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—
Co-Chairs

The Honourable Marie-P. Charette-Poulin

Mr. Richard Harris

Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament

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• (1200)

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC)): Good afternoon, colleagues.

The first part of our meeting today will be an information session. From the Library of Parliament, we have Sonia L'Heureux, parliamentary librarian, and we have Lynn Brodie, director general of the information and document resource service.

Before we deal with the motion put forward by Mr. Simms, as a result of the last meeting, there was a desire to ask questions of the parliamentary librarian and her director in order to clarify questions regarding the viability of the motion, etc.

We're going to go into a little presentation first.

Yes, Mr. Bevington?

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Are we still on the agenda?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Could I get through with this?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Yes, sure.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): We're going to go to a presentation by the chief librarian, and Lynn Brodie, the director of information services. Following that, we'll go to some questions from committee members.

Sonia, the floor is yours.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Chair, on the agenda, as we talked earlier, I was looking to see if we could get five or ten minutes at the end of the meeting to talk about issues that might be—

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Mr. Bevington, could you bring that up after the presentation? The librarian has a busy schedule, so I'd like to get that done first.

Go ahead.

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux (Parliamentary Librarian, Library of Parliament): Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair.

Honourable senators, members of Parliament, co-chairs, it is my pleasure to address the committee today on the matter of the digitization of parliamentary documents in relation to Mr. Simms' motion.

For the record, Mr. Simms' motion reads as follows:

That, whereas the Library of Parliament already scans Sessional Papers which are tabled in response to Order Paper Questions in the House of Commons, and makes the scanned copies available on the Parliamentary Intranet, that the Library of Parliament provide unfettered access for all Canadians to these same documents on the public internet site, and that such access be provided, to all existing and future scanned Sessional Papers, as soon as practicable.

To be clear, Mr. Simms' motion pertains to sessional papers tabled in response to a question on the order paper in the House of Commons.

[Translation]

We are appearing before the committee today because debate on Mr. Simms' motion was suspended to allow the Library of Parliament to answer your questions.

Today, I am accompanied by Ms. Brodie, the director of the Library of Parliament's Information and Document Resource Service. The service that Ms. Brodie oversees is responsible for the digitization of sessional papers and access to them, among other things.

I would first like to point out that the library already fills an important role by providing parliamentarians with sessional papers in digital format. Mr. Simms is quite right when he states that the library already digitizes written replies to *Order Paper* questions in the House of Commons. In fact, we have been scanning these documents since 2010. Even more to the point, the Library of Parliament is planning to give the public access to the scanned documents during this fiscal year, which would meet the objective of the motion.

In order to explain to you how we will go about this, I would first like to describe the context in which we are working.

[English]

The Standing Orders of the House of Commons are silent on sessional papers and say little in terms of procedures about responses to questions on the order paper. However, according to O'Brien and Bosc, sessional papers are defined as:

Any reports or documents (other than bills) formally presented in the House or filed with the Clerk are called sessional papers and are assigned sessional paper numbers by the Journals Branch.

These papers are tabled in print format, and copies are available through the Library of Parliament. Access should be granted to the public for their review.

It is important to point out that from a historical perspective, the library holds and preserves a complete collection of sessional papers tabled in the House of Commons. It is equally important to acknowledge that because of the printed nature of these documents, their accessibility is more limited.

The library began scanning sessional papers in September 2010, as a pilot project. The intention of this project was to respond efficiently to multiple requests within short timeframes. This service has since become part of our regular operations due to consistent and strong demand among parliamentary users. As a result, the library provides parliamentary users with convenient and timely access to the content of sessional papers in a digital format.

• (1205)

[Translation]

Many types of reports and documents are tabled by the government in the House of Commons or with the clerk. Of course, replies to *Order Paper* questions are among these documents, but there are also documents concerning government policies or measures, reports from royal commissions, draft bills, ways and means motions, responses to committee reports and petitions, various annual reports and the list of order in council appointments.

The sessional papers that the library scans include replies to *Order Paper* questions and represent by far the largest number of scanned documents. As of March 31, 2014, the library had scanned 1,650 replies to *Order Paper* questions, for a total of over 167,000 pages.

[English]

All digitized sessional papers are stored in an internal repository and are connected to our online catalogue. Currently, the catalogue and repository are available only to parliamentarians and their staff, Senate and House of Commons administration, library employees, and other clients having access to the parliamentary network, such as the Press Gallery.

All sessional papers scanned by the library are searchable according to their description, which includes the type of sessional paper, the question number from the order paper, the date the question was asked, as well as the name of the member who requested the information.

