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—
Co-Chairs

Mr. Gagan Sikand

The Honourable Lucie Moncion

Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament

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• (1200)

[*Translation*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion (Senator, Ontario, ISG)): Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome.

You have received the agenda. Today, we are meeting with Heather Lank, nominee for the position of parliamentary librarian.

Right now, eight people want to ask questions. Normally, the time allocated is five minutes per person. Should more people want to take the floor and we are running out of time, I will possibly decrease the speaking time, just so that everyone has time to ask questions. We will see how things go.

Ms. Lank is the nominee for the position of parliamentary librarian.

Do you have opening remarks?

Ms. Heather P. Lank (Nominee for the position of Parliamentary Librarian, As an Individual): Yes.

I want to sincerely thank all the members of the committee and joint co-chairs.

[*English*]

Thank you very much for the invitation to appear before you as the nominee to become the next parliamentary librarian. I am honoured to be here and to be considered for this position. I feel that I have been preparing for this job for the last 30 years. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to tell you about my background and how I believe it has prepared me for the challenge, and to answer any questions you might have.

I would be thrilled to be the successor to Madam L'Heureux, who has so ably led the library since 2012.

[*Translation*]

You will know from my resume that I obtained my master's and doctorate in sociology from the University of Toronto, where I developed a deep appreciation for the importance of quality research and analysis, as well as the value of library resources.

I began my career on Parliament Hill as a committee clerk in 1991, where I worked closely with analysts from the library to provide non-partisan, professional support to many standing and special committees. I quickly came to appreciate the importance of the work of the library.

Once I was promoted to management in 1997, I worked closely with my library colleagues to ensure that committees received the best support possible.

Working with committees gave me a deep understanding of the needs of parliamentarians to be effective in their work, as well as a keen appreciation for the multiplicity of stakeholders in the parliamentary environment, including witnesses, government departments and interested members of the public.

As Principal Clerk of Committees from 1999 to 2015, I led a team of procedural clerks and other employees supporting some 20 committees, while also being deeply involved in strategic and corporate files, both within the Senate administration and in support of the Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration.

In 2015, I became the principal clerk of the Chamber Operations and Procedure Office. In this capacity, I am responsible for the administrative, procedural and informational support to sittings of the Senate, as well as for providing procedural advice to the Speaker of the Senate, all other senators and their staff. I am also responsible for the production and publication of the official records of the Senate, including the *Journals* and *Debates*, in digital and hard copy, in both official languages.

I have led the directorate through technological and organizational transformation, developing and implementing a new information system, which supports the legislative functions of the Senate.

The creation, capture and management of parliamentary information are an essential part of my current responsibilities, and the skills required to be effective in my current job would serve me well should I become the next parliamentary librarian.

In both committees and Chamber operations, outreach and education have been at the core of my work. I, along with members of my team, have developed and offered procedural training seminars to parliamentarians and their staff on a wide variety of topics over the last 20 years. I have also reached out to the library and the House of Commons, as well to parliamentary relations officers in the public service, to invite them to our seminars, as I believe profoundly in the value of sharing knowledge, collaboration and learning from one another. I have developed numerous educational and training tools, many in collaboration with the Library of Parliament.

For over a decade, I have been a parliamentary advisor to one of the library's flagship programs: the Teachers' Institute for Canadian Parliamentary Democracy. In that capacity, I worked closely with my library colleagues to develop and deliver the committee simulation that wraps up this program.

●(1205)

I have been very fortunate to be able to share my knowledge of Parliament with colleagues across the country, foreign legislators, and many groups, of all ages, who come to the Hill. It would be a true pleasure to lead an organization that has education and outreach as a core function.

[English]

I believe that my background has prepared me for the position for which I've been nominated in three key ways.

First, I have a deep knowledge and understanding of the clients of the library, including parliamentarians, committees, and parliamentary associations. I understand that clients have different needs and ways that they prefer to be served and that the library must be flexible in meeting those needs.

