

OPENING STATEMENT

BY MATTHEW SHEA

**ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

TO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES**

June 16, 2020

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Good afternoon Chair and members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting the Privy Council Office (PCO) to review our *2020-21 Supplementary Estimates (A)*.

My name is Matthew Shea and I am the Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services Branch and the Chief Financial Officer at PCO.

I am accompanied today by Ms. Louise Baird, Assistant Deputy Minister, Intergovernmental Affairs, Ms. Lisa Setlakwe, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Social Development Policy, Mr. Ken MacKillop, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Communications and Consultations, and Mr. Michael Hammond, Executive Director, Finance and Planning Administration Directorate.

PCO remains committed to serve Canada and Canadians by providing professional, non-partisan advice and support to the Prime Minister and Ministers within his portfolio, and to support the effective operation of Cabinet on matters of national and international importance, as well as facilitating the implementation of the Government's agenda and fostering a high-performing and accountable Public Service.

I would like to begin with a brief overview of the *2020-21 Supplementary Estimates (A)*. PCO sought \$58.3 million overall for its core responsibility, which is to serve the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and for its internal services. This includes:

- Funding for COVID-19 communications and marketing strategy to ensure that Canadians receive important information about how to stay safe and

healthy, and about how they can access financial support during the pandemic;

- Funding related to the direct transfer of exempt staff in Ministers' Regional Offices from Public Services and Procurement Canada to the Privy Council Office; and
- Funding to support an increased regional presence and stabilize and enhance PCO capacity to support the Prime Minister, the new role of the Deputy Prime Minister, and other portfolio Ministers and advisors and Cabinet.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, PCO has been taking a leadership role in coordinating the government's response. Two units have been created at PCO, the first to ensure that Government of Canada communications and marketing efforts on COVID-19 are coherent and build citizens' confidence in the overall response, and the second to act as the central focus point for the operations of the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee, provide relevant information via daily briefings to Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee Ministers, and support the Deputy Prime Minister in her role as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee.

PCO has also been leading inter-governmental efforts to coordinate federal, provincial and territorial responses to the pandemic and to ensure information sharing among governments. In order to respond to COVID-19, there has been a tremendous surge in the need for intergovernmental collaboration, with First Ministers Meetings happening on a weekly basis.

This brief summary of PCO's *2020-21 Supplementary Estimates (A)* touches on a few of the means by which PCO continues to support the Clerk as head of the

Public Service of Canada, the Prime Minister and Cabinet as part of a whole-of-government approach.

Mr. Chair, members of Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this context. We would now be pleased to answer your questions.