Once a specific sessional paper is located using this information, the content is fully searchable.

[Translation]

Mr. Simms' motion explicitly mentions access of Canadians to all existing and future sessional papers as soon as practicable. The library intends to provide the public with online access to its catalogue. Similar to a number of other legislative libraries around the world, the library wants to provide public access to its catalogue, which should be accessible at all times, from anywhere and on any device.

Our ultimate goal is to provide parliamentarians with the best tools to help them access our collections and find the resources and services they need. Achieving this goal corresponds to one of the priorities set out in the library's strategic outlook, which is to increase the digital access to the information we provide.

By making its catalogue public, the library will give Canadians access to the sessional papers it is digitizing and will meet the objective set out in this motion.

[English]

Unfortunately, the catalogue is currently not accessible by the public. This is a situation the library is working to resolve in collaboration with our colleagues at the House of Commons administration in light of their role as our main IT service provider. Some specific investment in IT infrastructure and software is required. We hope to have all the necessary tools in place this fiscal year to enable public access to the library catalogue. As always, the smooth and efficient conduct of parliamentary business relies on the combined and coordinated efforts of all partners on the Hill.

I would like to reassure members of the joint committee that the library is working with its partners from the House of Commons on this file, thus ensuring that you, and on your behalf, the Canadian public, receive the best service possible.

[Translation]

Ms. Brodie and I are available to answer your questions.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin (Ontario (Ontario North), Lib.): Ms. L'Heureux, thank you very much for your presentation, which was very informative.

[English]

Colleagues, are there questions?

[Translation]

Are there any questions about the librarian's presentation?

Go ahead, Mr. Simms.

[English]

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Thank you very much.

You need a specific investment in IT. Is that correct? Can you explain a little further what exactly you need in order to provide what we're asking for?

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: Essentially most of our tools interface with the parliamentary network, and we would open that up to the public. We would need to meet a certain level of technical infrastructure and security thresholds to make sure there's no threat to the parliamentary network in opening up our applications to the public.

I don't know, Lynn, if you can go further into the technical details of what is required.

•(1210)

Ms. Lynn Brodie (Director General, Information and Document Resource Service, Library of Parliament): In terms of preserving the sessional papers themselves, we would actually have to do a little bit of investment in raising the standard with which we scan the sessional papers at this time. Right now we scan them to a level that is appropriate for disseminating them, sending them out rapidly. They're what I would probably describe as more of a convenience copy. They're perfectly readable, but they're done very quickly. There's optical character recognition done, so they are fully searchable. If we were going to preserve them and load them on the website, we'd want to improve the standard.

Mr. Scott Simms: That's the second step in the process to do that, make it public, which you're endeavouring to do, I might add.

How far away are we from doing it? Did you say this fiscal year?

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: That's correct.

Mr. Scott Simms: The whole process should be complete by the end of this fiscal year.

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: That's correct.

Mr. Scott Simms: This time next year I can sit here and I can go through all of my order paper questions, and anybody in my riding....

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: That's what I would like to be able to do, yes.

Mr. Scott Simms: All right. Do you think that's feasible by then?

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: That's what we're going forward with. That's what we're working with the House of Commons IT department to achieve.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay. I'm just trying to keep in mind where we are right now. I understand the pressures you're under, and I certainly do think this is not a cheap endeavour. I'm sure it's expensive.

What kind of costs are we looking at?

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin: Thank you, Mr. Simms.

I already have three other names on the list of questioners.

[Translation]

Ms. Moore and Senators Rivard and Eaton.

[English]

We're looking at the agenda that we have. The co-chair and I thought that maybe we'd limit questions to 20 minutes, so that we could move to the motion, if you all agree.

I see agreement. Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Moore has the floor.

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): My question is a little technical. It has to do with your process. Are you using text recognition software? What technology are you using?

Ms. Lynn Brodie: We are currently scanning the sessional papers that are received at the library. We receive them in a number of different formats. Some are very short; others are very long. We scan them and then put them through a software program that does text

recognition, which allows the user to carry out a full-text search of the file.

Having said that, I can't tell you the exact name of the software used, but it is pretty thorough.

Ms. Christine Moore: Perfect. That answers my question.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin: Thank you, Ms. Moore.

Senator Rivard.

Hon. Michel Rivard (Senator, Quebec (The Laurentians), C): Thank you, Madam Co-Chair.

I would like to know whether the initiative of this motion will include Senate documents as well.

