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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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• (1540)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Seeing quorum, I will call this meeting to order. This is the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

We are meeting today, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), to study Canada's role in complex international interventions that involve multiple foreign policy instruments focusing on Canada's efforts in Haiti.

We're very pleased to have with us today the Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development. We have seen him in Afghanistan. We have seen him in Europe. We see him now today before our committee.

Welcome to the foreign affairs committee, Mr. Minister. As normal, you would have a statement, and then there will be questions from your committee.

Mr. Minister.

[Translation]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs): You are absolutely right, Mr. Chair. I would like to thank those who work on this committee. Indeed, as the chair said, our interventions in other countries are highly complex, and we must always make multi-national efforts in foreign affairs.

[English]

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your invitation to be here today to speak about Canada's efforts in Haiti. This is perhaps one of the best examples of what you have just outlined as a situation where there are many countries involved in an effort to elevate the current situation and strife that is going on in Haiti today.

Canada's approach and expertise and long track record have, over the years, helped consolidate a leadership role in the international efforts to restore stability to a country that remains the hemisphere's poorest and most fragile state. We recognize the need for a long-term commitment from the international community to support Haitian priorities. We also realize the need for a more comprehensive approach towards emergency aid, security, rehabilitation, and long-term development.

Canada can continue to make a difference, building on past and recent investment to continue the leadership role that is expected by Canadians and Haitians and by key partners, including the European Union, Latin America, and the United States of America.

[Translation]

What happens in Haiti has an impact on Canada, the region, the US and our Caribbean partners. Haiti remains an important transit point for drugs and arms where organized crime and issues of illegal migration continue to pose significant challenges. The country's situation also poses health risks with the increased potential for the spread of disease in a region that is a key tourist destination for Canadians.

Canada's government-wide strategy has been focussed on creating and supporting conditions of success for Haiti's long-term reconstruction. There has been extensive cooperation and consultation between my department, CIDA, DND and the RCMP.

[English]

So, Mr. Chairman, what are the conditions here for success in Haiti today?

Security, first and foremost. The strengthening of democratic processes and governance must be combined, as always, with the key elements of human rights, reconstruction efforts, and political momentum. That is to say, there appears to be a focus amongst many of the international partners right now to help the situation in Haiti, so time is of the essence.

Security itself involves working closely with the United Nations stabilization mission in Haiti. DND and the RCMP have been supporting the pressing needs of security and stabilization by their presence. Restoring and maintaining security is also vitally important.

Up to 100 Canadian police are currently participating in the UN stabilization mission, which is mandated to ensure a secure environment, help restore law and order, and reform the Haitian national police. Canada maintains a strategic presence of key staff officers at mission headquarters, including the chief of staff and the commissioner position of the United Nations civilian police mission.

Canada is also working with Haitian authorities and our international partners to ensure that the new UN mandate for Haiti—replacing the one that will run out in August—adequately contributes to longer-term social and economic development needs that currently exist in Haiti.

Speaking to the democratic process and governance next, credible elections and the inauguration of an elected government were also key ingredients for long-term reconstruction goals and development in Haiti. Canada's contribution, both financial—over \$30 million—and to the electoral process, is well recognized by Haitians and our international partners. Elections Canada, headed by Jean-Pierre Kingsley, led an international mission that included seven bilateral partners and some 130 Canadians as observers. Some of those included members of Parliament, as you're aware, including my colleagues Mr. Goldring and Ms. McDonough. I believe there was another member of the committee, if I'm not mistaken.

Haiti is Canada's second largest recipient of bilateral relations vis-à-vis aid and it is currently situated at about \$190 million over the last two years. This is up \$10 million from the original commitment.

In addition, Mr. Chair, \$5 million was provided to support UN efforts to enhance electoral security, notably through the deployment of 25 Canadian police officers, experts, and the deployment of 3,500 national observers during that very critical period.

Outcomes of the February vote were reassuring, with an unprecedented 63% voter turnout, which delivered a strong mandate to President René Préval. This broad-based political support is a vital element to sustain longer-term stability and reconstruction.

Looking forward, Mr. Chair, Canada is committed to providing the necessary resources in helping re-establish effective public institutions, including law enforcement and the judiciary. That appears to be one of the key areas that still requires much attention and focus, and that is some of the lawlessness that goes on inside Haiti. So having a strong national police force and a judicial system of law enforcement is critical to the exercise.

• (1545)

[Translation]

With respect to human rights, I would like to underline that while progress was made in the area democracy, much needs to be done in the area of human rights. Haiti's weak legal system broaches human rights concerns through prolong detention without trial or sentencing.

In addition to our contribution of \$190 million, Canada has played a lead role in developing and renewing the Interim Cooperation Framework with the Haitians and our international partners. In the coming days, my CIDA colleague, Minister Verner, will be briefing the committee and will provide further information in this regard.

Canada has worked to maintain Haiti as a top priority on the international agenda. We have made a point of pressing for continued engagement at the G-8, United Nations and Organization of American States and the Summit of the Americas Process. Canada is particularly pleased to see a leading role being taken up by our Latin partners, in particular, Argentina, Brazil and Chile as well as renewed engagement with the CARICOM.

[English]

Haitians taking ownership themselves over the current situation, Mr. Chair, is obviously one of the end goals. We have led efforts to bring the Haitian private sector to the table, that is, business and investment, most notably with a meeting in Ottawa last fall to

discuss the minimal conditions required for economic recovery in the country. Again, this initiative met with good results, and we will be looking to a follow-up in the coming months.

On her recent trip to Haiti, Her Excellency the Governor General also engaged the private sector and civil society through an address to the Haitian Chamber of Commerce. I'm looking forward to meeting with the Governor General this week in advance of my own trip to Haiti in the coming week. I know she will have, for both personal and other reasons, much to impart from her visit, which was obviously highly publicized in Canada but, most importantly, well received within Haiti.

Capacity building, the role of parliamentarians, the role that the opposition plays in a Haitian parliament are also important experiences that members of this committee and those of you who participated in the electoral process can impart upon a Haitian parliament. More emphasis on social development is obviously what we look forward to in the future. All of this can happen with a more stable and sustained economy within the country.

Perhaps the most important lesson drawn from past efforts is the need for Haitians themselves to assume the leadership and responsibility for the implementation of their development agenda. The involvement of all sectors of Haitian society is key to putting all Haitians in charge of their future.

There is an upcoming conference that many of you may be aware of in July, where the international community will come together again to talk about the pledges that will be required in the coming days. That conference, I suspect, will garner a great deal of attention.

This leads to the comment on high-level political engagement. Visits of ministers and senior officials to Haiti and international conferences on Haiti are vital components of maintaining an international momentum that sends strong signals of the importance that we and others in the international community attach to stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Haiti.

In the last few months we've had an opportunity to demonstrate Canada's continued commitment to Haiti. I mentioned the Governor General's visit, but we also had the visit from former Prime Minister Latortue as well as from President Préval, who was here visiting Ottawa just a few weeks ago. At that time he made it very clear that his incoming government, which has yet to be sworn in, is very appreciative and is looking to Canada for this continued support.

I would also point out that the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, Peter Van Loan, also visited Brasilia in Brazil for an international conference on Haiti, which he was kind enough to attend in my absence and he has provided me updated information from that attendance.

We look forward, Mr. Chair, to robust Canadian participation in upcoming events such as the OAS general assembly in the Dominican Republic, which, as I mentioned, I will be attending, and the International Pledging Conference in July, in which Canada will be a participant.

Finally, next steps. As we have seen in the past and what appears to be approaching again, Haiti is at a crossroads. Significant obstacles continue to plague Haiti's prospects for recovery and reconstruction. Continued insecurity feeds on weak governance and institutional capacity and widespread corruption, exacerbating the deep and persistent social and economic development challenges.

The Haitian government must make efforts to reach out to opposition parties to include them in the consultations and evolve away from the highly adversarial nature of Haitian politics. Municipal and local elections should be held earlier rather than later to ensure the proper foundation for democratic development and provide the opportunity for Haitian citizens to have their say in the transformation of their lives.

The government must also take steps to develop and deal with a serious problem that continues to plague the country, that is, organized gangs that appear to be marauding in certain communities, providing terror and great instability to Haitian people.

• (1550)

Canadian leadership certainly does not mean going it alone, but what it does require is sustained political engagement and government-wide commitment to keep both Haitians and our international partners focused. We have learned from the failings of past international efforts in Haiti. We know that sustained international engagement, Haitian ownership and commitment, and broad, coordinated development cooperation are key ingredients for any success.

[Translation]

Lastly, Mr. Chair, now more than ever before, we must remain engaged with the new government in order to entrench the transformation process that will eventually ensure greater respect for human rights, the return of stability and the rule of law, and improve governance. It is a role that is expected of us from key partners such as the US and the European Union, and one that we can build upon for the development of the special relationships that we are working towards in the hemisphere.

The recent political developments as well as the actions and statements of President Préval give us cause for guarded optimism as we look forward towards the future of Haitians and of their country.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would be very pleased to take questions from members of the committee.

[English]

The Chair: All right. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

We'll go into the first round, a five-minute round.

