



CANADA

Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament

BILI • NUMBER 004 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, November 18, 2010

—
Co-Chairs

**The Honourable Percy Downe
Mr. Royal Galipeau**

Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament

Thursday, November 18, 2010

• (1205)

[English]

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): It's past twelve, so we'll start. We have a quorum. I anticipate my co-chair is en route. I don't want to hold people up.

I will turn the floor over to the Parliamentary Librarian, who will say a few words and then introduce Mr. Nanos.

Mr. Young.

Mr. William R. Young (Parliamentary Librarian, Library of Parliament): Thank you, senator and members of the joint committee, for inviting me to join you again today. As you remember, at the last meeting I presented our strategic outlook as well as our business and expenditure plan for next year.

[Translation]

Together, they provide a vision for Library services over the next several years. I thank the members of the Committee for their interest and support.

[English]

During the course of our time together, I also outlined some of the ways the library would like to serve you better in the years ahead. The Parliament 2020 project you will hear about today was undertaken to assist us in our forward planning, to help us take the decisions today that will position us to continue meeting the needs of Parliament in the 21st century.

This project was developed during discussions that I had with John Pullinger, my colleague in the U.K. House of Commons. We discussed ways that parliaments are using or might use new and emergent technologies to effectively transform their processes and their relationship with the public. We wanted to hear from three distinct sets of stakeholders: parliamentarians themselves, first-time voters, and parliamentary administrations.

Several other parliamentary libraries immediately expressed an interest in participating along with Canada and the U.K., including those of Australia, New Zealand, and Chile. The Hansard Society in the U.K., an independent, non-partisan, political research and education association, is coordinating the five-nation project, with each participating library and research service contributing its own study based on a common methodology.

[Translation]

In our case, following a competitive process, we retained Nanos Research to conduct the Canadian study. Many of you were

consulted as part of this project, and your insight and ideas have helped shape this report.

[English]

Today you will have the opportunity to hear from Nik Nanos on the findings of his independent research, which highlights the need for better communications between Parliament and Canadians and the importance of engaging the public, of speaking to Canadians in terms they understand, and of doing so in a timely way.

All of this is aimed at looking at ways to enhance both an understanding of the parliamentary system and the promotion of Canadians' interest in it, goals that are central to our work at the library.

Moreover, the Nanos Parliament 2020 report provides important insights into the priorities I outlined at our last meeting, connecting Parliament, people, and information, as well as into the importance of investing in our people and infrastructure.

[Translation]

Equally important, the report identifies opportunities for improvement.

[English]

I welcome this input not only as contributing to strengthening our own parliamentary and library operations here in Canada but as adding to the catalogue of best practices that the Parliament 2020 project is designed to build.

It gives me great pleasure, then, to introduce the president and CEO of Nanos Research, Nik Nanos.

Thank you.

Mr. Nik Nanos (President, Nanos Research): May I start?

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Yes, please.

Mr. Nik Nanos: Thank you for that introduction.

Mr. Young, Mr. Chair, members of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament, my name is Nik Nanos. I am the president of Nanos Research, a research associate professor at the State University of New York in Buffalo, and a fellow of the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association.

I was the lead researcher on the Parliament 2020 project and oversaw all elements of the research, including the methodology, design, and reporting. Today I will be briefing the committee on the key findings of the research completed on the “Parliament 2020: Visioning the Future of Parliament” project, and then I'd be happy to answer any questions. That would be what I'm interested in most: answering question in the dialogue after my presentation.

In terms of the methodology, in December 2009, using a discussion guide that was very similar to the one used in the United Kingdom, we began interviewing parliamentarians. An initial e-mail introducing the project and its aims was sent by the Parliamentary Librarian to all parliamentarians in both the House of Commons and the Senate. Nanos Research then followed up with an e-mail requesting that those interested in participating in the interviews confirm their availability with a Nanos researcher. Interviews were scheduled and conducted in person or over the phone by pairs of Nanos analysts. Parliamentarians could be interviewed in the official language of their choice.

Our original target was to complete 15 interviews with parliamentarians, but owing to the level of interest, the number of interviews was expanded. In total, 30 interviews were completed with parliamentarians, with 40% being senators and 60% being members of Parliament.

Using the same line of questioning from the parliamentarian interviews, Nanos Research then facilitated a group discussion among parliamentary staff. Fifteen senior Canadian parliamentary staff from the House of Commons, the Senate, and the Library of Parliament participated in this discussion on December 4, 2009. The discussion was conducted in a bilingual manner; participants expressed their views in the official language of their choice, and the moderator asked all questions in both languages.

To get insight into the perspective of young Canadians, Nanos Research conducted four focus group discussions with first-time voters on December 7 and December 8, 2009, in Montreal and Ottawa respectively. First-time voters were defined as young people who had never voted in a federal election, but who intended to vote in the next election. Participants were 18- to 25-year-olds, and groups were an equal mix of males and females. Two groups in Montreal were conducted in French, while the two groups in Ottawa were conducted in English.

I would now like to review the executive summary. Please note that each point is not meant to be prescriptive, but to summarize the consistent types of feedback that were received underneath each of the thematic pillars, such as communications, engagement, and so forth. Please also note—and this is very important—that this report is based on the views of stakeholders at the time of the research, which was about a year ago.

In terms of the executive summary, what follows are the key takeaways from the three portions of the research related to the topics of communication, engagement, information needs, resources and culture, and transparency and accountability.

In the communication section, we asked for ways in which Parliament communicates well with the public and for some ways in which it communicates poorly, we asked how parliamentary

processes and procedures impact Parliament's ability to communicate with the public, and we asked if there were specific things that could be done to improve the way Parliament communicates with the public.

Here are the findings.

First, Parliament should use understandable language and digestible policy information when communicating with the public.

Second, parliamentarians would benefit from learning how to best apply new technologies in a non-partisan way. Overtly partisan messages had an adverse effect, particularly on youth, although parliamentarians and parliamentary staff also expressed concern that partisan communication negatively affected all of Parliament.

Third, two-way communication could be improved, both online and off-line. Further work should be done to discern the most effective ways to collect input from the public on the types of information they commonly expect to find when contacting their MPs and senators or when visiting the parliamentary website, as well as the best ways to disseminate information to the public using new technologies. There were a number of opportunities identified by participants to gather user-generated intelligence through the parliamentary website.

Fourth, the parliamentary website should be more user-friendly to the average visitor. Participants in all three groups indicated that it would be difficult to navigate the website without knowing in advance what to look for and where to find it.