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: For the time being, the library does not have a role relating to Senate documents, which are managed by Senate administration.

Hon. Michel Rivard: Would it be possible? If so, what would it cost and what impact would it have on your service?

Ms. Lynn Brodie: We currently do not receive sessional papers from the Senate. Unless I'm mistaken, Senate documents are assigned a unique number by the Senate Journals. Then, the Journals service stores them and provides them to Senate Archives at the end of the parliamentary session, at which point they become administrative documents of the Senate.

Therefore, the library does not receive them. However, if the library did receive them, we could proceed in exactly the same way.

•(1215)

Hon. Michel Rivard: Would you be able to determine the additional costs and human resources needed were a proposal to be accepted that would enable the library to make the Senate documents public, as they do with House of Commons documents?

Ms. Lynn Brodie: We could possibly determine the costs if we knew how many documents we would receive. However, since we do not currently receive them, we can't know how much work would be involved.

Hon. Michel Rivard: In other words, the Senate must take this initiative. It is not up to you to do the research to determine the costs and consequences.

Thank you.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin: Thank you, Senator Rivard.

[English]

Senator Eaton, to be followed by Mr. Bevington.

[Translation]

Hon. Nicole Eaton (Senator, Ontario, C): Thank you, senator.

[English]

Is this motion retroactive, or are you talking about what's coming now and going forward?

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: I can't speak to the intention of the motion, but in terms of what we have, we started to digitize in 2010. We would move forward in making our holdings available based on what we started to digitize in 2010.

Having said that, there are other activities in the library for which we started to digitize information. For example, some of you might have recently come to the library where we have an exhibit on the historical debates. The debates were an initiative in which the library digitized all the historical debates of the Senate and the House of Commons.

We're now starting to think about what the next parliamentary document would be that might be of interest and of greater use from a historical perspective that we could start digitizing.

As far as the motion is concerned, I am not sure what the intention would be, but in terms of our holdings, we do not have the holdings in a digitized format before 2010 .

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin: Colleagues, just to give you notice, the motion hasn't been tabled yet, Senator Eaton. If you have questions on the motion itself, I'll bear that in mind and I'll bring you back, if that's all right with you.

Hon. Nicole Eaton: No, no, that's fine.

Regarding what you've been digitizing since 2010, may I ask where you are at now?

Ms. Lynn Brodie: We've digitized the sessional papers of the House of Commons, three particular series, one of which is referred to in the motion, which is responses to written questions, as well as another category called production of papers, and the third one, which is miscellaneous. Those are the three that we have been scanning since 2010. Those are already available to anybody who's connected to the parliamentary network. So we're up to date.

Hon. Nicole Eaton: Thank you.

[Translation]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin: Thank you, Senator Eaton.

[English]

Mr. Bevington.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: You have a plan in place now to move forward with digitization and opening up these opportunities for the public to access information. Could you describe to me how that plan has come about and what the main fundamentals of the plan are, what the philosophy of the plan is?

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: What we've noticed among our parliamentary clientele is that increasingly people wanted to consult documents in a digital format. There are all sorts of reasons for that. For example, you may have employees in your offices who are in different buildings and they want to access things electronically. They would ask us to scan a copy and send it through electronic means. There was a strong demand. We had a high demand for the responses to written questions in the sessional papers. That's why we started a pilot project to digitize them. Clearly, the demand did not go away, so we decided to continue with that.

Similarly, when we looked at other requests from our parliamentary clientele, historical debates was another area where we got a lot of demand. Now we're looking at the future in terms of what we would want to digitize, given how parliamentarians and their staff are working. We're looking at what's being used and what we could make more accessible more easily. That informs how we move forward.

• (1220)

Mr. Dennis Bevington: This is an internal plan. Have you had input from this committee before on the process of digitization, what the first steps should be, what the ultimate goal is, those types of things? Has the committee taken an active role in that?

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: There has not been an active role from the committee. It's been largely informed by the uses by parliamentarians.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Do you go to other legislatures to determine how they are moving in this direction? Is there a sense of being part of a general movement on the part of legislatures around the world to create these types of conditions?

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: I would say most of our colleagues, whether it's around the world or in Canada...our provincial legislatures are moving to digitize their collections. I don't know if there are specific examples to quote.

Ms. Lynn Brodie: Most of the legislatures, for one thing, have public catalogues and they may or may not use them to make available what they've digitized. It's a fairly straightforward process for us to do it that way, which is why we've preferred that. We've done some exercises over the last few years to determine sort of a digitization agenda. We're working currently on a strategy.