Oh, it's a minister. We may have difficulty, given the late start, but if you want to go 10-minute rounds, we can go 10-minute rounds.

We'll begin with Mr. Patry.

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Chair, I'll stay as long as required.

The Chair: Good. We do have two other guests coming right at 4:30 p.m., and we can maybe push them back somewhat, but I don't like extending it too long.

Mr. Patry. Thank you.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): I'm going to share my time with some of my colleagues, if you don't mind.

Merci, monsieur MacKay. Thank you very much for being here in front of us today.

Mr. MacKay, in your opening remarks you talked about security, democratic process and governance, human rights, reconstruction, political momentum, Haitian ownership, high-level political engagement as the next steps. That's a lot. You mentioned at the end:

We have learned from the failings of past international efforts in Haiti. We know that sustained international engagement, Haitian ownership and commitment, and broad, coordinated development cooperation are key ingredients for any success.

I've been to Haiti three times in the last three years, there is a persistent climate of insecurity over there. Recently, Rights and Democracy in Montreal and a coalition of Quebec NGOs released a letter that they sent to Kofi Annan concerning Haiti, and they said:

In the domain of human security, it is evident that MINUSTAH is obtaining very poor results.

And they go on to say:

we find it difficult to understand how MINUSTAH, which has been on the ground for nearly two years with a force of thousands of soldiers, hundreds of police and a strong infrastructure, seem unable to fulfil their mandate of re-establishing order and security in the country as well as moving towards disarmament.

My question is, knowing that the mandate of MINUSTAH, the United Nations stabilization force in Haiti, needs to be renewed next August, August 15 of this year, what can be done in the short term and longer term to improve the operational effectiveness of MINUSTAH notably in regard to human rights, disarming armed gangs, and the reform of a national police force?

• (1555)

Hon. Peter MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Patry, for your question.

I believe what you're seeing now in Haiti is that Canada is assuming a leadership role. As far as the area of security itself is concerned, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, Canada is now playing a more active role on the security side; that is to say, we're engaged in more of the training. There are up to 100 police officers, RCMP and municipal, who are mandated to work with Haitian authorities and Haitian police, many of whom are in training, to effectively undertake the task, albeit a very challenging task, to restore law and order and stability in the communities themselves.

Canada holds the commissioner position there, as you know, and this is a very critical piece of the puzzle as far as Canada's contribution is concerned. That, I believe, being the biggest challenge, is going to take time. It's not as though you can simply impose security overnight without knowing that there will be engagement and resistance from those who are the beneficiaries of lawlessness. That is the same as is found in any country, including our own. Organized crime is an enormous undertaking to address, and there will be inevitable confrontations. And that is the sad reality in Haiti.

We have contributed specifically \$5 million to the enhancement of security, so there has been money earmarked by Canada for security and training. That was particularly important, I would suggest, during the elections, which I think we should take as a telltale sign that increased efforts in the area of security can work. We saw in those elections increased participation, and enthusiasm on the part of the Haitian people to embrace the democratic process, and I think this again bodes well.

Yes, we can reflect on the past and some of the shortcomings that occurred. Some of the lessons learned are very important, but I think most importantly, to address your question directly, in the short term we can look at the recent successes and try to build on those, using the police and training officials we have there to continue to build on this foundation of stability. That is simply going to take hard work, training, and commitment on the part of those dedicated personnel who are there in Haiti doing the heavy lifting.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Patry: Thank you, Minister MacKay.

Before turning the floor over to my colleague, I would like that you formally commit to making sure that our government remains in Haiti for as long as Haitians need Canada. I believe that it is very important that your government today should state a clear, precise and accurate position.

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay: Well, certainly.

[Translation]

The government intends to remain in Haiti for as long as necessary in order to complete the reinforcement of international efforts undertaken with other partners. Our work is not done. Canada will therefore be there for an indefinite period of time.

•(1600)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Wilfert.

Oh, I'm sorry. Mr. Martin. I have Mr. Wilfert for the second round.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. MacKay and Mr. Khokar, for being here today.

Along the lines followed by my colleague Dr. Patry, I have two quick questions. It must be very frustrating for all of us involved in what's happening in Haiti and has been happening for some time.

We have invested a lot of money. My question is, if we use the millennium development goals as a benchmark upon which we judge success or failure, and we invested \$190 million over the last two years and a considerably larger amount prior to that, how are we doing with respect to the millennium development goals as they pertain to Haiti? Do we know how poverty has changed, or maternal health and mortality figures, or access to education? Also, do we know how many Haitian police officers we've trained? That, as you mentioned, is absolutely integral to the success and stability of the country.

Thank you.

Hon. Peter MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Martin. Congratulations on your recent appointment to official critic for the area of foreign affairs.

From the statistics that I have, in addition to some of the active police, both RCMP and municipal police, and a very modest military presence that is there for training purposes, we also currently have retired police officers who are engaged in this training exercise in an effort to continue the stabilization against gangs and organized crime that's taking place. As to how we gauge the tangible results, it's a little more difficult.

As far as the number of officers who have been trained and what Canada and our police officers can take credit for, I couldn't give you those statistics. I can ask the department how much training has actually occurred and how many officers are currently through the training process. I'll undertake to get that information to you.

On the millennium goals, again, this is certainly a long-term project by anyone's estimation. I would suggest that Minister Verner, who will be here before you as well, would be in a better position to give you accurate information on how that money is being spent and where the Haitian people and President Préval have in fact requested the money be apportioned.

Again, I'm not saying this in any kind of a partisan or provocative way, but I would suggest that Canada has obviously been engaged over the longer term. In the 100-plus days since this government has been in office, we would have to go back over a period of time to try to gauge what Canada's contribution has done as far as reaching our millennium goals, specifically in the country of Haiti. But again, I'll provide that information to the committee and to you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Madame Lalonde.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Minister MacKay. Kofi Annan said that the international community should be in Haiti for 10 years, but he should have also added the words "at least".

I would like to briefly come back to the issue of security. Following Aristide's departure, this committee met with NGOs that submitted recommendations on how to restore security. Aside from what has already been said on the need for cooperation with the MINUSTAH and the national police, the NGOs said that the disarmament process should begin.

In 1994, following Clinton's intervention, the deployment of 24,000 soldiers, there has been no disarmament. Haiti continued to be invaded, to be the transit point of arms and drugs coming from the United States. Political gangs at all levels were able to obtain these supplies easily.

Many times, I asked questions in the House of Commons and I was told that MINUSTAH did not have a mandate to disarm. Will you commit to obtaining information and do what is necessary, out of respect for Prime Minister Préval's decisions, to disarm the country? Otherwise, we would be fooling ourselves when we talk about security.

Secondly, does your government have the intention of helping Haitians pick themselves up, rather than trying to do things for them? I know that the answer seems obvious, however, the tendency of those who intervene in Haiti has been to replace rather than help.

Will you commit to helping them? Those are my two points of principle.

• (1605)

Hon. Peter MacKay: Thank you for your question, Ms. Lalonde. With your permission, I will answer in English.

[English]

As far as the deployment is concerned, you're right, there have been a number of examples in the recent and even distant past of deployments to Haiti. They have been most successful, if I can put it that way, when they have been of an international and UN-backed nature. Canada participated until 1994. We initially had 530 soldiers as part of this UN-mandated interim force. They remained there from the period of arrival until some time in mid-2004.

The transformation in leadership of the UN force has occurred a number of times. I believe the Brazilians are currently leading the expedition there, and I believe that is due to change again some time in the summer, in August. There are no immediate plans for Canada to redeploy or to send personnel there. We currently have six Canadian Forces personnel there.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: My question did not have to do with the fact that you are replacing them, but on your ability to insist on disarmament, since you are one of the key players.

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay: Well, there's no question whatsoever that greater focus by the UN forces there, by Canada's presence with policing, has to be on disarmament. And it's mainly, as you know, in the area of handguns, small arms. There may be some rifles as well, but the handgun issue in Haiti is acute.

There are, sadly, almost daily shootings as a result of the proliferation of handguns within the country. I know from officials there that this is currently a focal point. This is where they are concentrating their efforts, jointly with civilian police—our own, the multinational police force that's there, and the Haitian police who are in training—and they're working jointly with the military to address the issue.

In regard to your more altruistic question of the need of the Haitian people to take more responsibility and more active charge of their own future and their lives, this was the very powerful message brought by the Governor General during her visit. She, I think, really called for the empowerment of business leaders, of the community itself, to be more active participants in the building of capacity and participation in events that are aimed at elevating everyone's status.

The international community can do only so much without the full and active involvement of not only the politicians but the people themselves, community leaders who are currently facing enormous challenges. But I would suggest, and I think you're suggesting the same, that has to be the philosophy—that we are there to help and assist, but it is ultimately their decision-making and the path they choose that we have to assist them with so that they can walk on their own.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Bourgeois, vous avez quatre minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Good afternoon, Minister MacKay.

According to the information and documents I have seen on Haiti, it seems as though the country is in a perpetual state of insecurity and impunity. The vast majority of non-government organizations and universities working in the country are saying that the problem of security must be resolved before moving on to something else.