Fifth, Parliament should be more proactive in communicating using new media.

● (1210)

Parliamentarians consider media coverage as the primary way that Canadians learned about their activities, and they placed more value on CPAC, the cable public affairs channel, as a key vehicle for communicating with the public, as it provided an unfiltered, though selective, view of their work. Some parliamentarians acknowledged that CPAC's viewership is representative only of those who were already politically engaged. Consultations with first-time voters confirmed that a reliance on the traditional media channels, such as CPAC, was not sufficient in terms of making younger Canadians aware of Parliament's activities, as they placed a high value on the ability to choose from a multitude of sources.

In the engagement section, we asked what could be done to encourage greater understanding by the public of how Parliament works and what impact people thought digital technologies could have on civic engagement.

We discovered that developing a more robust civics school curriculum would positively affect engagement. The Canadian public's general lack of engagement in the political process was seen as endemic and symptomatic of a low priority placed on educating the public on civic affairs at the primary and secondary school levels. Also, Parliament should continue to assist educators and the public in understanding parliamentary processes and procedures by conducting interactive presentations and developing stimulating informational materials.

As well, the parliamentary website is a major opportunity for trust-building with the Canadian public. The website should use new media tools to gauge the information needs of members of the public who visit the site, as well as strengthen its positioning as a steward for up-to-date, reliable parliamentary information. Also, parliamentarians, youth, and parliamentary staff were cautiously optimistic about the ability of mobile devices to positively affect democratic participation. While the appeal lay in the ability to have a variety of voices engaging in a dialogue, all three groups felt there were risks involved when relying on these technologies. Participants in the three groups were generally concerned about the reliability of the information.

In terms of information, questions in this section were asked only of parliamentarians and staff. We asked how the information needs of members and staff were changing and how they were likely to change in the future. As well, we prompted for ideas on how Parliament could better support these changing needs.

Many parliamentarians felt that there was a time lag between committee meetings and publishing of committee proceedings. The time lag and difficulty in finding information were highlighted. Parliamentarians also articulated a desire for self-serve applications targeted at both parliamentarians and the public whereby all recordings from proceedings would be easily accessible and archived on the parliamentary website, with playback and download capabilities.

E-mail notifications that alert parliamentarians and members of the public about new legislation, votes, or amendments to bills would be considered valuable. All records available through the parliamentary website should be searchable and indexed thematically throughout the entire document, with tags by broad topics, people, and dates. Parliament could invest in video technology to support members' communications with constituents and organizations in order to decrease travel costs.

Also, paper and digital records must coexist and be equally integrated. Both formats were viewed as important. Digitizing documents can support information organization and easy transfer, while paper records are valuable for archiving purposes.

In the resources and culture section we asked questions related to the effect of social media and about expectations regarding speed of response from Parliament, how receptive Parliament is to change and the take-up of new technologies, and what the staff and resource implications of increasing the use of digital technologies would be for Parliament.

Parliament should assess what can be done to meet public expectations related to the speed of response and intimacy from elected representatives. Those consulted acknowledged that a new era in technological sophistication and online engagement presented a challenge to Parliament to meet this demand. While a number of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff felt that the legislative process and the research needed on issues could not be accelerated by technology, newer digital technologies allow Parliament to inform the public faster than ever before.

Also, Parliament should be a leader in adopting new technologies. While several of the participants felt that Parliament did a reasonably

good job at adopting new digital technologies, there was agreement that the institution was more reactive than proactive in its approach to new technologies.

In addition, resources should be allocated to support and train parliamentarians and staff to properly employ digital technologies in a consistent manner.

- (1215)

In the transparency and accountability section we asked about bilingual communications and whether the participants had any thoughts on whether digital technology will make Parliament more transparent and accountable in the future. This particular pillar was added. It was not included in the U.K. study, but it was considered extra content that we thought was important to cover off in Canada.

In this particular thematic pillar, we found that bilingual messages were nearly unanimously viewed as crucial when communicating through social media. Also, multilingual communications were viewed by many participants as growing in importance. Several youth participants and parliamentarians felt that changing demographics would necessitate additional translation capabilities in Parliament.

Also, transparency and accountability are contingent on the attitude towards these ideals. Many felt that if information were readily accessible in the public domain, this would hypothetically make Parliament more accountable; however, the consensus was that technology was not the deciding factor: accountability and transparency depend on the political will to be accountable and transparent.

These are the key findings that summarize the common threads from each discussion topic. Each of the groups consulted represents a variety of stakeholder perspectives and possesses different needs; however, there are compatible viewpoints that link each of the groups. Parliamentarians, parliamentary officials, and first-time voters were in agreement on the level of importance attributed to the following ideas: educating the public and outreach, access to information, understandable language, transparency and accountability, and interactive communication.

The issue now is to find the best path in order to move forward with a common sense of purpose.

I'd be happy now to answer any questions about this project.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Thank you for that presentation.

Prior to any questions, I'll ask Mr. Young for his concluding remarks, and then we'll open the floor.

Mr. William R. Young: The key point I'd like to make is that I think Parliament 2020 provides an opportunity for dialogue with members of this committee on the needs and priorities of parliamentarians and where we might go from here.

I think members might consider hearing directly from some of our international counterparts who are innovating with new technologies and exploring education and outreach and various other avenues in other parliamentary contexts.

[*Translation*]

The Library of Parliament would be delighted to facilitate this sort of discussion. Meanwhile, we would be happy to answer any immediate questions members may have about Parliament 2020, or the Library's services and plans for development.

[*English*]

I would like to point out that I have several of the library service heads in the room with us today. They are Sonia L'Heureux, the assistant parliamentary librarian; Dianne Brydon, director general of learning and access services; and Lynn Brodie, director general of the information and document resource service. Each brings expertise and insight to the development of services to Parliament, and I know they'd be pleased to respond to questions as well.

Thank you.

•(1220)

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Thank you, Mr. Young.

As parliamentarians know, this is an open meeting. We have a number of students from McGill University here today as well, and I'd like to welcome them.

We're creating a list. Mr. Malhi, you're first.

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

First of all, I want to ask a question to Nik Nanos.

Since 1993 I've represented the riding of Bramalea—Gore—Malton, and I notice every time that fewer and fewer young people are interested in politics. Are young people uninterested in politics only in Canada or in other countries too?

