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Chair: Mr. John Brassard



Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

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• (0845)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC)): I call the meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 67 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of Thursday, June 23, 2022. Members are participating in person, in the room, and remotely via the Zoom application.

Should any technical issues arise, please let me know immediately. It may be necessary to suspend the meeting to ensure that all members are able to participate fully in the proceedings.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h) and the motion adopted by the committee on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, the committee is resuming its study on foreign interference and threats to the integrity of democratic institutions, intellectual property and the Canadian state.

Now I would like to welcome our witness today. Appearing as an individual is Pascale Fournier, former president and chief executive officer of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and full professor in the faculty of law at the University of Ottawa.

Over to you, Ms. Fournier. You have five minutes.

Ms. Pascale Fournier (Former President and Chief Executive Officer at the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and Full Professor at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

First, I should say that I didn't ask to appear before the committee. I received a summons to appear.

I am a lawyer, so my initial response, as I'm sure you can appreciate, was to ask the House of Commons to ensure that my duty of confidentiality and loyalty to my former employer, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, would not be breached, or that I be protected by parliamentary privilege should I be required to disclose confidential information that I had access to during my employment with the foundation. I received confirmation of that in writing, of course.

That parliamentary privilege is provided for by the Constitution. Accordingly, I will co-operate with the committee in answering its questions. Bear in mind that I had access to a considerable amount of confidential information, which is to be expected since I was the

foundation's president and chief executive officer from July 9, 2018 to April 11, 2023.

Second, I want to point out that I, myself, am a former recipient of a Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation scholarship. I was among the very first cohort of scholars in 2003, so 20 years ago. I was a law student at Harvard University at the time. I was working on my Ph.D., and the foundation made a tremendous difference in my life as a researcher. My specialty is human rights, I teach the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and I have worked on the ground in many countries, including Iran and Egypt. Thanks to the foundation, I have travelled all over the world and been in close contact with various populations, marginalized women in particular, in an effort to understand the issues they face and engage meaningfully with our democratic institutions to advance those issues.

Ethics is something I am deeply committed to. This year, in fact, I worked with the National Judicial Institute to develop the very first mandatory podcast on ethics for federally appointed judges in Canada. Ethics is really in my wheelhouse.

When I was approached to become the foundation's president and chief executive officer, I was very moved, having been one of its scholars. The foundation changed my life for the better. When I joined the foundation, I was given a mandate to reform the scholarship programming for fellows and mentors, and I put forward an innovative strategic plan. Prior to 2018, the foundation's mandate did not include a strategic plan.

I toured the country, visiting every province and territory and inviting people from all sectors to participate, from private and public sector stakeholders to members of non-governmental organizations and the academic community. We held 23 events known as Future Forums, and then we implemented an innovative strategic plan. It included leadership curriculum for doctoral scholars to help them foster innovation and have a meaningful impact on society and systems. I carried out my mandate with great passion and conviction.

You will have understood that I am interested in ethics, and a key component of the strategic plan revolved around good governance. The foundation adopted a large number of policies to ensure good governance and predictability. As you know, the foundation has a government endowment of \$125 million. That is taxpayer money, and that matters deeply to me. It's not a private foundation. It's funded by taxpayer money. Accordingly, the foundation must show accountability and adhere to good governance policies. Under my leadership, the foundation adopted a large number of policies to ensure good governance and make a meaningful impact on scholars' lives.

That concludes my opening remarks. I am available to answer questions. As I said, I started with the foundation on July 9, 2018. It's important to keep that in mind because the issues involving the Chinese donation and the three expected payments were before my time at the head of the foundation. I had to respond to a crisis stemming from a situation that did not occur under my leadership.

As you can appreciate, it can be very difficult to try to piece together something that happened in the past, when I was not there, when certain individuals were on the board and others were not. I had to piece together what happened from internal documents, in an attempt to figure out how I, as president and chief executive officer, could get to the bottom of the situation and fulfill my duty—giving the board members all the information available to me, so that they could perform their fiduciary role properly.

• (0850)

I would say that we, at the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, spent February, March and April managing a major internal crisis.

Mr. Chair, I am available to answer the committee's questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fournier.

[*English*]

We're going to start with our first six-minute round of questioning.

Mr. Barrett, please begin.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Professor, for joining us today.

Does the company, Millennium Gold Eagle, which actually made the donation of \$140,000, seem like a real company, with ongoing business operations, or is there something peculiar about this business, based on your observations?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: In the process, in order for me to understand the past, my first reaction was to find the charity tax receipt that had been submitted at the time.