In Afghanistan, there is a problem of insecurity. Canada was hard-pressed to send soldiers to help with the country's reconstruction in addition to establishing security. How is it that Canada has been very discreet, and timid when it comes to Haiti?

When Mr. Préval came to Canada, the Conservative government did not place a lot of emphasis on his visit. Why? Was there some embarrassment regarding Mr. Préval's visit to Canada?

• (1610)

Hon. Peter MacKay: Thank you for your question. I will answer the last part of your question first. There was no embarrassment, nor any efforts made to downplay President Préval's visit.

[English]

I had very productive bilateral meetings with him. He attended a reception at which some members of the committee were also in attendance. I can tell you—and I hesitate to say this—his health was not good while he was in the country. It was very evident to me that he was making considerable effort to force himself to attend these meetings. He's very determined, and I think that is a tribute to his leadership and his efforts to help his country. For that reason, many of the meetings were cut short and he went back to his hotel to rest. That may be the reason that perhaps it didn't receive more attention through the media. I'm just telling you this was my observation.

I'm reminded that at the time of his visit, he had not yet been inaugurated. He was not yet officially sworn in as president, which may have contributed to some of the protocol.

With respect to your question on the deployment, yes, Canada is part of a UN-backed mission that went to Afghanistan in our largest deployment since Korea. We currently have 2,300 troops there on a rotation that has been ongoing. Approximately 14,000 troops have now gone through that deployment rotation. The goals are similar. As you know, and as you have stated, the goals are to establish stability in the region. I would again suggest that it is political decision-making in many cases as to where Canada's troops are deployed. The deployment in Afghanistan took place under a previous government, and we supported it.

The deployment that took place previously in Haiti was the decision of another government. There is no current request for an increased presence of Canadian troops in Haiti. Given the presence of the large UN force there, which is led by Brazilians, I would suggest that there is always a possibility, but it has not come. We do not foresee it coming any time soon.

As has been the suggestion by many, including members of this committee, our focus is currently on the developmental and democracy-building side. I believe that in the various stages in which Canada engages in our efforts in global international development, this is where the focus in Haiti is most wanting. To that extent, Canada is playing what has always been a traditionally very strong and powerful role, with emphasis on the development side. Because of the large diaspora of Haitians in Canada, I think this is something that Canadians take very seriously.

But we are not losing sight for a moment that stability is important. Again, that is justification for the presence of domestic police and the efforts to train and assist in the setting up of a functioning legal system that respects the rule of law and that has a judiciary.

There may in fact be more that we can do. I suspect that's very much the subject matter of this committee. Maybe we need to send more judges. Maybe we need to send a committee of parliamentarians to talk about the necessity of an effective, functioning Parliament, because I think this is going to be a coming challenge.

I'll leave it at that, Madame.

• (1615)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Goldring is next, followed by Mr. Van Loan.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister and Mr. Khokar, for being here today.

Mr. Minister, in your talk you mentioned that Haiti is at the crossroads. I certainly would agree with that analogy from the short time that I was there, seeing the progress that has been made. The last election, I believe, showed a stabilizing factor. I would view it as the glass being half full. The turnout was maybe in the 30% range, but still, given the instability of previous elections and the relative stability of this one, that's a gain.

I was also visiting the country and seeing some industrial development too. The visit to the Canadian manufacture plant of Gildan produced the surprising revelation that although they had a well-run, clean plant of some 1,300 people, he had plans there for

two or three more plants, so there were expectations of 4,000 or 5,000 jobs coming up. The concern here is that not all jobs will be in the garment industry, as this is; there are far more opportunities than that. There's an eager population, very capable of working in these particular areas, and the jobs are much needed.

But when we look at some of the other problems there—and probably some have to be overcome, and probably in the near term—the most important one that seems to really stick out is the one of Cité Soleil and the area that is occupied by the bandits, as you could call them. From a point of view of economic growth or encouraging tourism or even encouraging and growing democratic institutions and reforms, all of these are without basis if you don't have a secure country.

Mr. Minister, is a timeframe being looked at? Is there a stronger, more determined approach coming up in the near future on dealing with the instability, particularly in that large part of the capital city, and what could people expect on movement on that area?

Hon. Peter MacKay: Let me begin, Mr. Goldring, by acknowledging and thanking you for the personal commitment and initiative you've shown. I know you've visited the region a number of times and have a long-standing commitment and a will to make a difference, not only in Haiti but in the Caribbean region.

The Government of Canada is certainly cognizant that it is going to take perhaps a sustained period of time to achieve the results. There have to be benchmarks. There have to be noticeable indicators within all of these areas of development—economy, democratic capacity building.... I would suggest that stability on the domestic policing side is perhaps where the greatest focus in going to be required, as you've noted.

You've been to these cities and communities. There is still a very determined group of individuals preying upon the citizens of Haiti, trying, I would suggest, to capitalize on this vulnerable stage Haiti is currently experiencing. There comes a point at which there is a tipping point, a point at which it can fall back if the international community doesn't propel it forward with all of these areas of development and support, and policing is perhaps the most important right now.

I don't want to be repetitive, but I think the elections were the surest sign that the people themselves are tiring of this ongoing struggle. Based on evidence and reporting I've received, I think there is a growing frustration within the country itself that these gangs—these bandits, as you referred to them—are continuing to control a lot of the communities. Even within the cities, in many neighbourhoods people are literally living in fear for their lives, so an increased effort on the policing side is the area in which Canada has made a concerted effort.

We've talked about the disarmament issue. Demobilization of those gangs is of critical importance, and then reintegration of those participants—after they have been taken to justice, if that's what is required—is going to be important. Penal reform, I would suggest, is also a big issue. The putting down of roots of a judicial system that will bring about a respect for rule of law and accountability is again going to be a long-term exercise, but it's starting, and it appears to me that it's starting to take hold.

I look forward to visiting the region as you have, seeing firsthand what that progress really is, and, more importantly, hearing from the individuals there about where Canada should continue its effort in the most focused and perhaps diligent fashion.

• (1620)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Van Loan.

Mr. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Part of the object of our study is to look at Canada's efforts in the past and draw lessons from them. Haiti is a good focus for a study like that because Canada has had so many efforts in the past that have not met with success. Part of what we're trying to do is determine why that has been the case and what we need to draw, in lessons from the past, for the future.

In some of the preliminary discussions I've had, the theme that you draw out, the need for sustained international engagement, is one of the answers we keep getting; that the problem is that the international community has withdrawn too early in the past. Let me tell you, Canada's commitment is a very significant one. It is very much appreciated by the Haitians and by others.

The question becomes, if we're going to have sustained international commitment so that it's not only Canada but others who are staying there, we have to have some kind of plan and ability to keep others engaged and keep others committed. We just recently had the decision by Spain to withdraw their military commitment from Haiti, as Spain has done elsewhere in the world.

Have you any thoughts on what Canada should be doing to have other international partners either that aren't represented there make commitments to Haiti or that are represented there to maintain those commitments, so that it isn't just Canada left carrying the freight all the way?

Hon. Peter MacKay: I thank you, Mr. Van Loan, for the question. I know you've just come from a conference at which this was very much the subject of discussion; that is, how we keep the international community front and centre in the effort, how we remind them that anything less right now will be another failure. It will result in Haiti again sliding into a state of chaos and lawlessness.

There are a number of occasions on which Canada can make that point, as you did in Brazil. There's the conference that's happening in the Dominican Republic this weekend, which I will attend. All of the major players will be there. Unfortunately, because of some of the internal disputes that were going on within Brazil and some other international events, many countries were perhaps not as well represented as they could have been. But there's this coming conference of the OAS in the Dominican Republic, as well as the International Pledge Conference in July, which may take place in Port-au-Prince or, depending on circumstances, may happen in Washington. That is the best forum, I would suggest, for Canada to not only show leadership in demonstrating that we are there for the Haitian people for the period of time that is required, but encourage others to similarly step up, put their money on the table, demonstrate in a tangible way that they are going to be there, and make the commitments that will be required in the short term and the long term.

Let me come back just for a moment to Mr. Goldring's point about economic development. It's only through that type of investment—and companies like Gildan Activewear are a perfect example—that Canada can also encourage the type of economic stability that's going to result. But they are co-dependent, because companies naturally will be reluctant to invest in a country where there is lawlessness and a high crime rate and risk.

That's another sad reality. Much of the natural beauty of what was once a beautiful Caribbean island has now, because of political circumstances, but because of the raping and pillaging of the resources of that country, been destroyed.

If you look by contrast at the Dominican Republic, which was not that long ago in relative world history the lesser of equals on that island, you see how tourism has flourished, how investment by large travel companies and Canadians and other business interests has flourished.

There is a very tragic dynamic in this shared island. Haitians only need to cast their eyes to the country with which they share the island to say, look at what can happen; look at how things could be and should be for us.

So back to your point, I think Canada has to continue to make intelligent and thoughtful interventions at these conferences to say why we're there, certainly expressing our commitment and encouraging others to follow suit.