Also, during election time when it's time to go to vote, more and more young people are not participating in the voting process. What type of initiative or resources can you provide to them so that we can attract more young people into politics as well as get them to vote during the election?

Mr. Nik Nanos: Thank you for that question.

Actually, based on the research we've done for the Library of Parliament, and other research we've done—if I could add a nuance in terms of fewer and fewer younger people being interested in politics—my interpretation of what is happening is that fewer and fewer young people are interested in engaging in traditional ways in democracy.

I think that's the critical issue here. For younger people democratic engagement is taking place on Facebook and Twitter and on blogs. Let's rewind to 50 years ago: democratic engagement took place through traditional mechanisms. You joined a political party, maybe you helped on a local campaign; you talked to your parents about it and you became active through your school. From my perspective,

those are relatively traditional mechanisms to be involved in the democratic process.

I would say the problem is the disconnect between our traditional institutions and young people. I believe young people are democratically engaged, but not through our traditional institutions. That's the key thing to discuss at this table: how our democratic institutions can engage young people in the way they want to be engaged.

If I can use an example from the private sector, with the onslaught of the Internet, private sector companies initially dealt with the web as something to manage their reputation and what their customers were saying. But we've discovered in our research that the most cutting-edge corporations have taken dissent—consumer and client dissent—and internalized it by providing a platform for that dissent.

If we look at a company like Dell, it has a website called IdeaStorm. That's a place for customers to complain. They realized it was better to have customers complain in a platform they could be involved in where they could respond to them, as opposed to trying to interact and engage their customers along the whole web.

I think that particular paradigm, the whole idea that if younger Canadians—and I would say more Canadians in general—are engaging online and outside of traditional democratic institutions, we have to figure out how those democratic institutions can become a platform for engagement.

We might not like it. I can tell you it will be more risky and it is a completely different paradigm shift. But I think if we don't, then we're going to deal with the problem you just talked about, that more and more young people will be democratically engaged but not through the institutions.

I think it's important to keep that link as strong as possible.

Hon. Gurbax Malhi: Thank you.

Do I have time?

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): You have one minute.

Hon. Gurbax Malhi: Okay, thank you.

My question to William Young is in what specific way is the Library of Parliament making use of social media to communicate with Canadians?

Mr. William R. Young: Well, we've been experimenting, mostly internally. As you know, the use of social media carries certain risks. We've been using the Teachers Institute, for example, and a lot of you attended that last week. The Teachers Institute alumni have certain vehicles they can use to discuss.

As you know, we also publish Eugene Forsey's book on Parliament. With the collaboration of the Department of Canadian Heritage, we're creating an interactive website so people can use that tool more effectively. We have the ESL book, *Our Country, Our Parliament*, and we are trying to make this an interactive web-based mechanism as well as a published document. It's more experimental than part of an overall strategy at this point in time.

•(1225)

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Thank you.

Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Good afternoon. This is very interesting. I am part of the older generation. For various personal reasons, I have quite a few problems with the new media, such as Twitter and Facebook. I do not disagree with you, Mr. Nanos, when you say that our youth is more inclined to hear what we have to say on Facebook or Twitter.

However, I am a bit uneasy. I live in Québec. At the moment, something is happening in the National Assembly and it seems to me that it would be inappropriate for any government website to offer some sort of Twitter as a means of expressing a vote at large. This is one aspect of the question.

True, young people prefer the more modern means of communication, but we can invite them to participate in other ways. There are still people who, as I do, prefer the printed word and there are others, who are part of the new generation, who prefer to express themselves on the internet or on Facebook.

How can we best serve the democratic process while allowing both worlds to exist?

[*English*]

Mr. Nik Nanos: I think you have to take a longer-term perspective. Think of it this way: we have to walk before we can run, before we can sprint, before we can do whatever happens after that.

Usually the first step is push messaging, which is not interactivity. It means sharing information in the most efficient way, so that if someone wants to find something, the person can find it. That is the first step: to make sure that the particular user's experience is as effective as possible.

The next level beyond that is interactivity, and that's when you get into the risks that you're talking about. I think that's going to be one of the critical conflict points in terms of how democracy emerges in the future.

That said, web 2.0 technology is not the answer to everything, and I will say that from the very beginning. However, it needs to be part of the mix, and you need to be effective at what you're doing. I think that in the long run, the healthiest way is to promote traditional ways of interaction. I usually tell people that when you're doing a consultation, you don't want to do it all online, because you cannot replace the importance of face-to-face interaction. Democracy is about human interaction, right?

From my perspective, what you don't want to do is leave behind all the important ways that we traditionally interact with our voters in putting out information in person and through libraries and through educational systems and on paper and so forth; however, it's pretty clear that technology is ahead of us right now. I think the next step is management of information and the access to it, but you have to start planning for what's going to happen after that in terms of how other interactivity could work.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Thank you. That answers my question.

•(1230)

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Plamondon.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Young.

Thank you for being here, Mr. Nanos.

In your document, there is much emphasis on education. I took note of several expressions, forums for educators, forums for students. Educational materials and civic affairs courses are also mentioned.

In your analysis, did you take into account the jurisdictional aspects of the question, in view of the fact that education is strictly a provincial jurisdiction?

For example, could there be an understanding with the Quebec National Assembly Library concerning shared responsibilities, in order to work together of course, but always with a view to meeting the needs of both nations?

[*English*]

Mr. Nik Nanos: I'm very blessed in not being a constitutional expert, just a researcher listening to people make good solutions.

Regardless of jurisdiction, everyone has an interest in making the system work. The challenges that we have in the municipal level, the provincial level, and the federal level are all the same. We're the same Canadians. We're all serving the same Canadians at every level. That was really.... To an extent your question is outside of the scope of my research, because my objective was just to understand from first-time voters and people in the system how it could move forward. I will leave it to other experts to deal with jurisdictional issues.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: In the performance of your task, you are required to comply with the Constitution, with all laws in effect as well as with any federal and provincial agreement. You must be aware of this. You submit that everyone has an interest in virtue and education, but you must realize that when an elephant sleeps with a mouse, the elephant has a better chance of surviving than the mouse. And so, if the federal government is allowed to interfere with or to have jurisdiction in a provincial matter, particularly with regards to the Province of Quebec, where the francophone population is still in survival mode, with a mere 3% of the North American population as a whole, we really need the division of powers, an absolute respect of all jurisdictions.

This is not to say that your work has no value. I am impressed by the work you have accomplished, but I would like you to keep in mind this jurisdictional aspect during the practical application of your study.