[*Translation*]

Two receipts were signed and issued by my predecessor, Morris Rosenberg. As soon as I learned of the two receipts, a number of questions came to mind.

[*English*]

The first receipt mentions an address in China, with the name of that company, but without the names of the two donors who were

mentioned in the contract that was signed on behalf of these two donors—on behalf of the foundation by Alexandre Trudeau, and on behalf of Université de Montréal. The names of these two donors do not appear in 2016 on the receipt issued by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and signed by Morris Rosenberg, and the address was in China.

The second receipt in 2017 is different from the first one. The name of the company is there. The address is in Quebec, and the names of the donors are there.

I immediately started to ask questions about why we would have two receipts that were so different. One seemed to be international, with money that seemed to come from China, and the other one had an address in Quebec. The CFO, Caroline Lin, was working with me on that file. We tried to understand what was sent to the government.

• (0855)

[*Translation*]

There are two considerations. First, when receipts like that are issued, they obviously have to go to the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA. My first response was to figure out what had been sent and what was different in this particular case.

Second, there were the annual reports from 2016 and 2017. The foundation is required by the federal government to submit reports. Annual reports have to be approved by the board, posted on our website and submitted to our partner, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, or ISED.

In putting the pieces of the puzzle together, I realized that, in the 2016 and 2017 annual reports, which are publicly available, the company's name didn't appear but the two donors' names did. That means information was reported publicly, but it differed from the information on the receipt provided to the CRA.

I dug deeper, and I came across emails dated before I joined the foundation that were from an association in China. The association was asking staff at the foundation to put certain information on the tax receipts issued to the association.

[*English*]

The association said, "Please don't put the names of the donor. Please put that address in China," and so on.

[*Translation*]

It's very important to clarify that I wasn't there then and I wasn't the president. As you can appreciate, I had access to only some of the information.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett: I would just like to ask you a couple of quick questions. I'm running short on time, but I appreciate your precision on that issue.

You made mention of documents. I'm going to ask up front. If there are documents, emails, notes, meeting minutes, receipts, any materials of that nature, or other material that is germane to our discussions today with respect to our investigation on foreign interference and the attempt at foreign influence by the organizations you've mentioned today, would you undertake to provide those to this committee as part of your testimony today?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Look, as I mentioned at the beginning of my opening remarks, I have a duty of loyalty and confidentiality to my former employer, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, so my inclination would be to say no. If you are adamant about obtaining certain documents from me, that is your prerogative. There is nothing I can do about it. That is your right, and parliamentary privilege would then override my duty of confidentiality. Being a lawyer, I will, of course, co-operate. My initial response is to not provide those documents, but if you insist on obtaining them and you pursue that option, naturally, I will co-operate.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thank you.

I have about 30 seconds left.

You talked about how the donation was reported in your annual report, and how the receipts were made for the Canada Revenue Agency.

Is it your contention that if the donations were not received from the individuals who were named in the foundation's filing with CRA, the foundation lied to Canadians in what was reported in its annual report?

The Chair: Give a very quick response, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pascale Fournier: What I can tell you is that I planned to ask lawyers to get to the bottom of the matter. In my capacity as president, I had asked what I should do. Should I reach out to the federal government, through ISED, to flag that the annual report contained inaccurate information? If incorrect information had been sent to the CRA, I wanted to know what my obligations were, as president.

• (0900)

[*English*]

Do I have to do a voluntary disclosure? What do I have to say to CRA and what do I have to say to ISED? I sought legal advice and guidance in order to correct the information that was made public to Canadians.

Again, remember that this is public money—not the donations, but the foundation's money.

[*Translation*]

It was my duty.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fournier.

[*English*]

Thank you, Madame Fournier.

We went over on that time, so I'm going to keep that in mind for this first round and for the other members of the committee as well.

Ms. Hepfner, you have six minutes. Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Fournier, thank you for being here this morning. I know you didn't have a choice, but we appreciate it nonetheless.

You weren't there in 2001, when—

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett: On a point of order, there is no English interpretation.

The Chair: Okay. I've stopped the time.

There is no English interpretation. We're going to work on that right now.

Maybe we can test it...

Okay. We're good right now.

Ms. Hepfner, your time was stopped. Please continue.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Thank you.

I was saying that you weren't there in 2001, when the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation was created.

Can you tell us how and why the foundation was created? What was its original mandate? How has the foundation changed over the past 22 years?