• (1625)

The Chair: Madame McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to say how much I appreciated the opportunity to go to Haiti just before Préval's inauguration. I learned a great deal. I had some of my concerns reinforced and I changed my mind about some things. Hopefully that's what we all do when we go on a trip like that.

I have so many questions; I'm trying to boil it down.

I'm very glad to hear you stressing the importance of human rights and rule of law and so on, but I want to start with what potentially is an embarrassment, something we need to really deal with.

You will know that we had the privilege of meeting with Préval in Haiti with his senior adviser, Jacques Edouard Alexis. When Préval came to Canada just before his inauguration, Alexis was barred from entering Canada—to the monumental embarrassment, I think, of Canada—because he's supposedly “blacklisted”. I wonder if you can clarify exactly what that means.

Subsequently, by overwhelming majority of both the Senate and Parliament, Alexis was ratified as Préval's designate as prime minister. I'm just wondering if you can speak to how we're going to clean up our act in that regard and what it means.

Secondly, I share the guarded optimism, I really do. There's been a real sense of celebration thus far, based on the hope that people expressed, but at the same time, just horrendous human rights violations continue, including the imprisonment of political prisoners who have never been charged with anything. It seemed to me when we were there that one of the undercurrents is the need for that to be dealt with in a very serious way. Neptune, for instance, remains imprisoned. I had clear signals from people that he would be released before the inauguration. That appears not to have happened. I wonder what Canada is doing in that regard.

Thirdly, I think what we're attempting to do in terms of penal reform, in terms of prison reform, and in terms of judicial performance is very important. I have to say that I wasn't surprised to see, on the eve of the inauguration, a major riot in certainly the worst penitentiary I've seen in my life. I haven't seen great numbers, but these had absolutely unbelievable conditions. Teenagers who may have stolen chickens to save their families from starvation are imprisoned together with political prisoners—guilty of who knows what, and never charged with anything—together with murderers and drug dealers. Nobody really knows who is guilty of what, because nobody has ever been charged. We saw conditions in a prison where, to meet international standards, there should be four or six prisoners, but there were forty people there. They could barely stand up, and were allowed out for one hour a day from those conditions. I just wonder if you could speak specifically to that.

Finally, I want to say how impressed I was by the leadership shown by our police, by our military, by a small number of officials there. It was very refreshing to hear them making the point that security and economic development are interrelated. They pleaded the case, really, for both poverty reduction and environmental remediation. As they pointed out, we could end up salvaging a country that's unsustainable if we don't turn to that, which of course can be job-intensive.

I know I've raised four questions there. I would appreciate your comments.

Hon. Peter MacKay: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Ms. McDonough, I know that you've gone the distance as far as your travels to Haiti go, but also your very in-depth interest in all aspects of Haitian society and the problems that exist. I'm glad you referenced environmental remediation, because that will be one of the enormous challenges they face: reforestation, replantation. Some of the run-off, as I understand it, of the land itself into the ocean as a result of the environmental degradation that has taken place in that country is also a longer-term challenge that will require a specific plan where I think Canada might very well...and it's one of the areas that doesn't receive a lot of attention, perhaps because it's not seen as pressing.

On the human rights issue, I couldn't agree more. Canada again, I think, can show a leadership role. The United Nations, as you know, is undergoing their own reform in the area of setting up a human rights council, and I think they will in very short order be pressed and called upon to play a more active role there.

The specific cases you mentioned, including the newly appointed Haitian prime minister, Alexis, shall we say, is a very delicate matter, to say the least. I'm choosing my words very carefully because, due

to privacy legislation here, we cannot comment on the specifics of the case. There are issues right now with Citizenship and Immigration Canada that have prevented thus far the issuance of a visa, even for a visitor's purpose. But there is discretion there that can be exercised. I'm hopeful that this is something we will be able to sort out in the near future.

• (1630)

Ms. Alexa McDonough: But doesn't the prime minister face charges to which he can defend himself? Or are we falling into the same horrors of the lawlessness—

Hon. Peter MacKay: This is the challenge.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: —the lack of rule of law that have resulted in political prisoners? I don't think we need another chapter like this one.

Hon. Peter MacKay: Well, we certainly don't. But as I understand it—and there is much detail that's a bit sketchy because of the lack of due process and of a judicial system that operates fully in a manner to which we're accustomed—these are just allegations. So we are trying to walk that fine line between respecting Haiti's position on this and making our own independent assessment.

We are essentially in the position of basing our decision on entrance, for visa purposes, on information that's being provided to us by Haiti, which may or may not be accurate, because it hasn't been put to the test in a normal judicial hearing.

I don't think anyone would suggest that we should make the decision without input from authorities in Haiti. The problem is that because of their system of law, and even, as you know, because of the fragile state of their current parliament, which it is trying to set up and get in place, they don't have a justice minister; they don't have a foreign minister with whom I can engage in these discussions. I am hopeful that much of this is going to be alleviated when they have at least a functioning government and cabinet in place.

I'm answering this to the best of my ability without trying to put you off. But I'm suggesting that it will take time for us to be able to engage in a meaningful way with the government itself about its prime minister, which is a real anomaly, to say the least. But he was democratically put in place, which we have to respect.

There are other examples in the past of leaders who have faced similar accusations within their own countries. I think Mr. Martin is aware of some of those cases where African leaders have faced similar charges and have been permitted to come to Canada. So based on information that we have, and out of respect for the country in question, we have to make an informed decision. I think that in fairness, if this is an issue you want to pursue further, I'd certainly refer you to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. But he and I and others will be discussing this issue in the future.

On the equally delicate question of Mr. Neptune, this is again an issue that Canada has pursued. We've raised this issue. We continue to do so. Mr. Neptune, I also understand, is in the very vulnerable and difficult position of having deteriorating health problems while he's incarcerated.

You're right, there were undertakings given that he was going to be released, or at the very least given an opportunity to face an independent judicial hearing in proximity of the new government being sworn in. That has not been the case. But Canada has repeatedly raised this and will continue to do so. I will undertake to make inquiries when we go to the Dominican, and I'll be speaking directly to the president in the coming days.

You had a few other questions about prison reform and judicial reform. Having a legal system that operates, allowing the adversarial process to work, is all part of that overall capacity building that is still under way. I think Canada, as we have in the policing area, can show leadership, perhaps by dispatching personnel there. I think we have a very highly functioning and successful judicial system that Haiti can look to as a model. We have judges, both active, current judges and those who are retired, who I think are more than willing to share their expertise and their experience. So it's a matter of getting them there, or even perhaps having members of the Haitian judiciary come here, to engage in that exercise of training.

But I think most importantly, and what I've heard from you and others who've attended, and those within my own department who have been to Haiti, is that there is perhaps a growing sense of optimism in spite of all the.... My cell phone ring was very apropos to lighthearted music and a sense of optimism.

• (1635)

It shouldn't be false hope that we bestow upon the Haitian people. It's still going to take an incredibly important investment in so many of these areas. It's not just money, as you know. It's not simply a matter of turning over the funds and telling them to fix it themselves and use the money in their own discretion. I think there will have to be a lot of assistance in making the right decisions as to where the investments are best spent, both human resources and the financial commitment and, back to Madame Lalonde's point, giving the Haitian people a sense that they are taking charge of their own future. That, I think, will also build national pride and a sense of accomplishment.

I saw that. You and others had a chance to meet with René Préval. He strikes me as a man of great conviction, of great determination and a willingness to see his government do what others have failed to do, which is to finally succeed in pulling Haiti out of this spiral they've been in for decades.

I think the optimism is good, but it's really going to take a lot of continued sustained heavy lifting on the part of Canada and all the international partners, in particular those who are on the ground doing that work. The very least the Canadian government can do is continue to support them in every way possible.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. MacKay.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I hope you won't use...*[Inaudible—Editor]*...as an example of how to create quality jobs. I just have to say that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Very quickly, I'm going to take a very quick question from the opposition side.

Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, you talked about assessing objectives, and I think there's no question that a lot of hope is now in the new president. The issue, as you know from our past discussions, has focused on the capacity building at the local level. Are there instruments that we currently have not been using?

We look at things like environmental degradation and how we can improve basic sanitation and water issues, issues dealing with employment and long-term employment strategies. Are there approaches—I have to condense this, given the chairman's indulgence—that we can be using that we may not have put on the table, that either you or the department may be assessing in order to do this? Clearly, a significant amount of dollars, over \$600 million over the last 20-odd years, hasn't solved the problem. We can't do it alone. But are we, in conjunction with others, looking at that?

• (1640)

Hon. Peter MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Wilfert, I appreciate your question. I also appreciate some of the very positive suggestions and contributions you've made on this subject and others.

The short answer is yes. I think that CIDA, in particular, is canvassing a whole array of areas in which they can assist in environmental areas, in areas of investment around the economy and capacity building, some of the basics you've mentioned that we take so much for granted. I think of clean water, sanitation, infrastructure, road building, access, being able to go to and from a town or village or city to seek employment, to say nothing of being able to secure a job.

All of those basics are being constantly assessed by CIDA officials in conjunction with the international community and, perhaps more importantly, the NGOs that are there, the Red Cross, the efforts of many independent groups that are partnering. Doing that assessment is what will lead Canada to make important decisions about where to invest both human and financial resources.