I have one more question, Mr. Chair. This probably concerns more Mr. Young. It concerns document classification. I had quite a surprise while preparing a conference, when I tried to obtain certain data on various speeches given by Members of Parliament. In keeping with the educational aspects that you mentioned, and in view of the information that you wish to provide and the transparency towards the public that you speak of, it would also be necessary to keep a historical perspective in mind and to have on hand for example every statement made by a Member of Parliament. If I wanted to know the position of a certain prime minister on a certain subject I could quite easily obtain it.

The subject of my “conference” was the Lake Meech Agreement. Consequently, I needed to have access to all of the various parties’ interventions, more precisely the interventions coming from Members of Parliament of the various parties, so as to be able to present an objective comparison during my conference. However, the Library of Parliament has not filed these documents by Member. I have been here for 26 years. Would it not be possible, by a simple click, to have access to all of the statements I have made during the last 25 years? This type of information pertaining to a particular individual is not available on video nor on paper.

Will it be available someday? I was told that it was a work in progress, but has there been any progress? It will be necessary for the follow-up on your...

Mr. William R. Young: This is a project I have undertaken with Library and Archives Canada. The project involves the scanning of all House of Commons debates from the beginning of the twentieth century to this day and I know that debates have only been made available since 1994. If you wish additional information concerning this matter, Mrs. Brodie is responsible for the project.

•(1235)

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Could we have more information from Mrs. Brodie? It is possible Mr. Chair? My time is up?

That’s fine. I will wait for the second round Madam.
[English]

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): The next name on the list is Madam Wong, who showed up to replace one of her colleagues, but their whip did not send the proper documentation. I’m seeking the approval of the committee for her to have her five minutes as well. Is it agreed?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Of course we support the indulgence, but the appropriate moment will be duly considered.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Madam, for five minutes.

Mrs. Alice Wong (Richmond, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Coming from an academic background, it is my pleasure to be able to have exposure to this committee. The library definitely plays a very important part in the education sector.

My questions will be related to two specific areas.

First of all, the Canadian report concludes that “Parliament should continue to assist educators and the public to understand parliamentary processes and procedures by conducting interactive

presentations and stimulating information materials.” On this subject the Library of Parliament already operates a series of educational programs for the public. In particular, the background resources programs help educators learn more about Parliament and transmit their knowledge while providing structural material and offering professional development.

During the constituency break week I was invited by a private school to speak to a group of grade nine students. They were very interested in Parliament and also in getting to know what a member of Parliament does. I was able to share how bills are made, the parliamentary procedures, in a very simple way, and the students were very happy that their member of Parliament was able to talk to them. Definitely the teacher did a great job. It was the second year he did it.

Talking about getting young people interested, educators should pay a very important role, because they are the front-line people. They meet the young people first before we reach them or they reach the age of being a voter.

I have three questions. First of all, how do you measure the results obtained in this field of activity? The question is for either of you.

Mr. Nik Nanos: Could you repeat that, please?

Mrs. Alice Wong: Either one of you.

Mr. Nik Nanos: How do we measure the results obtained in terms of the activity, for which part?

Mrs. Alice Wong: For assisting educators with materials: one of the recommendations. How would you measure that?

Mr. Nik Nanos: Are you talking about the impact of educating Canadians on Parliament?

Mrs. Alice Wong: Yes, because we’ve already been doing educational programs for the public.

Ms. Dianne Brydon (Director General, Learning and Access Services, Library of Parliament): Maybe I could answer that question. I’m Dianne Brydon, director general of learning and access services.

We do it in a couple of ways, and not as expansively as we would like, given our limited resources. With regard to the Teachers Institute, on a regular basis we evaluate the impact of their learning when they’re here, and at the tenth anniversary of the institute—it’s now been going on for fourteen years—we did an impact analysis. We surveyed teachers from the first ten years and found out how it had affected their teaching.

It’s coming up to the fifteenth anniversary. Now that we’re further out we would like to do a further study, to say, “What has the impact been on your students? Have you noticed them going into public life, getting more involved, getting more active?” That’s the first thing.

For all of the other education resources you mentioned that are on the web, we do have evaluations and feedback forms. Teachers can feed back how it is affecting their teaching and how it’s helping them. We don’t have the resources to do a full-bore study across the country to find out that impact, as much as I’d like to do one.

Mrs. Alice Wong: Thank you.

My second question is directed to our researcher. Looking at the report that was just presented, in the summary of findings, number 19, you mention that multicultural communications were viewed as growing in importance by many participants. I'd like to draw to the attention of the committee members that with a new citizenship guide for new immigrants, before they become Canadians they probably have to study about procedures for Parliament. That is step one, before they become Canadian citizens. But definitely they would probably need more, so what kinds of suggestions would you have?

After the summarizing of the findings, you'd probably like to have some recommendations. Can you give us more details of how you would recommend to educate new Canadians about the Parliament?

• (1240)

Mr. William R. Young: I will start. We have published *Our Country, Our Parliament* at the library, which is a booklet that's been very well received. I don't know how many we've printed—several hundred thousand—and they have been distributed to all schools and all teachers of English as a second language. That is also going to be available in an online form very shortly, if it isn't already.

Ms. Dianne Brydon: In about another six months.

Mr. William R. Young: The other thing, though, and Dianne can explain this, is that information—pamphlets and brochures—about Parliament that are printed here are done in many, many languages.

Perhaps you'd like to amplify.

Ms. Dianne Brydon: We have two basic brochures available online, as well as in the Centre Block for people who are visiting. There is information about the Parliament Buildings themselves, and there is also information on our legislative process called *Democracy in Action*. Both of those online publications are available in 44 different languages, and we're going to make them more prominent very soon.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Thank you. The five minutes are up.

Senator Johnson is next.

Hon. Janis Johnson: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Nanos, it's good to hear that young people are engaging, as you said. That was a good finding. They don't like overtly partisan messages, and of course many people don't as well.

They also say there is benefit by applying the new technologies in a non-partisan way. Could you give us any information on how? Which would be the best way in terms of...? And how much is the partisan communication negatively affecting the parliamentary image with the young?

Mr. Nik Nanos: I would say that, based on the research we've done here and other research in this area, young people like unfiltered information. Many times they'll engage in their own partisan activity after they have that unfiltered information. I think the key role is for them to have access to what they would consider unfiltered information in order to make their own decision. They tend to be much more cynical of traditional media sources having a particular bias—individual reporters and parliamentarians, and you can go through the whole list. They just tend to be more suspicious.