Second, I understand the parliamentary environment in all its complexity. I appreciate where the library fits into that environment—directed by the two Speakers, advised by this committee, and serving both Houses in a non-partisan way. I am cognizant of the many important relationships the parliamentary librarian must develop and sustain to be effective, including with the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the Parliamentary Protective Service, Public Services and Procurement Canada, and of course, the Senate and the House of Commons. Throughout my career I have looked for ways to collaborate with many partners on and off the Hill, and I would build on these relationships and continue to work in a collaborative way in my new role.

Third, as a leader and as a manager I have had the privilege of working with and developing agile, innovative, and effective teams to support Parliament. I have spent my career working with and for parliamentarians of all political parties and groups, developing relationships of trust and providing non-partisan, professional support. I would look forward to working with the members of this committee and all parliamentarians if I am confirmed in this position.

I have huge respect for the library, its executive team, and its employees, and I would be committed to continuing to build flexible, engaged, professional teams with a focus on excellence—all qualities that I know are essential to the success of the library.

The organization will be faced with many challenges during the coming year and thereafter, including the closure of Centre Block and the library's iconic main branch and the opening of new branches in the West Block and the Government Conference Centre. The visitor welcome centre will open and the tourists will have to be reconceived, as Canadians will no longer have physical access to Centre Block.

I know that Madam L'Heureux and her team have already done a great deal to prepare for these changes, and I would look forward to working with my colleagues at the library to ensure that Canadians

and visitors from around the world continue to have memorable experiences when they come to both the Senate and the House of Commons in their new buildings.

Of course, it is service to parliamentarians that is at the very heart of the library's mandate. My professional experience has prepared me well to lead the organization in meeting your needs and those of committees and parliamentary associations. I have always made consultations with parliamentarians central to my work, for example, by getting regular input from committee chairs and deputy chairs on how to improve services, and by reaching out to new parliamentarians to identify their needs and provide the information, training, and tools they require to be effective in their roles. If I'm confirmed as the parliamentary librarian, I would look forward to working with you and both Speakers to ensure that the needs of all parliamentarians are well understood and met.

I would also make it a priority to reach out across the country in all its diversity so that the Library of Parliament becomes better known to Canada's best and brightest as a place they might want to work. I know that the library has outstanding employees who are deeply committed to serving Parliament, parliamentarians, and the public. I would like energetic and engaged subject-matter experts, librarians, and other professionals from a variety of backgrounds to know that the Library of Parliament is a dynamic, healthy workplace where they can have exciting, rewarding careers in the service of Canada.

It would truly be a great honour and privilege to become the next parliamentary librarian and to work with its executive team to lead the outstanding professionals who make such an important contribution to Canada by supporting you and our Parliament.

I look forward to your questions.

●(1210)

[Translation]

Thank you very much.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Thank you, Ms. Lank.

[Translation]

We will now begin the question and answer period.

I will reduce everyone's speaking time, as other senators and members have added themselves to the list. So instead of having the usual five minutes, you will have three and a half minutes. We will see how we can get organized, within these limitations, to give you all an opportunity to ask your questions.

The first person to take the floor is Senator Mercer.

[English]

Hon. Terry M. Mercer (Senator, Nova Scotia (Northend Halifax), Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Dr. Lank, congratulations for your nomination. I should say on behalf of my Senate colleagues, we will miss you in the Senate. I will miss you in our daily meetings, the scroll meetings, which you ably chair. Thank you for that.

I have a simple question. I've been very critical of this committee over the past number of years because of its lack of activity and its lack of involvement in assisting and managing the library.

Can you give me a quick capsule of what you see the role of the committee is in helping you, as the librarian?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Thank you very much, Senator Mercer, for the question.

As you know, from a legislative point of view, this committee is in place to advise the Speakers. However, it is a fantastic forum for me to have the possibility to consult with you, as parliamentarians, about your needs and whether we are meeting your needs, or if I have ideas that I want to explore with you.

I was so pleased to see that this committee was organized recently. I had put my name forward for this job, hoping that if it came to pass, this committee would be available and interested in having that relationship with me, so that I would be able to serve you, get input from you, and ultimately, be able to bring what I learn to the Speakers and really work in collaboration with you.