I also expect that the important work of this committee will assist Canada in making accurate and correct decisions when it comes to CIDA's continued support for the people of Haiti.

Again, I commend members of the committee and I look forward to hearing from the report and from further witnesses who I know will be coming here with practical recommendations and an in-depth understanding, having been there. As for myself, I look forward to visiting Haiti and seeing the work of Canadians and to bringing some of the messages that have been underscored by members of the committee here today.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

In closing, I would like to say that I think all Canadians, and certainly governments, have recognized that Haiti has been a frustration. For many years we've wanted to make a difference. Air Canada has made a huge difference there, but it seems that time after time there's disappointment. I think all parties wish we could do more to see real effective change. Even by you coming here today and talking about some of the fundamentals that we would like to see, I think there is reason for optimism, maybe short- and medium-term optimism.

I know you are always looking for new ways we can apply resources where they're needed, and maybe, as we go on with our study in this committee, we will be able to come up with some kind of report that would be advantageous to the department and to you.

Thank you and your department for being here.

We will suspend for just a few minutes, and then we have other guests, and we will continue with Haiti.

•(1640)

(Pause)

•(1645)

The Chair: We will reconvene this meeting. I call the meeting back to order.

We're very pleased to have with us today Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Elections Canada's Chief Electoral Officer. We're also pleased to have Diane Davidson, the deputy chief electoral officer and chief legal counsel at Elections Canada.

As I was travelling down the road one day, Mr. Kingsley called me on my cell phone and asked if I would consider having Jacques Bernard, the director general of Haiti's interim electoral council. We're very pleased to have him with the committee today.

We want to welcome you.

We also have an observer to whom I would like to draw your attention: Robert Tippenhauer, Haiti's ambassador to Canada. He is an observer back there.

Welcome.

I also want to apologize for our late start, but certainly we are looking forward to what you have to say. We have your testimony here. We'll give you time for opening comments and then to field questions from our committee.

Welcome, Mr. Kingsley, Mr. Bernard, and Ms. Davidson.

•(1650)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Kingsley (Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Canada): Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

Since you've already introduced my good friend and colleague Mr. Jacques Bernard, as well as my friend and colleague from Elections Canada, I'll proceed and get into my text.

[*Translation*]

I will be in my mother tongue, and then I will switch to English.

It is a privilege for me to appear before this committee. I believe that this is the first time in several seasons since I have been in this

position, that I am appearing before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Today I will discuss briefly the International Mission for Monitoring Haitian Elections (IMMHE), of which I am chair. I will review the beginnings of the IMMHE, the basic elements of the IMMHE model and what the mission accomplished. Like the International Mission for Iraqi Elections, set up in December 2004, the IMMHE represents a novel approach to international election monitoring and assessment. This innovative model on which the two missions are built focuses on the sustainability of democratic electoral processes and electoral systems, and the longer-term task of building the capacity of the country's electoral management bodies. The mission's approach is one of accompaniment—providing reports and advice on a continuous basis to the electoral management body: the Provisional Electoral Council or Conseil électoral provisoire.

The independence of the electoral authority is an essential characteristic. Such an approach cannot succeed if electoral management bodies are not at arm's length of the country's political authority.

This accompaniment is based on respect for the culture and history of the country. This is a very important element that we can discuss further. This approach is in continuation with the kind of partnerships Elections Canada has developed in the past, such as with Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute, since 1992.

In addition, it provides a base on which to build future cooperation and facilitates follow-up to recommendations, promoting standards of good practice in electoral administration.

Another unique feature of the mission is in its Steering Committee, made up of independent electoral management bodies from across the Americas. The independence that each member of the Steering Committee possesses in its own country bestows credibility and allows the mission to play an accompanying role—that is, provide ongoing guidance in developing the most appropriate electoral rules, a sound legal framework and effective administrative processes. Using internationally recognized standards and practices, the mission relies on in-depth expert assessments of numerous elements of the electoral process before, during and after the elections. These include: legal framework, voter registration, access to media and a complaints process. A total of 13 elements were examined—the full list is available on the IMMHE Web site. I will provide you with the address later on.

The model has worked well in bringing together two types of electoral expertise—that is, combining scholarly analysis with the store of experience and knowledge of leading practitioners.

I will now turn to the beginnings of the International Mission for Monitoring Haitian Elections. In the spring of 2005, I was approached by the Department of Foreign Affairs and CIDA to explore the possibility of setting up an international election monitoring mission in Haiti. It was felt that there was a need to foster international support for the forthcoming presidential, legislative and municipal elections, which at that time were expected to take place in autumn 2005. Given Elections Canada's credentials, including our independence, our previous cooperation with Haiti (in the 1990s), and our excellent relations with other electoral management bodies across the Americas, I was asked to set up a similar model to what we had established for the Iraqi elections.

On June 15-16, an international forum was held in Montreal, under the auspices of Elections Canada. Participants included representatives of election management bodies from across the Americas, as well as the CEP, and representatives of the Organization of American States and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. Following two days of discussions, the heads of eight independent electoral management bodies from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, and the United States formed a Steering Committee and agreed on structure and aims of the mission. That was the goal of the two-day forum. It was thus that the IMMHE was established. I will now switch to English.

• (1655)

[English]

In early August 2005, the IMMHE established a secretariat in Port-au-Prince. Beginning in September of the same year, long-term observers were deployed throughout the country, two teams of two in 10 areas of the country, and provided weekly updates to the steering committee. In addition, expert assessors conducted in-depth studies of the 13 aspects that I've discussed over the elections.

The mission further deployed some 130 short-term election observers for both the February 7 and the April 21 rounds of elections. They were drawn from Canada principally, as well as from CARICOM countries and a small number from Japan. We coordinated with other observation missions in Haiti, both international and domestic, to ensure maximum coverage throughout the country. Of course, we constituted the major international mission in Haiti.

The IMMHE has issued several statements and reports, beginning in October 2005, with its interim assessment report, which examined the legal framework, the voter registration system, and electoral preparations. The most recent report was issued on April 24, shortly after the second round of legislative elections. We are now preparing the final report, which is to be released in the coming weeks.

All of the reports from our group are available on the website, and the address is in the notes that I provided to you in five languages. You will have understood that it's in English, French, Creole, Spanish, and Portuguese.

I brought along copies of those reports in English and French for committee members. They are available to you through the clerk.

The IMMHE worked very closely with the CEP, and more particularly with its director general, Monsieur Jacques Bernard. I

would say that the emphasis should be on our relationship with Mr. Bernard throughout the whole procedure, since his assumption of responsibilities in late October, if I remember correctly. His leadership since that time has provided the momentum to ensure that electoral preparations were carried out and to coordinate the contributions of all stakeholders, including the OAS and the MINUSTAH. We provided advice and made substantive recommendations throughout the process through the good offices of Mr. Bernard.

Special mention can be made regarding our coordination with MINUSTAH, which was crucial in addressing security needs, a real concern for all of us, especially for the first round, as I'm sure some members will remember.

I would like to underline the excellent collaboration that the MINUSTAH leadership provided to us, especially through Juan Gabriel Valdés, as well as Gerardo Le Chevalier.

I would like to recognize the important role played by the OAS, which was responsible for setting up the voters list that registered voluntarily 3.5 million Haitians out of a total eligible population of 4.5 million, and for the leadership provided in that respect by a fellow Canadian, Elizabeth Spehar. She did this in her OAS capacity, not her Canadian capacity.

Another significant accomplishment of the mission was the involvement of CARICOM, and I wanted to underline that. It became an integral part of the mission, in good part due to the involvement of Danville Walker, the chief electoral officer of Jamaica, who is also vice-chair of the steering committee. On a number of occasions, he went to Haiti independent of our group, in light of his vice-chairmanship. For that, I am grateful to him.

I must say that bringing CARICOM into the picture, even though not as a formal step in the international community, has resulted in what we consider to be greatly improved prospects for Haiti's reintegration into the region.

The IMMHE has succeeded in attracting attention, by the way, beyond the region itself. When I met with U.K. foreign office officials in March of this year, dealing principally with our mission in Iraq, by the way, they expressed great interest and support for what we were doing in Haiti.

Officials from la Francophonie, with whom we also had special relationships, were also very pleased. Colonel Sangaré, who was on the ground in Haiti until recently, represented la Francophonie, as well as Madam Christine Desouches, who is responsible for electoral democracy matters for the la Francophonie.

• (1700)

In my view—and I'm here to discuss that—the IMMHE has provided an effective means of addressing both the short-term need to verify the legitimacy and the legality of the elections and the long-term need to foster democratization by strengthening the capacity of the Haitian electoral commission.

I suspect, Mr. Chair, that you would like to hear from my good friend and colleague Mr. Jacques Bernard at this time, before we go to the exchange portion of this visit.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kingsley.

Mr. Bernard, just to help us a little more, please tell us how long your statement will be.

Mr. Jacques Bernard (Director General, Interim Electoral Council of Haiti): Maybe five minutes.