I think this is why transparency was on the list. The whole idea is that transparency is something that would be welcomed by young people in order for them to have the information to engage in democracy as they see fit.

In terms of the impact of overtly partisan messages, it's kind of like the car crash: people are attracted and repelled at the same time. It's one of those things. You know what? Whenever we do research, people will say, "Oh, isn't it just awful how partisan things are?" Then when something happens that is really sensational or quite entertaining, they'll just love it.

So maybe we could have something like good partisanship, if there is such a thing, between the different parties. I think when partisanship becomes personal and is not focused on the meat of the subject at hand, that's when you actually start losing people. I think people expect partisanship from the different parties because that's why they're there, but when it hits a particular tone that might seem to be personal or not necessarily relevant to the substance, that's actually where we lose people.

Hon. Janis Johnson: In terms of using a new technology to communicate with the young people, would you say that was the case in the Obama campaign, and also for the new young mayor of Calgary?

Mr. Nik Nanos: Well, the Obama campaign nailed it in terms of what I'll call "first mover advantage". They were able to use that. The Democratic Party is a powerful institution that is hard to overturn, and technology overturned that.

What happened in Calgary was actually different but quite interesting. My understanding of the campaign, which was successful there, is that it started with the core message of "get engaged and be informed". They used that non-partisan message to get attention, and then they said, "Be engaged, be an informed voter", and then they used that to start engaging. Then they used that to engage voters and also used that to have voters engage other candidates too.

• (1245)

Hon. Janis Johnson: It captured the imagination of everybody out there.

Mr. Nik Nanos: Exactly. The other thing that made it very effective was that the people they were engaging felt a particular sense of ownership in the campaign. I think that's a lesson for us. If you can engage people so they start to feel as though they own the institution, that's when things are really going to start to work.

Hon. Janis Johnson: Yes, I agree. Thank you.

Thank you, Chair.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Thank you.

Madame Bennett, you have five minutes.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Should we be canvassing the people who are not voting?

Mr. Nik Nanos: Is that the end of your question?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Yes. I mean, it's like sending out a form and saying "Take one if you're apathetic". How do we go get particularly the first-time ought-to-be voters?

Mr. Nik Nanos: We've done a number of studies on democratic engagement for the Institute for Research on Public Policy. I remember, as part of the research, we were looking at the creation of the secret vote. Actually, the Liberals instituted the secret vote when they overturned the Macdonald government. The expectation was that the voter turnout would go up. Actually, the voter turnout did not go up as a result of the secret ballot. When we shifted from a show of hands to a secret ballot, there was no significant change in the voter turnout.

We've done research. The interesting thing is that there is a certain portion of Canadians who are generally satisfied and are just not into politics. The thing is that converting those people into democratic activists is going to be very difficult, because they're just not into this.

That being said, there's a broader theoretical discussion about democratic engagement, and that also doesn't mean you don't start moving the yardstick. I think leveraging technology as part of a broader strategy can help to start moving that yardstick.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: We talk about civic literacy, or the fact that politics is a swear word. But democracy is still important to people, and they don't really know where they overlap.

In looking at some of the international examples, there has been some interest in an online, age-appropriate civics course from kindergarten to grade 12, or something. If any interested teacher, regardless of jurisdiction, wanted to download it and use it in their classroom or Sunday school group, you could provide that. I think it's not going to be at age 18 that we get kids involved; it has to be much earlier than that.

Internationally, did you notice that some countries were further ahead or behind and had different outcomes in what they were already doing in technology? Whether it's the U.K., Australia, or New Zealand, is any country further ahead than we are, and did they end up with a different kind of outcome in terms of when they were asking for advice?

Mr. William R. Young: A lot of this stuff is so new that it hasn't been evaluated, and the outcomes aren't available.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: I want to get on the record that eight years ago, on the disability committee when you were the researcher, we began the e-consultation that ended up with rather huge support. Why aren't we doing it all the time, seeing that it was so successful? What would it take to have that now be the norm in how parliamentary committees work and consult?

Mr. William R. Young: Thanks for the question.

That e-consultation, which at the time was recognized as being the best that had taken place in any parliament in the world, was driven by parliamentarians. So from my perspective we responded as an organization—the library, and particularly me at the time—to the express wishes of members of Parliament. That was followed up in the Senate by Senator Kirby's report as well. But that was driven by parliamentarians, not by the research branch of the library.

So the answer to your question is that we respond to parliamentarians' wishes.

• (1250)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: If we were going to make every one of these recommendations operational, is that the next part of the study?

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): We really don't have time for another question. You have 15 seconds left. Sorry.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: I would like to get it on the record that we would like to embark on hearing from some of the internationals.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): You're off the record.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Is this a study that we are going to continue?

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): We'll talk about that as soon as we get rid of the witnesses here, and we'll carry on.

Mr. Bélanger, you're up.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions.

I wanted to ask, of all the recommendations that are there—and this follows up on what Carolyn was just asking—which top two or three the library or Mr. Nanos would suggest we pursue first.

Second, I take great comfort in number 18 of the results, or the *constatation* that “bilingual messages were nearly unanimously viewed as crucial when communicating through social media”. I'd like to know the cost and time implications of that, because social media demands immediacy, yet if you're going to translate things, you have to have a delay. So I'd like to get some sense of that.

Finally, I have more of a broad question. My mentor in politics, Monsieur Jean-Luc Pépin, used to use five words to describe our system of government. I'll go quickly: it's monarchical or a monarchy; it's responsible, in the sense that whoever is the government has to be responsible to the House of Commons to keep the confidence; it's bicameral—we're the only bicameral committee; it's parliamentary, as opposed to presidential, if you will; and finally, it's representative.

My question is with regard to that fifth word. I think I understand what representative democracy in the parliamentary system is all about. You run a general election, or by-elections, on a platform that is supposedly based on a set of principles, and people make a choice, and you are then sent to Ottawa and Parliament to represent them.

But we seem to be going in another direction entirely, which is participatory. To what extent is our parliamentary system prepared and equipped to go the participatory route? I look at your recommendation 15: “Parliament should assess what can be done to meet the public's expectations related to the speed of response and intimacy from elected representatives.” What does that mean?