I see it as an extremely positive forum for me to be able to do my job better, to learn from you, and hopefully, be able to meet your needs.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Thank you, Chair.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Mr. Saroya.

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Thank you Madam Chair, and thank you, Ms. Lank, for your nomination.

What is next? You're the only person nominated. Where does the process take us from here?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: I should probably defer to other colleagues in terms of where things go after today's meeting.

As you can probably imagine, my focus was much more in getting ready for today's meeting and hoping that I would be able to get the support of this committee, so that when you decide on whether or not to support my candidacy, it would be positive, as I hope it will be. Of course, then you would report it back to the House of Commons. Being a joint committee, it would also normally be reported back to the Senate. If all goes well, I would hope that my nomination would be confirmed and then I would be in my position at an appropriate date.

• (1215)

Mr. Bob Saroya: Assuming you're confirmed today, what would be one thing you would be known for? What is the unique stuff that you bring to this table that would help both sides of the chamber—something that hasn't happened in the past? Is there anything unique that you bring to the table?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: I would be loath to say that I bring anything necessarily unique, but of course every candidate for any job is unique. We all bring our own backgrounds, but I do think that my background, in terms of understanding Parliament, knowing the needs of parliamentarians, and having a very strong background in education and outreach, is a combination that is quite unique.

I have 27 years of experience on the Hill, and I've made it a point to build relationships across the Hill and outside the Hill. There's a

very strong foundation there. Also, I have a network of people internationally I have benefited from in my current role. I would continue to build on that collaborative approach.

I think the other thing I would bring, more than anything else, is an excitement. I cannot tell you how thrilled I am to be nominated for this position, and to potentially have the opportunity to lead an organization that is so important to your success. I would want to share my excitement about Parliament and about the Library with Canadians and with visitors. I have ideas for ways to make that experience of coming to Parliament—even after we've closed—to be particularly memorable.

For me, it's a question of investing in excellence and making this institution even more dynamic and exciting than it already is.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Thank you.

Mr. Iacono, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Lank, thank you for coming to tell us a bit about yourself today.

Big changes are coming. I have several short questions and I will put them to you all at once, and then I will give you time to answer.

What is your vision of the Library of Parliament's future?

What will you focus your attention and efforts on?

What are the library's current and future challenges?

How will official languages be used at the library, be it in terms of documentation, employees or work in general?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Thank you very much for your questions.

I have already talked a bit about my vision. I aim for excellence and want to continue to build innovative and flexible teams to support all parliamentarians. I also want to ensure that Canadians, the public and visitors have access to this institution, even during Centre Block's closure.

As far as challenges go, there are many of them. Despite the renovations and all the changes, it will be extremely important to continue to provide you with quality services. You need to be assured that, if you put a request to the library, you will receive a quality response within the prescribed time frames, so that you can have the tools you need to do your job. That is definitely a tremendous challenge, but I am sure that the team has already implemented things to prepare us for it. As I have not yet been appointed, I will have to get information about this.

You also asked a question about official languages. As you already know, I come from the Senate administration and I work in both official languages daily. That has been an essential part of my entire professional career. I have a deep respect for the use of both languages in all aspects of the library's work. Of course, that will not change. Once I am appointed, that is something I will continue to do.

• (1220)

Mr. Angelo Iacono: How much time do I have left?

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): You have a few seconds left, but you could take the floor again in the second round.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: I have one last quick comment.

Ms. Lank, thank you very much for your comments. I really like that you speak French very well. Good luck to you.

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Thank you very much.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Mr. Lauzon, go ahead.

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Lank, welcome.

I am very impressed by your fluency in both official languages. It's better than mine.

[English]

Very few Canadians, only 17% of Canadians, are bilingual. It's nice to see that you're so fluent in both official languages.

I have just a couple of questions. Could you tell me what the overall annual budget is for the Library of Parliament, and how many FTEs will you be managing?

First of all, do you have experience in budgets similar to that and in managing that type of workforce, and what are your plans once you are in the position? How do you plan to utilize that budget and those FTEs?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: I was reading the transcripts from past meetings to get some of that information, and looking at the annual reports. If my memory serves me correctly, the budget would be in the neighbourhood of \$48 million this year, with some 330 or so FTEs.