The Chair: Okay, just take your time. Mr. Bernard.

Mr. Jacques Bernard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to follow in the path of my good friend Jean-Pierre Kingsley and start in English, and then I'll switch to French later on.

Let me start by thanking the members of the committee for the opportunity to address them. I would also like to extend my thanks to the people of Canada, who have graciously agreed to contribute to the financing of Haitian elections. And of course, my special thanks to Mr. Jean-Pierre Kingsley and his team of both long-term and short-term observers for their advice and help to the Haitian provisional electoral council. They have contributed significantly to the success of the two rounds of elections.

These elections were very different from any previous elections in Haiti. One can say with certainty that they truly reflect the will of the Haitian people in that both the president and parliament were legitimately elected. I am glad to report that no one in Haiti contested the legitimacy of the polling process. The electoral process was transparent and open to all political parties as well as domestic and foreign observers.

While it is not possible here to describe the process in its entirety, we think it is necessary to highlight some of the new features that truly differentiate this election from any held previously in Haiti. We will mention only six innovations: the identify card, the electoral list, the voting centres, the tabulation centre, publication on the Internet, and the legal challenges to the results.

The identity card. I think it is very important to talk about the identity card, because for the first time in the history of Haiti we have registered 3.5 million citizens out of 4.5 million potential voters. The card is not only a voting card; it is also an identity card, and it's supposed to last 10 years, so we will be able to use it in subsequent elections. The card has not only the picture of the individual but also their fingerprint. When we did the matching of all 3.5 million fingerprints, we found only 5,000 duplicates. So to that extent, it was a very successful operation. Let me also point out that out of that 3.5 million people, 600,000 never had any documents to identify them positively as Haitian citizens. I think it is remarkable. It is almost a revolution in the history of Haiti.

From the data generated from the identity card, we built an electoral list that has not only the picture of the individual but also, in a bar code, the number of the identity card. So when the voters go to vote they can be identified not only by the identity card but also from the picture that is on the electoral list. A voter would sign next to his picture so that he wouldn't be able to vote twice. I think these are very significant innovations, because never before have we had them in any Haitian election.

Voting centres. Traditionally in Haiti we had about 13,000 polling stations, and nobody had any control of them. We had 13,000 polls, and we didn't have the logistical capability to monitor them. But what we did this time was to work them into 802 voting centres so that the CEP as an institution had the capability to monitor the 802

voting centres, and the observers, both domestic and international, were able to be there at one voting centre and monitor maybe 20, 30, 40, even 50 polling stations within the voting centres. Also, from a security point of view for the observers and for the CEP, it was a fantastic idea. But I'll tell you, the politicians were very much against it because they said the people would not walk so far to vote. But I think the numbers proved them wrong, because 63% of the eligible voters voted in the first round of elections.

● (1705)

Then we developed what we call the tabulation centre, which is a centre where we bring all the reports to compile them. It is very important because traditionally in Haiti that is where fraud is committed. But this time we controlled it. We entered the data twice by two independent operators, with no possibility of collusion between the operators, and only when the numbers matched would they go down to the servers to be compiled.

So we think this election legitimately reflects the will of the Haitian people. But in addition to that, we published all the reports on the Internet, not only the results of the election but each individual report per polling station, so that the candidate could sit in the comfort of his living room and compile his own results. And I think most of the Haitians overseas who are interested in what's going on in Haiti were very appreciative of the fact that they could go to the Internet on a daily basis and follow the election almost hour by hour.

The last thing I want to talk about is the legal challenges of the results. Before, the electoral council in any previous election would just announce the winner. This time the losers in the election could challenge the results in two different courts. They can go to a first level of tribunal at the departmental level, and if they're not satisfied with the outcome they can go to a second level of tribunal at the national level. And I must say that we did give a number of people who challenged the results the chance to present themselves. Once the rulings were made we didn't have any more challenges, nor did we have any more complaints in terms of the results published by the CEP.

So all in all, I think these elections were very legitimate, and I would say that the contribution of the IMMHE observation mission was significant to the success of these elections, because at the CEP we developed a working relationship with them, and it was a two-way relationship. We would give them information and they would tell us what they saw in the field, and that would allow us to correct a lot of mistakes in the field. Contrary to the other observation missions, we had a much closer relationship with IMMHE, and I must give it credit because, very frankly, it truly contributed to the success of the elections.

Now that we have a president and we have a parliament, unfortunately the process is not complete. We still have the local elections. The local elections can be divided into four categories: the municipal election for the mayors, the ASEC, CASEC, and the town delegates.

For the ASEC, CASEC, and town delegates, it's very difficult now to have this election, for a number of reasons. Number one, I will have to do a lot of redistricting. Number two, there is no legal framework for these people to operate, because we never had them before in Haiti. They came with the 1987 constitution, but for whatever reason, the Government of Haiti has always neglected to create the legal framework for these elected officials to operate. Number three, frankly, that would add about 9,000 more civil servants to the payroll of the government, a government that cannot even pay the people who are currently working in Haiti.

So there are problems that will have to be resolved before we can do the ASEC, the CASEC, and the town delegates.

• (1710)

[Translation]

For municipalities, I believe that it is absolutely necessary to hold elections for several reasons.

In Haiti, we have 142 communes, and there is a mayor for each commune. Therefore, there are 142 mayors in Haiti. This government structure has always existed. This legal framework has always existed, and there have always been mayors in Haiti.

What happens in Haiti when mayors are not elected? When mayors are not elected, the Department of the Interior appoints mayors. Once they are appointed, the mayors are answerable to the Department of the Interior. This situation is the most significant source of corruption in Haiti because taxes are collected by the communes and then funnelled to Port-au-Prince rather than remaining in the commune to serve the area's residents.

I believe, therefore, that it is absolutely necessary to hold municipal elections, even more so when mayors are appointed. The executive not only has political control over the country through the mayors, but it also has financial control over the whole country.

If we want to save the work that has already been done, it is absolutely necessary to hold elections as soon as possible so that the executive is not tempted to appoint mayors. I have been fighting for some time now to hold these elections.

I am coming back from Washington and I must tell you that we held several meetings with the State Department to encourage the Americans to help us finance these elections, because funding remains one of our most significant problems. The Americans have answered positively by giving us a certain amount, but we do not have all that we need to win these elections.

Given that you are privileged partners in the electoral process, through Mr. Kingsley and the International Mission for Monitoring Haitian Elections, I must insist on saying that if we want to save the work that has already been done, we must absolutely, as soon as possible, organize municipal elections.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Bernard and Mr. Kingsley.

We will go into the first round and we will have five-minute rounds. Mr. Martin.

Okay, Mr. Rodriguez.

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): I wish to congratulate you on the recent elections, and I congratulate Mr. Bernard in particular.

I am familiar with Haiti, because I travelled there several times over the last 15 years. I visited areas such as Île de la Tortue and Île à Vaches. How do you deliver ballots to these remote areas?

Mr. Jacques Bernard: They are transported by helicopter. Non-delicate materials—booth dividers, pencils, and so on—are delivered by automobile. Between 24 and 48 hours before election day, delicate materials, including ballots, are distributed. The ballots are kept at the MINUSTAH military base. Therefore, we distributed the ballots first at the MINUSTAH military base well before election day, and one or two days before the elections, the ballots are collected at the MINUSTAH military base and taken by helicopter to remote areas.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: How many polling stations are there throughout the country?

Mr. Jacques Bernard: We have 802 voting centres, and we have approximately 10,000 polling stations within those 802 voting centres.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Therefore, there were 802 actual buildings where there were several... And generally speaking, things unfolded smoothly in those 802 centres?

• (1715)

Mr. Jacques Bernard: Absolutely. I must tell you that there were some places where problems occurred, and that is precisely why we held new elections in 14 for some members' ridings as well as new elections for senators from the North East.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Would you say that Haiti now has a permanent electoral system? Otherwise, what changes would have to be made in order to have one?

Mr. Jacques Bernard: I think we have to specify what we're talking about because the subject is open to debate and discussion. I believe that we have to distinguish between the electoral machine and the administrative council overseeing everything.

In Haiti, we need an electoral machine that is capable of technically and scientifically run elections. To my mind, it is not about having a provisional electoral council—like the one we currently have—or a permanent one, that will guarantee an election. What will guarantee an election, is the mission's effectiveness, and that is what we have to focus on, regardless of the administrative council.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: More precisely, with the identity card and the voters' list, you have everything you need to run a more structured, more permanent electoral system.

That is what my question is based on. In this case in particular, did you had to make practically super-human efforts to get there. If there were to be an election tomorrow morning, would it be too difficult to repeat those efforts? Or are there some more permanent elements which, next time, would not make the difficulty the same, but make things much easier?

Mr. Jacques Bernard: Absolutely. In fact, even for municipal elections, which are going to be held in two or three months, we will be setting up the same machine. The same national identity card is going to be used, the same system will be used, the same voters' partial list will be used as well.

What we need now is to consolidate our achievements. We got the machine up and running twice and we need to build on our success to make sure that for the next election that will take place in two years—for one-third of the Senate—we will at least have a machine that is capable of organizing an election.