I use the phone. I'm an old fudgee, I use the phone a lot. It's very direct and intimate and immediate. Face to face is even better. I don't use a whole lot of social media. Does that mean that I'm totally out of sync with what's going on out there? I somehow don't think so, not completely anyway. I'm just wondering—where does “representative” stop being representative and become participatory? I'm not saying one is better than the other. I just need to know the frame of reference we're all supposed to be working under.

Mr. Nik Nanos: In my opinion, we're going through a transitional phase. I might get in trouble for saying this, but let's face it: this particular form of democracy was invented in the steam-engine era. Now, what does that mean? We still have trains, right? They're a great way to get around. But there are also other ways.

As a researcher, I think one of the two recommendations that would be more important than some of the other ones, in terms of a sense of urgency or speed, is actually the one you just identified, because there is a different expectation with regard to speed and immediacy of information.

I think the second one would be access. The experience of accessing information about what is happening to our democracy has to improve. That is one of the best ways to get people to engage. They are getting it everywhere else. They are getting it with every other interaction, whether it's with a business or their family, and I think there's an expectation that with regard to our democracy that information should be readily available and findable in a relatively effortless way, just as information in other areas is.

In terms of your broader question about representative versus participatory, realistically we're probably going towards some kind of hybrid. We don't know what it's going to look like, but it's time now to think about these issues and what the right mix is. I think the worst thing would be to go down one path and to think that representative democracy is dead, because it's not dead, in the same way that we're still using the rails. So that would be my observation on that.

•(1255)

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Thank you.

Next we have Madam Leslie for five minutes.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you all.

Mr. Young, I just need to say that your staff are truly incredible. They make my job a whole different thing. It's awesome.

On engagement and the parliamentary website as a major opportunity for trust-building with the Canadian public, I absolutely agree. I know that in your research you heard from people that they Google what they need to find, instead of interacting with the website. That's what I do. If I want to know who the witnesses are going to be at a committee, I will Google them because that's how I use the Internet. So I'm unable to navigate the parliamentary website because it's not how I use websites.

On the idea of how we're already using the Internet, and then this idea of speed and access, another interface that I use every week is openparliament.ca.

[*Translation*]

I don't know if there is a French equivalent.

[*English*]

But openparliament.ca is exactly what Monsieur Plamondon said. You can click on Megan Leslie and see every bill. My understanding is that it's a computer program, so it all sort of happens automatically and feeds into the speed piece.

I want to know, Mr. Nanos, if you have heard much about openparliament.ca in your research and people's interaction with it. From the library's perspective, are there problems with the way that kind of site works? What do you think generally about that way to access parliamentary information?

Mr. Nik Nanos: As far as the research, we didn't get into that, although it's pretty clear that it is trying to meet some needs that are out there.

Ms. Megan Leslie: It's filling a gap.

Mr. Nik Nanos: Yes.

Ms. Megan Leslie: What's the library's response?

Mr. William R. Young: The parliamentary website is produced by the House of Commons, the Senate, and the library. It is in the process of being redesigned. Dianne has been part of the team called the parliamentary information management group, which reports to the Clerk of the House, the Clerk of the Senate, and me. It is looking at redesigning the website.

So that is in process, and parts of it should be ready in the relatively near future. I won't give you a date because I'm not sure.

Ms. Megan Leslie: That's fair.

Mr. William R. Young: The other question.... What's the name?

•(1300)

Ms. Megan Leslie: It's openparliament.ca.

Mr. William R. Young: It is one that I was tempted to use for some of our stuff, but they cabbaged the name before I had a chance to get it. It's modelled on a site in the U.K. called theyworkforyou.com, which has the same type of information. Quite frankly, it demonstrates that if Parliament—and this is my personal view—doesn't get its act together, other people will be putting out information about Parliament that may or may not be accurate and complete.

If the committee is interested in pursuing this, theyworkforyou.com in the U.K. was put together by a number of people, one of whom was a member of Parliament and is currently a member of the House of Lords. I think he's also director of policy for Facebook Europe. I know him fairly well. It's precisely to make this information available in an easily accessible form, but it mirrors to some extent some of the—

Ms. Megan Leslie: Are there problems with it?

Mr. William R. Young: I'm not as familiar with the site as I probably should be. I'm sorry.

Ms. Megan Leslie: I know there are problems in terms of whether we are getting everything we're supposed to get. If I want a copy of my speech—I hate to admit this—sometimes I'll go to openparliament.ca. I don't know if it's accurate. I look at it and it sounds like what I said.

This is being recorded, right? My constituents are listening at home.

I'm wondering if there are other problems with that kind of program. Could the Library of Parliament site do something like that, or are there other problems you can see?

Mr. William R. Young: As I said, on the parliamentary website the governance issues involve all three institutions on Parliament Hill. Things like repurposing information in that manner....

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): I regret to inform you that the time for this item is concluded. Unfortunately, there are a number of names on the list that we didn't get to. Obviously the committee will have to consider having a discussion on this item at our next meeting.

I'd like to thank Mr. Young and Mr. Nanos for their presentations.

Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chairman, can we hold off a second here?

The other item might take five minutes. The other items that we're called to deal with—

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): If you can guarantee it will take five minutes, the co-chairs will certainly consider it.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I can't, but it might. Perhaps you may want to consult the members of the committee before you lower the boom, that's all.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): The reason for the boom is that the last time I was asked to stick to the agenda as it was written. That's what I'm trying to do this time.

If it's the wish of the committee to carry on for another 10 or 15 minutes, subject to the co-chair agreeing, I would have no problem.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC)): I'm here until two o'clock; I don't care what you want to talk about. But frankly, we have to know that when we deal with an agenda, the agenda means the agenda.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: This committee wasn't consulted on the agenda. It's the will of the committee how we spend our time.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Mr. Bélanger has made a suggestion. Do the committee members agree?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a motion, if you would consider it, that we approve the supplementary estimates in front of us.

If there's any time remaining, we can revert back to the other item.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Normally we would have a discussion on that. I think that's the way we would want to proceed, having a discussion of supplementary estimates rather than moving them on a motion.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: We're going to be approving them anyhow.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I don't have a lot of experience on this committee, but what I've witnessed here before is that when a member of the committee attempted to bring something new to the agenda, a member of the committee, who happens to be sitting here now, objected and said let's stick to the agenda. And that actually adjourned the meeting.

As co-chairs we try to follow the rules, but if the committee wishes to go in one direction...it can't be forever changing its mind. We're here to serve the committee with some sort of order, not whims.

[Translation]

Mr. Asselin, you have the floor.

