainly it feels like going after the PBO. If it continues, I'll want the floor again to comment on it.

I would hope we could stay focused. We've heard the answer that if we get the \$484,000 in place, it meets the requirements we set out in our document that we all supported. I didn't hear that there were any problems in terms of the PBO not meeting his end of it. The only piece left over for the current fiscal year is this piece. I would just hope we could stay focused on that. If people have other concerns, at the very least, get them up front, but I would ask that you hold off on those—and it's going to start soon, I have no doubt—until we get into the main estimates. I can see a whole host of issues and problems and challenges we're going to face. These would be some of them, but to mix it up now seems to me somewhat potentially problematic.

I leave that with you, Chair.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Mr. Christopherson, I think your comments are fair. However, we will be entertaining this motion at the end of the meeting here that will be involving the main estimates. Perhaps these comments are more appropriate for that section of the discussion.

We are giving it a bit of lateral room here in the discussion. I hope Mr. Young will have fair comments to present on all these questions.

Your point is well made. We'll carry on, if it's okay with you, Mr. Christopherson.

Mr. Bélanger.

• (1230)

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you Mr. Chair.

Could you tell us if the request for supplementary estimates has been tabled with the Senate?

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Yes.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Would it be appropriate now to table a motion to adopt the supplementary estimates?

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): I'm told that normally it's done at the end of the hearings.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I'll repeat my question. Would it be appropriate to table a motion to adopt the supplementary estimates?

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): No, at the end of the hearings, I'm informed, Monsieur Bélanger.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So, my motion would not be appropriate now?

My question is very clear.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): The vote we will be having at the end of this meeting will be for the supplementary estimates.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Okay; because I would move that in order to avoid where we were going.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Yes. And then we will entertain your motion on the main estimates.

Senator Terry Stratton: I would just like to make a comment.

This is not intended to be a witch hunt, Mr. Christopherson. That's not the issue. I think it needed to be stated, because the Parliamentary Budget Officer reports through the media. I think we need to put on record, to a degree, some of the concerns that are out there so that we will look at them in the future.

I would suggest to you, sir, that at the end of this, you put forward your motion and it will be done.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chairman, I had the floor here.

If it's not in order, then obviously I won't move it. But if it is, I do want to bring that to an end. If we are going to ask that kind of question, I'm with Mr. Christopherson here; I'm a little uneasy.

There are tons of media reporting 24 hours a day. If we're going to be monitoring media to dictate what we say and have to bring to the attention...then I would suspect that we would have to go and redo what we've done before. I'm not going to do that in the absence of the protagonist about whom the question is being asked, just in fairness.

That's not what I thought we were meeting here for today. We were meeting to set supplementary estimates that have been tabled in great part because of our recommendations as a committee—unanimous recommendations, let's remind ourselves. Let's proceed forward to making sure the best we can...with a still obviously difficult situation. We're all aware of that.

This committee's purpose was to try to smooth the way ahead so that parliamentarians have the benefit of a functioning Parliamentary Budget Office within the current legislative framework, whether we like it or not.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Mr. Bélanger, I fully intended at the end of this discussion here to be introducing a motion to vote on the supplementary estimates, and then also a motion to gain support to report the supplementary estimates. We fully intended to do that.

Next on the rotation here was Senator Stratton.

Do you have a further comment to make on that, Senator?

Senator Terry Stratton: I want to put it abundantly clear, Mr. Bélanger, that this is not intended to be a witch hunt. I think it is intended, or it should be advisable, to put on the record that there are concerns. It would be inappropriate for us not to, all of us around this table. And that has been done.

I think we should move along now, if there are no more questions regarding this. Some of the concerns have been expressed. That's all I wanted to say; nothing more than that.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you, Senator.

Monsieur Plamondon.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): I have a brief question for Ms. Chartrand. What is the total to date of the expenses for the Parliamentary Budget Officer? If you include the supplementary estimates, how much will he have received for the year?

Ms. Lise F. Chartrand: He will have received \$2,345,000.

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Thank you.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you.

Are there any other persons wishing to ask a question? My list has expired.

There are no other questions, so we will go directly to the call for a vote on the supplementary estimates.

Do we have support for the vote on the supplementary estimates?

PARLIAMENT

Library of Parliament

Vote 10b—Program expenditures, including authority to expend revenues received during the fiscal year arising from the activities of the Library of Parliament.....\$484,000

(Vote 10b agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Shall I report the supplementary estimates to the House and the Senate?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you. That carries too.

Now we'll proceed with the motion by Monsieur Bélanger.

Could you repeat that motion, please?

•(1235)

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chair, I suggest that the committee convene in camera next week to examine the Library budget for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Mr. Louis Plamondon: This would be done with the people from the Library?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Yes.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Are there any comments?

Senator.

Senator Terry Stratton: I have a question of clarification.

Is there a deadline attached to this, Mr. Young—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: December 7.

Senator Terry Stratton: It is December 7. I just want to make that abundantly clear.

So we have to have this completed, approved, reported, and passed by both houses....

No? Just going into the estimates—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It's the speakers' meeting.

Senator Terry Stratton: No, no, I understand that. I just wanted to make sure of the process.

Mr. William R. Young: You advise the speakers.

Senator Terry Stratton: Thank you.

Mr. William R. Young: And they need some time.

Senator Terry Stratton: Exactly. That's my point.

So perhaps....

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Next week would be fine. They'd still have a couple of weeks.