We have organized these elections with the technical assistance of MINUSTAH and the OAS. As we speak, the technology transfer has not taken place. That means that Haitians are still unable to take over from the OAS, particularly when it comes to the partial voters' list, and the registry that we want to keep in Haiti.

The transfer of technology from MINUSTAH and the OAS to a Haitian team will take some time.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Thank you very much. I'd also like to start by congratulating you. Before discussing the future, I would like to ask you a few questions.

From an objective standpoint, we realize that we were on the brink of a precipice when the results had not yet been confirmed. René Préval's supporters may have gotten the impression that some people were plotting against them as the rest of the results were slow in coming. I was following the situation on a daily basis, far less than you were, but still to some extent.

And then, when the preferred candidate was clearly ahead and would have won in the run-off, but did not have a majority, negotiations took place to change blank ballots into something else. Yet, I have Haitian friends who stated that unmarked ballots were not an anomaly but rather the expression of the will to vote, but for no particular candidate.

Mr. Bernard, I'm not referring to the problems you had. I can refer to them insofar as the information did not remain private. At some point during the process, you had to leave because your life was in danger.

In your presentation, I do not really see any recommendations which would help to avoid the situation from recurring. I'd like to hear what you have to say on that. I believe it is important to disclose results, because we could end up with the same problem. So there is the issue of the timing of the disclosure, the blank ballots with respect to a majority, and another point that I do not want to forget. At some point, ballots were found in a dump. What was that about? Were they really ballots? It would seem to confirm that there was fraud.

I'd like to close by saying that I think it is very important for you to clarify these points.

• (1720)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Lalonde.

Mr. Bernard or Mr. Kingsley.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Bernard: With respect to the blank ballots, the election writ is somewhat unclear. On the one hand there is a subjective interpretation of the definition of a blank ballot and on the other hand what the writ says to that effect, which is not very clear. If you look at the section of the writ of election which deals with unmarked ballots, you will see that it states that all ballots marked with an X or any other sign unequivocally indicating the voter's intention to vote in the space (circle, photo, emblem) reserved for the candidate are valid and accounted for. Further on we see that ballots on which there is no choice expressed are also valid and accounted for. That means that the wording used for valid ballots is also used for unmarked ballots. That led to a great deal of confusion.

When I personally started processing ballots, I counted blank ballots simply to establish a percentage. That decision was not taken lightly. I was not personally involved in that decision because I am Director General of the CEP. It is a decision which was handed down by the tribunal composed of the board and jurists. Opinions deferred on this point. Some jurists argued for one option whereas others preferred the other option. There was a great deal of confusion. I think the solution would be to have a clear electoral writ which would eliminate any confusion as to the processing of blank ballots.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: And what about disclosure?

Mr. Jacques Bernard: Disclosure?

Ms. Francine Lalonde: The fact that 48% of electors had voted for Mr. Préval...

Mr. Jacques Bernard: We tried to modernize elections in Haiti. We created a broadcasting centre. Each day, the centre would broadcast election results, aside from what we published on the Internet.

It just so happened that on that day I was the only one announcing results. The tally for Mr. Préval had fallen to 49.7%. And the rest is history. I don't think that we should do away with the broadcasting centre because we had a negative reaction to the decision to create such a centre. I think that in any future elections in Haiti, the broadcasting centre should continue to operate because it allows journalists to be present, members of the CEP to share the results, and it also gives journalists a better understanding of the election process.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame Lalonde, we're out of time.

Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We'll try to keep it within the five minutes, so the longer you take to ask the question, the less time our guests have.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Mr. Kingsley, Mr. Bernard, I too want to add my congratulations for a wonderful job that has been done on the electoral process.

My question relates more to what I think Mr. Rodriguez has touched on, and I'm sorry if it didn't come through that clearly. There is a very substantial amount of hardware and capital put into the machinery—the electronics, the computers—in that large voting centre that is there. I was given the impression that perhaps it wasn't a permanent location. I think it would behoove the country to have it continually established there as a means to conduct other elections too, because I imagine the computers would be utilizing the same process.

Is that a permanent installation, and does it come with all of what I would suppose would be manuals and operating guidelines, as a well-written and well-documented process to be utilized now and then turned over to Haitian authorities at some time in the future?

• (1725)

Mr. Jacques Bernard: I would like it to remain a permanent facility. The building where the tabulation centre is located belongs to the government. In fact, the whole industrial park where we are belongs to the government. To that extent, I think it's easier to keep it as a permanent facility.

All the equipment is there. I must say that I have asked Mr. Kingsley whether he could find an expert from Canada to come down to help do exactly what you talk about. He sent me somebody by the name of Alain Gauthier, who worked on that project from the beginning. He came in for the second round, and he has already completed his work, and it's precisely what you're talking about. I have a thick book that describes every step of the process. I received it about two days ago, so I have to review it and make comment. But it was done thanks to Mr. Kingsley, and it was done by a Canadian.

Mr. Peter Goldring: I'm sensing, though, that you're saying it's not necessarily established as a permanent electoral facility.

Mr. Jacques Bernard: What I'm saying is that, frankly, when I joined the CEP I was so concentrated on having elections that it is only now that I'm starting to think about the future and how we're going to be able to keep all these facilities, all this knowledge, and the transfer of knowledge from the OAS to Haiti. So that is the next step. And that's why I talked about building that electoral machine. That is part of that electoral machine, to keep these facilities there.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Yes, because the room we were in was just amazing. There were hundreds of computers in there. There's a tremendous amount of set-up and cost to put it in if it's just on a rental basis. It would be a tremendous loss if it couldn't be replicated and kept.

Mr. Jacques Bernard: Yes, I do hope we will be able to keep it. That's going to be my recommendation to the government upon my return to Haiti on June 4. That's one of the things I'm supposed to do. I have personally already taken steps to make it permanent, but in the final analysis, it's not my decision; it's the decision of the government.

Mr. Peter Goldring: I have just one final question.

With the Ukraine elections they included the municipal and regional areas of election. They actually had four ballots for each person to fill out and mark, to indicate. Is it the intention in the future to maybe combine these, rather than have so many different stages of elections? Now you're looking at the municipal election too. Can that

not be combined in the same way as it was in Ukraine and some other places?

Mr. Jacques Bernard: What we did for this election was combine them by function. So for instance, for president, all the presidents were on one ballot—but different political parties. You have to realize that we had about 45 political parties participating, so the ballots were pretty good. But in the second round, where we reduced the number of candidates for deputy to only two, the ballots were about the size of a sheet of paper.

But we do need to have different ballots per *circonscription*, because physically you can't have a different *circonscription* in the same ballot. It would be very difficult.

The Chair: Mr. Goldring, we're out of time.

Madame McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thanks very much.

It's not even necessary to take up the committee's time right now, but I wonder whether you might table—perhaps you're going to do so in any case with your final report—the statistics that would give us an opportunity to make the comparison between the previous election, both numbers of electors registered and the turnout, and this election. I think it's the combination of those two things that makes the achievement quite remarkable in terms of the level of participation. Separate from each other, the percentage turnout isn't as overwhelmingly impressive as when you take into account the number of electors who were actually registered.

You may want to comment, but I don't want to use up all my time asking questions.

Second, I'm more confused than ever about the status of what was clearly the provisional electoral commission. I had thought—and maybe I came away with the wrong impression—that by definition, because it was provisional until there was a duly elected government in place, that what would have been anticipated is legislation brought in to create...I don't know what it's called, but as we have in Canada, a totally independent, permanent Elections Haiti apparatus, as we have with Elections Canada. Could you clarify that?

The third thing is, I have to say, there is nothing worse than politicians who go somewhere for a few days and think they get a total impression. It's ridiculous, but it was really impressive how much you could sense a real hopefulness and pride people took in turning up at the polls with their identification, which meant they weren't facing all kinds of questions, and so on. There had been some criticism about the significant reduction in the number of polling stations, and a concern about whether this would limit access.

Could you comment on whether the recommendation would be to go with the 802, or is there some interim number between that and the previous 11,000 or 12,000, maybe even 13,000? I understand the reason for reducing, but it appears, as you've said, that it didn't severely reduce the number of participants, in fact, the opposite. Is there some recommendation about extending even more opportunities to vote, which would be based on more experience, more know-how, and so on, or would a recommendation be to stick with that?

I have one final comment. Against the backdrop of what clearly was a pretty positive experience, hundreds of political prisoners were languishing in prisons, invisible to the international community but not invisible to Haitians themselves. I think they were overwhelmingly supporters of Lavalas, not charged with anything, not entitled to any due process of law. It's hard to imagine that not being something you would comment on as part of the environment in which it's hard to say an election is completely fair and free. Somebody suggested, and it's not a bad analogy, it's like imprisoning the whole leadership of a political party in Canada and expecting that party to say yes, it was tough, but it was fair and free other than that.

I'm wondering if you chose not to comment on that part of the political landscape. It's hard to understand why it wouldn't be important to take note of this factor in the context in which you were trying to conduct this election.

• (1730)

The Chair: You have about 30 seconds to answer.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Kingsley: With respect to documentation, we'll provide that comparison for you, to the extent that we can find it.