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Chair, I am convinced that, should you so request it, you would obtain the unanimous consent of Committee members. In view of the fact that the allotted time for the first question on the agenda has already elapsed and that no additional registrations are allowed, we could at least hear the witnesses, parliamentarians already on the list, whether it is for 10, 15 or 5 minutes.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): That would mean that we will not have the full hour reserved for the second item on the agenda. We have to be in the House of Commons by 2 p.m. Moreover, Senators must be in the Senate by 1:30 p.m. If we should proceed as requested, there will be conflicting schedules.

● (1305)

Mr. Gérard Asselin: Do you have unanimous consent?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The member asks for unanimous consent. Do we have it? Thence, the matter has been settled.

Mr. Bélanger?

Mr. Gérard Asselin: We don't have it?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Yes, you do. There are no objections.

Mr. Asselin, you have the floor.

Mr. Gérard Asselin: My question goes to Mr. Young.

I have divided the questions we are presently debating into six different points.

The Parliamentary Librarian has identified a need. To meet this need, a mandate has been given. This mandate is reflected in the report submitted in which there are recommendations. The next steps would be implementation and operations.

Has the Parliamentary Librarian established an implementation schedule for the recommendations? Do we have the material, human and financial resources to do so?

Mr. William R. Young: Thank you. First, I would like to point out that Mr. Nanos is a consultant and that the report ...

[English]

is in the form of a consultant's report and advice, which I am sharing with the committee. It is not a series of recommendations that needs to be adopted, either by the library or the committee. We had the results of this report a few months ago when I was preparing the strategic outlook for the library, which I presented to you last week. In broad terms, the recommendations from the study are reflected in the approach taken in the strategic outlook, which will determine the future of the library in the next few years. What we will be doing next is a planning process where we will be looking seriously at how we can incorporate the recommendations from this report.

But to tell you the truth, the reason we presented this report to the committee as representatives of all parliamentarians from both houses was that it was important for me to get your views on what you felt was important in the report, so that I could then do some concrete planning and come back to you next year with concrete proposals to move forward.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Thank you.

Mr. Nanos, concerning the new media, much has been said about rights. If, as parliamentarians, we implement what we call social media, can we have the assurance, in view of the present events, that personal information will remain personal? Much has also been said about partisanship and other such things. As Mr. Bélanger pointed out, we live in a democracy and we belong to different political parties. Accordingly, it stands to reason that we defend our position and that of Canadians from different points of view.

Can we have the assurance that things will be done in a democratic fashion, that social groups won't be the only ones to have access to these media, in short, that everyone will have equal treatment?

[English]

Mr. Nik Nanos: I think there are actually two things at play. One that definitely came through in the consultations was that people were concerned about the quality of information in what I'll call the Web 2.0 world. I think the reliability of information is a particular sweet spot for the Library of Parliament, which is what people are looking for.

In terms of the privacy of personal data, many companies have been trying to internalize discussions in order to protect their clients a little more and have more robust protection of privacy than having discussion taking place all over the web.

My personal view is that I don't think there's a guarantee for anything anywhere, but in terms of younger voters especially, they want to know that when they get information it's reliable. They are very sophisticated consumers of information out there. They look at Wikipedia and they know there are mistakes in Wikipedia. Right? So I think there is a role for a robust, accessible, reliable source of information, regardless of what's on Google, that people would want to see. So there are no guarantees on the privacy front, sorry, but I think there's definitely an appetite for reliable information.

● (1310)

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): There are no further names on the list, but I have a question, since we have extended the time.

What about information overload? We have people twittering and many who are getting into problems after twittering in the heat of the moment. You have all of these other media for information. At what point, in your opinion, do people simply tune out?

As you indicated before, there's a whole bunch of people not interested in politics. We're trying to engage people. If we give them too much information, my concern is that they wouldn't know what to believe and what's right, what's wrong, not only in partisan terms but also in a host of information they're receiving.

Is there anywhere in your research where that concern has been raised, particularly among younger people?

Mr. Nik Nanos: Absolutely. We call it drinking from the fire hose. There's so much information out there it's rendered useless.

Thematically, what we've seen in other areas is where people are looking to aggregators of information where information is aggregated and synthesized so it can be consumable. Realistically, what you're looking at, the model that most news organizations and other information organizations are looking at, is mass customization of information. For example, perhaps in the future when people are interested in democracy they might pick specific subject areas or individuals. They're not going to get everything. This goes back to key words or tags that this is what they're interested in. They will exercise the role of managing how big that fire hose is based on how wide or how narrow their information request is. From a functionality point of view, this is probably going to be a key factor that the library is going to have to consider, not just having everything accessible or fast, but having a mechanism to control that fire hose of information, so to speak, so it can be consumed.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): And not only the volume, but the substance of the facts. We see with a fragmented audience the media are cutting back substantially in their reporters, researchers, and stories may be getting out much more quickly. They're not being checked. And once they're out, 48 hours later the correction comes out and doesn't carry the same impact. It seems to me the library would have a significant role to play here in being right all the time, as opposed to most of the time, which some of the media are. I see reporters now trying to record and write stories, blog, and I don't know where they find the time. Researchers are not double-checking stories, information, facts. Is the public concerned about this? Are they concerned about if what they're hearing is right or it's just somebody's opinion?

Mr. Nik Nanos: In terms of the media they're quite concerned. That's why this goes to the reliability and trustability of information as being a key advantage, key benefit, and value. Many news organizations are trying to come to grips with this. We're seeing different strategies where some are going shallow and some are going very deep. What it comes down to is the importance of the reliability and trustability of the source and the quality of the information and being able to access it as being key factors.

• (1315)

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Thank you very much.

Unless there are further questions, we'll conclude this part of the meeting.

Thank you very much for your presentations and taking the time to answer so many questions.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Honourable Senators, members of the House of Commons, given that we are already more than 15 minutes late on our agenda, I'll move forward to the second item.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 81(5), we now turn to the Supplementary Estimates (B) 2010-2011: Vote 10b, under PARLIAMENT, referred to the Committee on Tuesday, November 2, 2010. Our witness, William R. Young, is assisted by Mrs. Chartrand.

I note that the Member Bélanger...

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I have proposed and propose once more that this part of the Supplementary Budget be carried as submitted. This is an amount of \$600,000 that we have to spend because it is part of collective agreements. As I see it, there is no need for discussion.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): We have a motion.

Mr. Asselin has a question.

Go ahead.