One of the things we have to consider is where we're going to actually store anything that we digitize. We've determined it was important to know where we were going to store it, how we were going to store it, who it was going to be accessible to, and could we maintain it going forward.

In terms of doing the debates of the House of Commons and the Senate, because we had not resolved the digital storage question, we actually are partnering with an outside organization that is in the process of becoming a trusted digital repository, which is an ISO standard around the world. They were able to do a lot of the storage work and the OCR work more effectively than we could.

At this point, we're looking at what our next items are on our agenda for digitizing. Certainly, the *Journals* of both the Senate and the House are items that are frequently requested. As Madam L'Heureux said, a lot of our thinking in this is really based on what is used, what is requested, both by the public and by yourselves as our primary users.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Out of this motion that we're dealing with today, do you anticipate that this changes your plans in any way, or would it be true to say that this motion may assist you in applying for more resources to actually accomplish the work in an expeditious fashion?

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux: I think we're aligned with the intention of the motion. This is something we already planned to do. Obviously, if the committee is supportive of the motion, it expresses a will from the committee which we can use as feedback when we do discuss our level of resources.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin): Thank you, Mr. Bevington.

I don't see any other requests for questions.

[*Translation*]

Ms. L'Heureux and Ms. Brodie, thank you so much for taking the time to prepare the information related to the motion.

I would also like to sincerely thank you for taking the time to be here today.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Mr. Butt.

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Can we get a clarification from Mr. Simms on his motion that this is on a go-forward basis, that his motion is not retroactive, to digitize millions of documents back to Confederation? This is on a go-forward basis, is it not? Can we get that clarification?

• (1225)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): I think the motion has to be presented first, and then we'll get clarification on it.

Mr. Simms, I understand you have a motion you'd like to present.

Mr. Scott Simms: I would like to present this motion, Sir.

Do I have to read it into the record?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): I think we'll just resume debate.

Mr. Scott Simms: That's correct, because we've started debate.

I'd like to move this motion.

I'll address what was brought up earlier. I would like for them to make public what is available to them right now. That's why I say at the end of it, whatever is practicable. I understand there are limitations to this and in many cases we're gingerly stepping into the digital world. There are cost restraints as well; I understand that. That's all I want out of this. I won't say go forward, because that only includes today and beyond. I would say whatever is available is really what I'm looking at. That's why I left it open-ended at practicable.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): All right. We'll begin debate.

Are there any questions?

Mr. Brad Butt: I appreciate what Mr. Simms is trying to do and what he's saying. I have a problem with the wording, because I think it really opens it up. This could be an enormous expense. I think it requires judgment on the part of the staff as to what they believe is ready and available and what somebody else looking for something to be digitized would think.

I really wish the motion were tighter. I think I understand what Mr. Simms is trying to do, and on a go-forward basis I completely get

that. I'm supportive of that. I simply have a problem that the wording of the motion isn't tight enough for me to know that we're not getting into tens or hundreds of millions of dollars of expense to do this thing, based on the way it has been worded.

That's my concern, Mr. Chair.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Do you want to respond to that, Mr. Simms?

Mr. Scott Simms: It didn't seem to be a problem. Our witnesses seemed to be implying that the motion sanctifies what they're doing already. I never got the impression it was impractical or not possible or anything like that. At this stage in the game, I can only say to you, make an amendment.

I'm fine with it as is, obviously.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Is there any further discussion or questions?

Mr. Brad Butt: Well, sure.

Co-Chairs, if you'll permit, I think the witnesses have indicated today that they already started this process in 2010, so I would move an amendment to the motion that it start at that time and on a go-forward basis.

Mr. Scott Simms: You can't have both.

Mr. Brad Butt: That would be my amendment: from 2010 onward, until today and beyond.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Sure.

I think we'll get a copy of the amendment.

Mr. Bevington.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: If we are going to do it by date, I think it would probably be better to do it through the date of Parliament, so that would be the 39th or 40th Parliament.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): This is the 41st Parliament.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: The 40th would have been in 2010. I'd say, as a friendly amendment, move it to the beginning of that particular Parliament. I think it would be useful to take it from that time.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms: I think Mr. Bevington is correct. We are talking about sessional papers. We might as well hold it to the actual session where it begins. I think he has a good point.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Okay.

Mr. Brad Butt: Do you mean the beginning of the 40th Parliament?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Yes.

Mr. Brad Butt: Okay, I can live with that.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): It seems we have some good agreement going here, so maybe Mr. Butt will read the amendment into the record.