That being said, as you are probably aware, in terms of the details of how those resources are currently allocated, and where the priorities are, until I'm in the position I am really not well positioned to give any real assessment of what would or would not be appropriate on a go-forward basis. I have a lot to learn about how that organization is currently using its resources, and I would want to consult obviously with my team and with parliamentarians, too, to see if we are putting the resources in the right places: Do we need to shift or not? Do we have the resources we need?

In terms of my experience, you'll know from my CV that I have run significant directorates in the past, but certainly not as large as this institution. Depending on where I was working, there were somewhere between 30 and 40 full-time equivalents, and budgets of \$2 million to \$3 million.

I think what's really important, though, is that I have had the great privilege of being invited by the Senate to be very much involved in corporate files and in budgetary matters well outside of my own areas of responsibility. This was both by being asked to be the lead senior manager in terms of the legislative sector on HR and finance files for a number of years but also being asked to clerk the subcommittee of our internal economy committee on not only committee budgets and the allocation of funds between budgets—which, for budgets, would normally be an amount allocated between \$2 million and \$4 million a year—but also the subcommittee on the

Senate estimates. I was privileged to be the clerk of that, and I had an opportunity to be involved in supporting the Senate in developing its budget.

It's an area where I feel very comfortable. Even though I don't pretend to be a finance expert, I am nonetheless very comfortable in that domain.

[Translation]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Mr. Choquette, go ahead.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Ms. Lank, congratulations on your appointment. That is a very important position for us, parliamentarians, but also for all Canadians, who can benefit from the Library of Parliament services, as well. Perhaps not everyone knows it, but this service is available to all Canadians.

When it comes to the quality of official languages, I also wanted to congratulate you and tell you that, for me, it is very important for you to have that concern about the quality of both official languages. You must be a leader at the library, pass on that concern for official languages to the entire team and to all people, and ensure that services are provided in both official languages. That is already the case now, but that concern and spirit must be maintained. It also reassures me.

I would now like to put a more specific question to you. It's not a trap, but it's a question you could answer in a more general sense. There is currently a small issue with the digitization of *Order Paper* questions. Financial resources are lacking for the library to be able to do the work properly. So we are increasingly headed toward the digitization of information.

How will you explain to those who provide funding that it is important to be able to provide that information to Canadians, including answers to *Order Paper* questions?

• (1225)

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Choquette.

I have understood that this topic was of great interest to this committee, as I had a discussion with Ms. L'Heureux and her team. Unless I am mistaken, I believe that issue was part of discussions between the House of Commons and the Privy Council Office.

I don't have the information I need to look into the details. However, I am very aware of the fact that it is important for the library to have the resources required to digitize written documents. That is a significant challenge, even if we don't really deal with answers, as that is something that is handled elsewhere.

One of my important roles will be to properly understand the needs of parliamentarians, so that I can get the speakers' support and receive the resources that will enable me to support you.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Senator Duffy, the floor is yours.

[English]

Hon. Michael Duffy (Senator, Prince Edward Island (Cavendish), ISG): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Lank, it's a delight for all of us from the Senate side to see you here as you're about to take on this new challenge. I want to assure our friends from the other place, as we call it, that we could not have made a better choice. The Prime Minister should be applauded for his selection of Ms. Lank as the person to be nominated for this distinguished position of parliamentary librarian. It's a very important role.

I have two quick questions. One is the question of copyright. I don't expect you will have an answer today, but I wanted to flag for you the fact that at a time when traditional media is dying for a lack of revenues, there is a lawsuit against the Library of Parliament for the breach of copyright. I would urge you to make it a priority that the Library get its house in order as it relates to copyright. We have people who generate copyright material who are making a pittance because of abuses of copyright, and I would urge the Library to be a leader in that field in observing copyright and protecting the works of our creative artists.

Second, we even hear it here in the local media. They're talking about a new library for the City of Ottawa, and there are people talking about how libraries are dead. Nobody uses them anymore. The Internet is the answer.