Mr. Gérard Asselin: Mr. Chair, before the vote, I would like to say that in the documents, in the French and English versions of the documents, the numbers are not the same. The French and English versions do not contain the same information.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Are we to approve the numbers in the French or English version? Which one has the lesser amount?

A voice: In English.

Mr. Gérard Asselin: I haven't added the numbers, but the cost seems lower in the French version.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Both versions have \$600,000.

Mr. Gérard Asselin: I don't have the same numbers.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Mr. Young, any comments?

Mr. William R. Young: I don't know. The document I have contains the

[English]

submissions to the speakers.

[Translation]

I don't have the numbers.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): According to you, the numbers in both the French and English versions are the same? Are they Arabic numbers?

[English]

Mr. William R. Young: The documents that were signed by the speakers are exactly the same in terms of the amounts. So the amounts that I submitted to Treasury Board are the same in the French and English documents.

• (1320)

[Translation]

Mme Sylvie Boucher: Where are the differences in the two versions?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Are we agreed that the numbers are the same?

[English]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It's \$600,000.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Shall we report vote 10b under Parliament to both houses?

PARLIAMENT

Library of Parliament

Vote 10b—Program expenditures.....\$600,000

(Vote 10b agreed to)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Are we going to discuss future business?

An hon. member: It's not on the agenda.

An hon. member: At the next meeting.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: When is the next meeting, Mr. Chairman?

[Translation]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): No meeting has been scheduled for the moment. We shall...

[English]

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Exactly.

When are we going to discuss whether we could do a study on the role of technology and Canada's response to the Parliament 2020 report?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is it the will of the committee to set a date for the next meeting?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: But I don't know whether it's the will of the committee to actually do a study on this and to hear the international experts and be able to hear what's possible in terms of even setting some priority. I don't know whether we can decide that today or whether you want to have a meeting just to explore that study.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): I think we should have a meeting, because people weren't prepared for that today. And I think the next meeting should be set in the next week or two and we'll put it on the agenda.

[Translation]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Go ahead, Madam Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I don't object to the study of new technologies. However, each person could also express his or her opinion, in writing, about topics to be discussed at the next meeting. It would be important to know that.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Chair, is it possible to find out if the three other countries participating in this exercise have concluded their review?

Mr. William R. Young: Chile has done so.

[English]

The United Kingdom has done its part. Australia and New Zealand have not completed theirs. So we do not have the full international comparison. But certainly I know that the U.K. and Chile have findings.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I think it would be worthwhile in the next week or two, even if we don't have the five but we have three, to give this a kick and see what happens.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): How long would it take you to prepare a presentation for a meeting—

Mr. William R. Young: It depends on the subject of the meeting.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): —if we want both those countries?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: We would have no media. Just bring them in by video conference.

Mr. William R. Young: The clerks of the joint committee would be the ones who could organize this for you.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Go ahead, Madam Bennett.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: I think, as the parliamentary librarian stated, we could have Lord Allan, Richard Allan, who was one of the developers of the openparliament website, or we could have the U.K. equivalent, Professor Stephen Coleman, at University of Leeds, who's been leading a lot of the work on e-parliament and government. I think there would be a number of witnesses we would like to hear. We could also have video conference hearings with the three countries, or even all five. Even the ones that haven't done their work yet must have some initiatives or at least have begun to say what they're going to do.

Mr. William R. Young: I was just going to say that I'd be delighted to submit some names to your clerks and researchers, which is, I think, the appropriate way to proceed. The members of the committee may also have other suggestions.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Mr. Clarke.

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, CPC): If I can just save some time for the committee here, we

can maybe have the steering committee sit down and discuss the avenue they wish to take.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I don't think the members of the steering committee would mind that.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Who was on the steering committee? We've never met.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): We now have two joint chairs and we have a vice-president, but we have not yet been constituted as a steering committee.

• (1325)

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): Anyway, we have a recommendation for a submission of written proposals and suggestions. We'll set the date for the next meeting, obviously within the next couple of weeks, which is what I hear people want to do.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: May I ask a question?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Go ahead, Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Will there be a steering committee? If so, can we consult it? If a committee must be appointed, I understand that there has to be a representative from each party and that the committee must also have a reasonably balanced representation from both Houses of Parliament.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): The clerk is checking to see if it's allowed. It will just be a moment. It may be longer.

Clerk, why don't you speak to it?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Does the Senate allow steering committees?

A voice: Oh, yes. We have them all the time.

The Joint Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Paul Cardegna): If I may, during the first meeting of this committee in this Parliament, on April 22, 2010, the committee agreed:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be composed of the Joint Chairs, the Vice-Chairs, and three (3) other members of the Committee representing, from the Senate, the Conservative Party, and from the House of Commons, the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party, to be designated after the usual consultations;

and that the Subcommittee be empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Committee with respect to its agenda, to invite witnesses, and to schedule hearings.

Actually, we only have one vice-chair now, Monsieur Bélanger. The committee can elect others if it wants to.

Also, “designated after the usual consultations” would imply that we consult with the whips. The whips of the Conservative Party in the House have not yet sent us a representative from the committee for the steering committee.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): The members from those parties here should speak to their whips so that we can get this steering committee up and running.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: If I'm not mistaken, *monsieur le président*, the reason the Bloc is not mentioned is that Monsieur Plamondon, I believe, was a vice-chair, as well, and that's why there was no reference in that motion to including the Bloc.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Paul Cardegnà): That is true. The motion could be amended to include a reference to the Bloc Québécois, or alternatively, prior, there was a second vice-chair elected, who represented the Bloc Québécois caucus. It was actually Monsieur Asselin last time.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): We will ask the clerk as well to contact the whips, but if the party members here could also speak to the whips, that would be very helpful.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Therefore, I don't think we need to wait for the steering committee. I think there is consensus here that we would like to proceed with a follow-up to the report we heard today, and if—

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The co-chairs are getting along on this. We'll get it done within a couple of—

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): We also would like to have the steering committee, because it represents—

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Yes, but we don't need to wait for the steering committee for you guys to sort out the program.

The Joint Chair (Senator Percy Downe): We'd like to have a steering committee, so we can meet.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Thank you for trusting us.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Another decision we have to make is whether to have another vice-chair—as we had Monsieur Plamondon—or to add a representative from the Bloc. That decision has to be made, and we have to set a date.

[*Translation*]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Mr. Bélanger, that is a question for the committee to decide. The suggestion has been made.

The meeting is adjourned.

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>