Senator Rivard.

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Rivard: The librarian just said that she had nothing from the Senate. If we support the motion, we include the Senate. I think we should remove the part of the motion that refers to the Senate. We can decide today for the House of Commons, because there seems to be a majority or a consensus. But based on the librarian's response that there was absolutely nothing from the Senate, I think we are making a commitment without consultation.

• (1230)

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Senator, I don't see the words "the Senate" in the motion.

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Rivard: Unless I don't have the right document. It was submitted on Monday, May 12, by Scott Simms. Paragraph (a) reads, "any reply to a Written Question tabled in the Senate pursuant to Senate Rule 4-10".

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): You're looking at the wrong motion.

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Rivard: So who should we blame for sending the document?

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin): You are ahead of the whole group. One moment.

Hon. Michel Rivard: I withdraw my comments.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Okay, could we hear the amendment, Mr. Butt?

Mr. Brad Butt: Do you want me to read the whole motion as amended?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Okay.

Mr. Brad Butt: Why don't I do that. Then everybody will know what we're talking about:

That, whereas the Library of Parliament already scans Sessional Papers which are tabled in response to Order Paper Questions in the House of Commons, and makes the scanned copies available on the Parliamentary Intranet, that the Library of Parliament provide unfettered access for all Canadians to these same documents on the public internet site, and that such access be provided, from the beginning of the 40th Parliament and future scanned Sessional Papers, as soon as practicable.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin): Mr. Butt, just for your information, the clerk has given me on his iPad the date the 40th Parliament began—

Mr. Brad Butt: I don't know; I wasn't here.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin): —and you might want to know that it began in 2008.

Mr. Brad Butt: Yes, I know it was 2008, but I don't know the actual date, but I'm fine with that.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin): November 18.

Mr. Brad Butt: November 18, okay. I wasn't here.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Mr. Simms, how do you sit with that friendly amendment?

Mr. Scott Simms: Perfectly; my feet still can't touch the floor, but I'm sitting perfectly.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Mr. Mayes.

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): I just want to make sure it's understood that they have to go back and they have to do some work, and that likely they can do that over the summer when Parliament isn't active. I don't want to see any sort of timeframe to finish the scanning of those papers from the start of the 40th Parliament until—they started in 2010, so they're going to have to go back two years, right?

Mr. Scott Simms: It's 2008 now.

Mr. Colin Mayes: Or 2008. Yes, that's right. They're going to have to go back two years. I just don't want to see any pressure. Let's do it as time allows and budgets allow, as long as that is understood.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Yes, actually, the motion ends with the words "as soon as practicable".

Mr. Scott Simms: Yes.

Mr. Mayes, if I may say so very briefly, that's why the word is there, for the concerns that you just expressed.

Mr. Colin Mayes: Thank you.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer (Senator, Nova Scotia (Northend Halifax), Lib.): It would be helpful if the librarian updated us periodically on the progress.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): We could ask for that.

Colleagues, the amendment has been moved and I see general agreement. Could we perhaps have a show of hands and then we can deal with this quickly?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): Now we have a vote on the motion as amended. Do you want to do it the same way, with a show of hands?

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): That was easy. Thank you.

I think we have something.

Mr. Bevington had made a request.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: I've had a request from Carol Hughes, whom I'm replacing today, to see if we could reserve five or ten minutes at the end of the meeting to talk about important issues that the committee should be meeting on and encouraging ideas for future business, which could perhaps instruct the subcommittee in preparing some issues for the fall session.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): I think Ms. Hughes brought that up the last time, and there was a question about whether we actually had a subcommittee or whether we were going to form one. I would suggest that one of the things we deal with at our next meeting be whether we're going to have a standing subcommittee or whether we'll have an ad hoc committee when we think we need it.

I'd like to reserve that one possibly for our fall meeting. That's probably a good time to have Ms. Hughes give input into that committee, if that's the way we go.

Mr. Nunez-Melo, go ahead.

• (1235)

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Excuse me, sir. Did you say next week?

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): No, in the fall, the next meeting.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: [*Inaudible—Editor*] library committee.

The Joint Chair (Mr. Richard Harris): All right. That appears to be all.

[*Translation*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin): Thank you very much. We will see you in the fall.

Senator Mercer, did you want to add something?

[*English*]

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Colleagues, I had wanted to raise the issue of the appearance of the Parliamentary Budget Officer before the committee. It is my understanding the Parliamentary Budget Officer reports to Parliament through this committee, and I think it's time we heard from the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

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