What's your take on the future role of the library and the many things beyond books that you do in the parliamentary library?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Thank you very much, Senator Duffy.

In terms of your first point about copyright, certainly that's an area where I will need to become more well informed and I've made note of the importance of that.

On the second item, I applied for this job in part because I believe that libraries are anything but dead. I think libraries are more important than ever because we are overwhelmed with information. There is so much information out there that individuals—be they parliamentarians or Canadians—might have very easy access to through Google and other mechanisms for information. But do you know whether that information is quality information that you can rely on in a speech, when you're meeting with constituents, when you're putting out backgrounders, or whatever it might be? The Library should be the place you can come to and say, "I need information on this topic", and know that if the Library brings it back to you, you can count on it.

For me, we're in a world where libraries are more and more important. I want to be sure that when you have questions in your mind about information and reliability, you can come to us and say, "Is this right?" or "I need information on this", and know that if it came from the Library of Parliament, you can count on it.

Libraries are absolutely not dead. I think they are the place to be.

•(1230)

[*Translation*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Mr. Ouellette, go ahead.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much for joining us today, Ms. Lank. I am very pleased to have you here. I want to sincerely congratulate you on your accomplishments in your life and work. I am sure that you will

contribute tremendously to the building of the great institution of the Library of Parliament.

In your presentation, you briefly talked about your intention to consult. In the past, you have consulted parliamentarians. My question mainly concerns new members of the House of Commons. I would like to know how you will consult members and whether that will be followed by a report and concrete actions. I know that you are new to this position, so I would like to point out that the way we proceeded before was perhaps adequate for a more theory-oriented world, but the institution is a bit different today. Parliamentarians would greatly benefit from receiving in-depth information and advice.

I would like to know what kind of consultations you will undertake and how you plan to go about them. We sometimes want to undertake consultations, but people do not participate. If people don't know that certain services exist, they will use the resources of a partisan group, rather than those of a non-partisan group.

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Thank you for the question, Mr. Ouellette.

As I have not yet taken over the position, I would have to check whether any consultations have been held and, if so, what they focused on, what methods were used, and so on. I still don't have the basic information.

That said, it seems to me that there are a number of ways to consult people. As a sociologist, I have often found ways to obtain data on the population and on a variety of topics. I find that it's often personal contact with users, such as parliamentarians, that makes it possible to obtain the most information.

This committee exists and it's active. It could help hold those consultations, but there are other possibilities. Of course, you receive documents from the library, including analyses. We will have to look into ways to get feedback from our users. That is something I would discuss with my team to decide what the best way to obtain that information is. Will we do it in a personalized manner? Will we attach something to our documents? There are several ways to go about it. It is something to be explored.

As I mentioned in my presentation, that feedback, those contacts and consultations are fundamental aspects of my management method. I will certainly continue to implement them if my appointment to this position is confirmed.

•(1235)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Thank you.

Senator Eaton, go ahead.

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

[English]

I have to say, as deputy speaker of the Senate, that it has been my great pleasure to work with Heather. She has been absolutely wonderful to me, very patient, very good, and very thorough.

My questions for you, Heather, are these. There has been a great deal of talk now about preserving indigenous languages, and I'm wondering if the Library has any kind of vision or role to play in the preservation of indigenous languages and vocabulary. That's my first question.

Second, does the Library have an acquisition fund for rare Canadian books?

[Translation]

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Thank you very much, Senator Eaton.

[English]

That is a fascinating question, and one I admit I did not think about at 3:30 in the morning when I was lying in bed anticipating what I might be asked today.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Honestly, it is a question I have not thought about and one that I will reflect on. I don't know what the appropriate role for the Library would be in that domain, if there is one. I certainly do appreciate the importance of indigenous peoples to the country, to Parliament, and the importance of the Library integrating that into—

Hon. Nicole Eaton: I was thinking of oral histories, because they perhaps don't have a written tradition but they have an oral one.