Senator Terry Stratton: My concern is that we may need more than one meeting to get through this; that's all.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Monsieur Bélanger, is it your intention to have this meeting on the main estimates of the library specifically?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It's not on the estimates per se. It's on the fiscal 2010-11 budget that we would be providing advice on for the library, which includes the Parliamentary Budget Office.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): All right, and this is for next week.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Again, Mr. Young has told us that the deadline for the submission of budgetary estimates for fiscal year 2010-11 is December 7. That responsibility, legislatively, belongs to the Speaker of the Senate and Speaker of the House. They would need some time.

We proposed in our reports that we be involved in the elaboration of budgetary considerations. If the chief librarian responds positively to this proposal, and if it's not too early, I propose that we meet next week.

I fully understand that a meeting on budgetary considerations is a strange one—I don't think we've done it before. It would need to be in camera. The outcome will become known when the main estimates are tabled, early in the new year. At that point, we'll see whether the speakers have listened, whether they have taken our advice or not.

I'm not particularly hell-bent on having it in camera, but I think it would make sense.

So I would therefore propose that we do it next week, if it's feasible for the library to come to us with the information we need to have a fruitful discussion.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Mr. Young, could you comment? Is there an acceptable amount of time? Should it be in camera?

Mr. William R. Young: We'll be prepared next week.

I agree that it should be in camera, because estimates are confidential until they're tabled in the House. Your role is to advise the speakers, so you don't want to be in a position of boxing them in.

Moreover, in our considerations, we might have to deal with human resource issues or internal management issues, which I feel are best dealt with in camera.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Monsieur Plamondon.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Chair, I have a question before voting on this motion: what would happen if that meeting did not take place? The executives of the Library of Parliament prepare the budget and send it to the two Speakers. Is that correct?

• (1240)

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): It's my understanding that we would hear from Mr. Young as the chief librarian and decide from there, depending on what he has to say.

Mr. Asselin.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Asselin: Next week, there will be a meeting with the Librarian. I imagine he will be accompanied by someone from finances. However, will the Parliamentary Budget Officer be there when the financial statements will be tabled?

The Parliamentary Budget Officer should be there because it represents a major part of his budget. We could have an in camera meeting that would include the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): In my opinion, it would be Mr. Young. It's under his direction. However, I would leave that up to the committee to decide.

Mr. Young, would you comment on that?

Mr. William R. Young: By statute I'm responsible for the presentation and preparation of the estimates of the Library of Parliament, so we will have a discussion about whether it would be appropriate for my service heads to come. The submission is going

to be quite simple. It's not complex, given the economic circumstances.

So I'm at your pleasure in respect of whom you would like to have here. I could bring all my service heads in case you have discussions or questions on any of the other areas of the library. I would be pleased to include the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you, Mr. Young.

Senator Greene.

Senator Stephen Greene (Nova Scotia): I would like for you to also bring to that meeting the information requested by Senator Stratton concerning the projects. As we get into the budget process, that's the kind of information that would be interesting to have.

Mr. William R. Young: I'll bring that in any event, whether the others come or not.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Senator Stratton.

Senator Terry Stratton: I think it might take more than one meeting. If we do the presentation by Mr. Young of the overall budget, and should subsequent discussion ensue that it requires the presence of others, then we could do a supplementary meeting, bringing whomever is required to answer the question. I don't want to limit it just to the PBO.

I would suggest that, if it's acceptable, because I think it's going to take a couple of meetings.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Mr. Young.

Mr. William R. Young: I could come and make the presentation, and the others could be outside the room. If you wanted them to come into the room at any point, you could request that they come in.

Senator Terry Stratton: That's a good idea.

Mr. William R. Young: If you don't mind, I would like to bring my director general of corporate services into the room, along with Madam Chartrand.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you.

Mr. Christopherson.

Mr. David Christopherson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was going in much the same direction as Senator Stratton, but I was going to go further. I suggest we acknowledge that there are at least two pieces to this, and both of them are brand new. One is the overall library budget, and this committee will be engaged on that in a way that it never has before. It will be involved much more than it ever has. That's one stand-alone piece. Then, the PBO clearly is going to be the sticky point that we're aware of right now.

Whether we want to break it into two meetings might be getting too much ahead of ourselves, but I think Senator Stratton is right in recognizing that if there are any bumps at all regarding the PBO, it's probably going to take a second meeting.

Keep in mind—just as a suggestion to you, Chair, with the greatest of respect—that recognizing that there are at least these two pieces might make it a little easier to manage.

I think I'm with Senator Stratton on proceeding forward.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you very much.

Monsieur Bélanger.

• (1245)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I concur, Mr. Chair. I was going to perhaps go a little further in providing discretion through the chairs—you and Senator Carstairs—in lining up whomever you feel might be necessary and perhaps dividing the meetings into one-hour sessions next week. It seems we'll certainly be done in the one-hour period, so we may even give you that discretion to possibly have both subsequent meetings next week at this time period if necessary.

I would be quite comfortable leaving the chairs with the discretion, along with the clerk, to set that up with the interested parties so we could deal with it by next week. That would leave not much more than a week and a half or so for the speakers to finalize it. If not, then call us for two meetings in rapid succession so that we don't tie the hands of the speakers either.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you, Monsieur Bélanger.

Are those all the questions for today?

If so, I'll repeat, Monsieur Bélanger, that the intention is to call a meeting with Mr. Young, and only with Mr. Young, for that particular meeting. Should there be a requirement for subsequent meetings, or other meetings—

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: No, I didn't say that. I said to have this committee meet in camera next week, with the witnesses to be determined at the discretion of the chairs, to consider the 2010-11 budget of the library, including the PBO's.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): All right.

Is everybody in agreement on that?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Peter Goldring): Thank you.

I want to thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

The meeting is adjourned.

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