The *conseil électoral provisoire* is provisional, as the word says, and it's supposed to become permanent through the elections. The elected local authorities are supposed to roll up into a permanent body, and if there are no local elections, one will have to see what can be done. It probably will be another *conseil électoral provisoire*, but I do want to build on the point my colleague made. A concerted effort should be made to make sure a permanent body is established to maintain election readiness, because 16 elections in the next 10 years are foreseen under the constitution. This is in answer to Mr. Goldring's question about elections as well. They are foreseen in the constitution. They'll have to amend the constitution to do things differently. At least, that's my understanding.

With respect to political prisoners and the fact that the body I chaired did not comment on them, I suppose we could have, but everybody else was, even the United Nations, which had approved the holding of elections through the presence of MINUSTAH. So that's one factor. If it had become a factor that negated the whole purpose, then Elections Canada would not have participated. I would not have participated as the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada. The international community encouraged Haiti to solve the problem and, at the same time, to go ahead and hold its elections. As long as it has UN blessing, Elections Canada feels it can play a useful role.

So that's my answer to that question.

• (1735)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kingsley.

A very short question to Mr. Van Loan, and then to Mr. Martin.

Mr. Peter Van Loan: On the issue of making the election superstructure permanent, is there an assessment of the cost of doing that? That's my first question.

Secondly, is there a proposal to include that in any of the future asks, if you will, of the international community in terms of development? Does it represent part of Mr. Préval's program of social appeasement that he's putting forward? Does it belong anywhere? Is it somewhere in the financial asks?

On the issue of the municipal versus local elections, your position, Mr. Bernard, I think reflects that it's still an ongoing debate. But I think the emerging consensus among the donors is that it's best to proceed with the municipal and the mayors and leave the local councils to later. How long can those be left before that permanent, temporary, or whatever voters list that has been developed with these national identity cards is going to require a serious investment in updating? At what point does that list become so stale that we have to go another round of heavy investment?

Mr. Jacques Bernard: If I may, I will answer the second question first. The registration of the voters was stopped voluntarily because we had to stop somewhere to be able to build a list. Once we complete the municipal elections, then we can go ahead and restart registration. We have the technology. Haiti doesn't really require any technical assistance, because the OAS gave us the initial assistance.

The whole team was Haitian. They were in the field with a computer, doing the work, putting it on a CD, and sending it to Mexico for the printing of the card. The government in Haiti would have had to invest in a small plant to produce those cards.

We don't have to have the local election to start registration. We can go ahead after the municipal election to start registration, and we can even update the list for the local election. I think we will have to do that.

Regarding the local election, I think there is a problem with the districts and going to the database to look at the people in the exact district where they belong. It's a very cumbersome process. That is why my preoccupation right now is to provide Haiti with enough governmental structure so that it can work effectively and efficiently.

The other aspect of it, as I mentioned earlier, is that there is no legal framework for the ASEC, CASEC and town delegates. So the government would have to do that first before you can elect these people. The last time they were elected in 1994, they didn't know what to do. They were just there. They were never a part of the government budget. They were just walking around. So I really think the government needs to do a lot of background work in creating the legal framework and including those people in budgets and so on, before we, as a CEP, can go ahead and have an election. Otherwise we're going to have a bunch of elected officials and they won't know what to do.

The permanent CEP will come from this election. We need to make sure that if we do it, there are no changes in the constitution. They are talking about changing some of the procedures in the constitution because they are so cumbersome. I have calculated the number of elections over the next 10 years, and there are going to be 16 elections. Haiti cannot afford to have 16 elections in the next 10 years. Something will have to be done. One has to recognize the financial constraints of having 16 elections in 10 years for such a poor country.

• (1740)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bernard.

Mr. Martin, for a very short question.

Hon. Keith Martin: Thank you, Mr. Kingsley, Madam Davidson, and, Mr. Bernard, for being here today. Congratulations on your work, not only in Haiti, but all over the world. You really put Canada on the map in terms of guiding countries and developing their electoral capacity building.

A friend of mine asked a friend of mine about the top three things that Haiti needs. He said, first, Haiti needs a free and open election. The second thing they need is a free and open election, and the third thing they need is another free and open election. How long do you anticipate our involvement with respect to Haiti in terms of investment before Haitians can actually take substantial control of their own electoral infrastructure?

Lastly, when one is dealing in an environment where corruption is endemic—which has to affect your ability to create the infrastructure on the ground, as you have all mentioned—what is needed to try to address that endemic corruption beyond the obvious economic restructuring that has to occur in the country?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Kingsley: Certainly, I'll answer the first question, and obviously I'll allow my colleague to talk about endemic corruption.

In my view, it would take perhaps one more year of partnering with the Haitian electoral authority—should one be established—to say there is no longer a need for any kind of external support, other than perhaps financial through other means and so on. I say a year because I take into account what my colleague has just said about the transference of knowledge that is required from MINUSTAH and especially the OAS about the matter of the lists.

That may sound a little short, but I like to think it would be realizable.

What's next on the horizon is the next round. I will be having discussions with the people at CIDA and Foreign Affairs to see exactly what involvement there will be from my office for that next round and for any other kind of permanent partnership that can be developed to allow the one year to elapse—and to feel that we've gone as far as we can and are no longer required, in the same sense as we are now. It would be something akin to what we did with Mexico, for example.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kingsley.

Mr. Bernard, on the second point of Mr. Martin's question.

Mr. Jacques Bernard: On the corruption point, let me say that I was put in charge of organizing elections, but I'm not really an election expert. Believe it or not, I'm primarily an international banker and an economist. I can tell you that I have travelled to a lot of third world countries, and I consider corruption as the cancer of third world countries. Therefore, it's something that should be eliminated. I always believe that you don't have to be economically efficient to grow your economy, but if you have corruption, you're not going to go anywhere. Indeed, corruption is endemic in Haiti.

Since most third world countries cannot develop by themselves—they don't have the necessary capital and know-how—countries like Canada are involved. Frankly, I think part of the conditionalities for foreign aid should be a systematic program of anti-corruption. If the country cannot impose the discipline on itself, I really think one of the conditionalities to providing foreign aid is that there needs to be a systematic program of anti-corruption.

Frankly, I think one of the reasons Haiti has never developed and basically stayed behind most other countries in Central America and the Caribbean is precisely corruption. If you go back to the 1950s, Haiti was at the same level of economic development as, and perhaps more advanced than, a lot of these countries. Today they might be 100 years ahead of us. The whole thing can be traced to corruption.

So I am very much against it. I think it's something that the international community should take very seriously, and it should be a part of the conditionalities for extending aid to a third world country.

• (1745)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bernard.

In your presentation you mentioned—or perhaps it was Mr. Kingsley—the fact that there were a number of different individuals who were challenging the results, or you had a protocol for those who would challenge the results.

Were there a lot of different challenges? Was it one challenge overall, or were there certain challenges at certain polls? Was it a vote count challenge, or was the entire exercise challenged?

Mr. Jacques Bernard: We can't really classify it into a category. I must say that in Haiti we have a lot of sore losers.

The Chair: Well, we do here too.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I'm not looking anywhere, but...

Mr. Jacques Bernard: There we have two types. One is the tally, the number of votes, but since it was an open process, everybody had a copy of the reports. They come, and we take them to the tabulation centre and show them precisely that what we post on the Internet is a reflection of the actual vote.

The second type is that we had reports of problems in some voting centres, and indeed in some areas we did have problems. For instance, in one area I stopped the election for the second round. It was the second time I had stopped the election in that district. It's an area called Grande Saline in the Artibonite. One of the reasons we are redoing 11 districts is precisely that they were a problem. Some of it is fraud; some of it is that candidates would come with armed men and invade the voting centres and then would stuff the ballot box, and things like that.

We have identified all these things and have eliminated those voting centres. There are cases where we eliminated voting centres, but they were voting centres in an area where we still went ahead and published a report. But there are areas where the voting centre was so significant that we had to redo the election.

So I would say that there were these two types. One is a candidate saying there were mistakes in the calculation, and the other case is where there were real problems, and that's why we had to redo about 14 constituencies.

The Chair: You mentioned that there was a 63% voter turnout. Is that in both election days? On one election I heard someone say there was 30%.

Mr. Jacques Bernard: In the first round of elections we had 63%, and in the second round of the legislative elections we had 31%, actually 30.86%. Mind you, the way you should compare it is to look at past second rounds for legislative elections in Haiti. We never went beyond 15%. This time we reached 31%, so I think to that extent it was a success.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Kingsley: And there were no presidential candidates for the second round, and despite that there was still a 30%-plus turnout, which was double the previous score. It was recognized to be a very successful second round, frankly. I just thought I'd add that.

The Chair: I want to thank you for coming today. I know this has helped our committee. Sometimes we have committee meetings and wonder after the witnesses have been here how the testimony fits into what we may be studying. But certainly this has been a very good hour, and I want to thank you.

And specifically, Mr. Kingsley, I want to thank you for helping to facilitate Mr. Bernard's being here.

We will adjourn.

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