Ms. Heather P. Lank: That's a wonderful idea to explore. It's certainly one that I would be happy to think about, if I'm confirmed in the job, and to talk to my colleagues about as well and get ideas from you. Certainly that is something I will make note of for future reflection.

In terms of the budget for the acquisition of books, I would love to know the details of the Library's budget, and I can assure you that, if I am confirmed in the job, one of my first priorities will be to get a detailed briefing on the budget, where the funds are, how they are distributed and why, what the rationale is, and see if there are things that we don't have that we need to get or if there are things that we have budgets for that we don't need. That is something I would look into.

Hon. Nicole Eaton: When you see the budget, do you think that is something we should have? As the most important library in Canada, should it not have an acquisition fund for acquiring rare Canadian books or early publications?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: I think it is a fascinating and important question to ask. One of the things, Senator, that I would want is to consult with Library and Archives Canada to see what the appropriate forum or organization is for those kinds of documents. We want to be sure that we use taxpayers' dollars wisely and make sure that we're not acquiring things that we should not, but also make sure that Canada's history is indeed captured. That would be something I would put on the table for discussion with my colleagues at Library and Archives Canada, and we'll see how that unfolds.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Ms. Dzerowicz.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thank you.

I, too, want to lend my congratulations on your nomination. My very first job was in the library when I was 14, so I have a very big heart for libraries.

The first question I'm going to ask you is around transparency. One of the things our government is trying to do is to increase transparency, put more documents out for public viewing, and give a better understanding to the public about the work we do. My understanding is that there was a discussion and a brief study done in 2014 around digitizing House of Commons documents such as petition responses and Order Paper question responses. I think the goal of the study was to see how we could make public those documents by putting them on the public website.

My understanding was that, at the end of that study, there was an understanding that it would be done by the end of the year, by the end of 2014, but my understanding is that it didn't take place. I want to know—and this is a little unfair to you, because you're nominated now and not quite in the position—whether you might have an understanding of where that is at this moment.

● (1240)

Ms. Heather P. Lank: All I know about it is essentially what was reported to this committee by those who are currently involved in these files. My understanding is that there are discussions that are ongoing between the Privy Council Office and the House of Commons with respect to whether something can be done to facilitate making those documents public.

Certainly, it's a file I'm interested in following, because I'm very interested to find out where this will go, but until I am more knowledgeable, I think I would be ill-advised to jump into that, because I know there are discussions that are going on with respect to that issue. We'll see how that also develops in the coming months, but I certainly share your commitment to transparency whenever possible.

One of the things I've done in my career has been to do as much as I can to make documents available to Canadians, be they procedural documents, information packages, and so on. Outreach and transparency in bringing Canadians into Parliament has been a huge part of my career on the Hill, and I would certainly continue to make that outreach and transparency part of my commitment at the Library.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you for that. I appreciate it, and I think that's a very fair response based on where we're at.

I would ask, if you could at the appropriate time, come back to the committee. It could be a written document to just giving us the status of where that's at once discussions are concluded and whether there's a plan to move forward on it. I'd like to know what the conclusion might be, just so we don't lose that loop in terms of work that's already been started, work that was supposed to have been concluded, and discussions that are happening now, so that we find a way to close that loop properly, if that's okay.

Ms. Heather P. Lank: You can probably imagine that, since today I am just a nominee and I'm not in the position yet, I am certainly reluctant to make any kind of commitment to bring specific things back yet, but I've certainly made note of the committee's interest.

Thank you.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I appreciate that and—

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Thank you. We're going to have to go to the second round.

When we first started, I was allocating three minutes so that everyone would have time to ask a question, but we will put you on the second round.

Is there anyone else on the first round who hasn't asked any questions? If not, we are going to the second round.

Mr. Saroya, please.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Lank, you are very well qualified, and stuff looks good here. I had some questions for tomorrow, but I'm going to ask anyway if you can make some comments, or you can come back and tell us in the future.

From one Library, there are a number of satellite libraries coming up, four of them, I understand. Do we have enough money for you to do what you need to do to be the best library in the country?

Second, my question is—I come from retail—about the boutique shop. Sometimes we run out of ideas when we want to get somebody something, some knick-knacks or something, and the same few things are available. If we can expand it, I will gladly help out if I could bring my expertise into the thing.

Third, at the last meeting we heard about the 3-D Library tours. I don't think it's done yet. What are your ideas on it and when can we know if anything is available?

Thank you.

Ms. Heather P. Lank: In terms of whether we have enough money, as you can imagine, I'm not in a position to say at this point whether we do or do not. What I can assure you is that I will take the management of the budget of the library very seriously and ensure that it is one that is very soundly managed. If there are needs, I will certainly bring those forward to your attention, and of course, to the attention of the Speakers. Once I'm more familiar with the details of the budget, that's something I'll be able to come back on.

In terms of the boutique, I noted that Ms. MacLeod, when she appeared with Madam L'Heureux at the last meeting, talked about their having hired an expert in retail to really make the boutique more dynamic and get ideas for new products. She had mentioned that the sales had increased significantly, so it's certainly something that the current executive seems very conscious of and very committed to doing. I think that will certainly continue. It is an important part of the Library, and it's certainly a wonderful thing to have the capacity to get different kinds of souvenirs for constituents and other visitors here.

In terms of the 3-D library tours, I know Madam L'Heureux mentioned in her appearance that there were some time frames they were hoping to be able to meet with respect to making various products available. Certainly one of the first things I will be asking for in my briefing, should I be confirmed in the position, is to find out where we're at with these different projects, what the costs are, what we have to do to try to ensure those deadlines are met, and how I can make these things happen. I see my role as being one to lead and inspire and bring the organization forward. Certainly these ideas sound very exciting. Especially when Centre Block will be closed for some 10 years or so, having these tours will be a wonderful tool, so I will certainly be very interested in supporting those initiatives.

• (1245)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Iacono, the floor is yours.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Lank, over the years you have been working on the Hill, you have acquired a great deal of expertise in terms of procedure and a lot of knowledge in the preparation and publication of parliamentary documents. Since 1991, you have surely used Library of Parliament services.

Here is a more current question you will be able to answer easily. Does the library currently offer any services that should be revamped in order to be more adapted to the parliamentary work of today and tomorrow? Based on your experience with using those services, what important elements should be reviewed?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: As we are part of an innovative and flexible institution, we are always rethinking the way we do our work in order to determine whether there is a better way to proceed.

As the new librarian, reviewing the way the library provides those services would not be anything new. Library people are always in review mode. They have changed the way to provide information and use technology a lot more. There will be new branches, and they will try to implement new ways to access information. In my new role, I will obviously want to become familiar with all the measures planned for new branches and see what is being done.

I will want to get feedback from parliamentarians to find out whether it meets their needs. The system does not need to work for me, but for you. I will obviously look into that to obtain information from people who use library services. I know that parliamentarians work differently. They must have access to resources from their constituency offices, from their offices on the Hill and also from committee rooms. Some still like hard copies, while others prefer to use more modern technology, if I may say so. We must be very aware of the need to be innovative and able to change our ways to provide services.

Over my 27 years on the Hill, I have been witness to many changes, and there are some I can't even anticipate today. In three years or five years, I think the world will be very different. It's just a matter of building agile and flexible teams.

• (1250)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Thank you.

Ms. Dzerowicz, you have the floor.

[English]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

I note with interest that the Library of Parliament manages the parliamentary tours program and also the boutique. I have been coming to Parliament Hill to do the tours for over 20 years, and whenever I leave, I always want to know more. I have such great interest and there's so much history here.

I know there's a strategic plan for the next five years. I'm not sure if looking at what's included in the tours from different perspectives is part of it, but I would encourage it to be.

In terms of the boutique, I would love to buy everybody something from that boutique. To me, there's such opportunity and potential there to get great Canadian artists to help us reimagine some of its elements. We can take lessons from private sector companies. For instance, Stella McCartney joined with H&M and for one year did some really cool stuff. We could do that with some of our Canadian artists and just be innovative.

Do you have any thoughts around the parliamentary tourism boutique that you want to share with us?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Thank you very much for the question.

This is a perfect example of why having this committee in place is so great. You have ideas that I can take and think about and explore with my team to see what comes of them.

In terms of the boutique, I'm certainly open to ideas from members of the public, parliamentarians, and any source. That's a wonderful idea that I will take note of.

The tours provide such an incredible opportunity to really explain to Canadians and visitors from around the world what the Parliament of Canada is all about, including the role of the Senate and the role of the House. We have so much to be proud of, and the tours are a fantastic opportunity to share that knowledge.

This is just an idea for exploration, but I know from my experience in the Senate that one of the most powerful things for visitors is having contact with an individual parliamentarian, a real person. I know that as much as 2-D and 3-D technology is wonderful and that having virtual reality is wonderful, reality is even better. Is there a way that those 350,000 Canadians and visitors who come on tours could have even a moment of time with one of you or one of your colleague just so that when they go home, they have a memory of coming in contact with a parliamentarian who represents them here. It's not just about history. It's also about now. I think there are all sorts of ways we can make those tours and the boutique dynamic, creative, and innovative. I look forward to working with you and all parliamentarians to find ways to do that.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Is there anyone else for round two?

We're on round three.

Mr. Saroya.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have two comments. It's not fair to ask future questions.

My comments are coming from the retail side. When we sell more souvenirs, we get happy customers here, and there's more employment and more souvenirs. Those souvenirs will grow our democracy. When kids get souvenirs, they will be anxious to turn 18 to vote. Sales were up 32% this year compared with last year, but we can do much better, in my opinion.

My second comment is to confirm that you will have our 100% support and we will never tie your hands. Whatever you need to be done, you can always count on us. Thank you.

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Thank you.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Ms. Lank, do you have some closing comments for us?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: I'll just say a big thank you for the opportunity to appear today. I cannot tell you what an honour it is to be considered for this position. If I am confirmed in it, I look forward to working with all of you over the coming years. Thank you for your courtesy and interest, and I will give you everything I have to do a fantastic job should I be confirmed.

• (1255)

[Translation]

Thank you very much, everyone.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Do you have another question, Mr. Iacono?

Go ahead.

[English]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Once you're in the position of your new role—we would say when you take office—how do you intend to consult with parliamentarians or do you intend to consult with parliamentarians? Do, and how do you, intend to consult with parliamentarians to guide and inform them on how you intend to run the parliamentary library? How can they benefit and make use of your new services?

One last thing, how can we be more proactive in helping you make this place a lot more user-friendly and also open to us?

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Certainly, in terms of consultation with parliamentarians, as I mentioned, I think this committee is certainly one place for that.

Until I have actually been fully briefed by the Library in terms of what they're doing now to consult with parliamentarians, I'm not sure that.... I certainly don't have a fully developed plan yet on how I would do it, but I do know that there are many avenues for those consultations and it could be everything from a client survey to all parliamentarians asking are you satisfied or are you not, and what can we do better, to face-to-face meetings. We know we have the library ambassador program, where there are employees of the Library who meet with individual parliamentarians to find out about the services of Parliament. Is that an avenue where they could bring back feedback on how to improve?

We could work through committee chairs and deputy chairs and, of course, I would have regular contact with the Speakers who will provide direction to me.

I think it would be a multi-faceted approach recognizing that different individuals have, first of all, different ways of liking to share feedback and also recognizing that you're all very busy people. You don't have a lot of time, so is it a question of getting feedback when you're in one of the branches and finding out whether we met your need or not, and whether this document was what you were looking for?

I would look at a whole lot of different ways of doing it, but until I actually find out what's being done now, I don't think I'm as well based to make a final determination. This is just exploration at this point, but I can assure you parliamentarians will be well consulted and they will know the services that we offer, which will continue to improve.

[*Translation*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): Very well.

Ms. Lank, thank you very much for your presentation. I think that people have had an opportunity to ask you questions.

We wish you luck. You should hear about us pretty quickly.

Ms. Heather P. Lank: Thank you very much.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Lucie Moncion): We will suspend the meeting for a few minutes.

Thank you.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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