[*English*]

Ms. Pascale Fournier: In 2002, the federal government endowed the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation with the advanced research in the humanities and human science fund of \$125 million. The foundation is living off the interest, so we cannot spend that \$125 million. We invest it, and we use it to fund Ph.D. students from Canada and across the world who do innovative research around four themes: human rights and dignity, responsible citizenship, Canada and the world, and people and their natural environment.

The foundation is committed to leadership. How do we appoint mentors and fellows? Mentors come from different sectors. They are former Supreme Court justices, people in the business sector, movies, artists and so on.

[*Translation*]

They were were the cream of the crop from across the country.

[English]

The fellows are university professors who are also experts around these themes that should interest all Canadians. The role of the foundation is to bring impact and leadership training for these Ph.D. students.

I was a scholar for the first three years of the foundation. It had a tremendous effect on my life, my vision of research and the necessity to democratize knowledge, disseminate knowledge and make it accessible to Canadians across the country and around the world.

[Translation]

The foundation has been around a long time. In fact, it marked its 20-year anniversary. In recent years, we were working to extend our reach internationally. For instance, I developed partnerships with France. Representatives of the foundation were in Spain, back in January.

The Ph.D. students are absolutely brilliant, obviously. We choose 12 or 13 people out of 500 applicants, which is a lot. The selection process is very demanding, and the bar is quite high. We want to make sure that their work has a real impact on the world. That means democratizing knowledge and making it more accessible.

In academia, which is the world I'm from, a world I love, students are highly specialized. When you're working on your Ph.D., you're dealing with a subquestion of a subquestion of a subdiscipline. What the foundation does is help the person to broaden their focus from a single tree to the forest.

● (0905)

[English]

How can you make your research accessible and go to the public sector, governments, NGOs and outside the university world to address the most complex issues that should interest all Canadians?

[Translation]

It is the extraordinary generosity of mentors and fellows that made that possible. Under our public interaction program, cohorts of scholars and mentors would go out in the field, whether it be cities in Canada or certain other countries, to explore high-level scientific issues and make that expertise accessible. We would equip them with the tools they needed to democratize their knowledge. It's a colossal undertaking, and we were able to offer them an extraordinary amount of support.

I can speak to my first three years at the foundation, which were incredible, and the last five years, which were equally incredible. In November, we celebrated the foundation's 20th anniversary, and more than 200 people attended. There were about 450 alumni as well as people with very impressive careers who had worked with the scholars.

I, myself, did a Ph.D. That can be a very solitary path. It's just you staring at a blank sheet, writing your thesis on your own with a small committee of supervisors to turn to. Then, all of a sudden, you have the support of the foundation, and it's like this caring family putting its loving arms around you.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Hefner: That's a fantastic answer. I occasionally like to listen to the Peter Mansbridge podcast during my commute, and I think this topic came up during one discussion. Chantal Hébert, a very respected, long-time journalist, talked about her experience. She disclosed that she participated in the program, and she saw how much good it did.

What other sorts of people would you say are involved in these programs? Perhaps you can reflect a bit more on it, because you said it really changed your life as a researcher. I'd like to hear more about that impact.

The Chair: Can you do it in about 45 seconds, please?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: In 45 seconds, that will be hard.

I did my Ph.D. on issues of human rights and women's rights in the Middle East. It allowed me to go into the field to teach women's rights in Iran, for instance, which was thanks to the foundation, but taking risks, and serious risks, going there and building relationships and partnerships, I would say, with different groups, in order to understand that despite our differences as human beings all over the world, there's a lot that we have in common. If we work with good faith and good intentions, together we can do great things. The foundation allowed me to dream big and to build an ethical platform for the future, when I became a university professor and taught the Canadian charter, accessibility to justice and so on.

I was very proud and privileged to bring that back to the foundation, and to make sure we had a strategic plan that would protect the foundation and policies that would ensure that governance was good governance, and that we could correct the past, whether something happened or not. I am a firm believer in transparency.

The Chair: Thank you. One of the worst jobs in being chair is having to cut people off.

We extended in the first and second rounds, and I will continue that courtesy for Mr. Villemure and Mr. Green.

[Translation]

Mr. Villemure, you have six minutes, possibly a bit more. Go ahead.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Fournier, thank you for being here today.

Can you describe the circumstances of your resignation from your position as president and chief executive officer of the Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Yes. As I mentioned, the crisis hit. I read an article that appeared in The Globe and Mail on February 28 about possible interference and a donation to the foundation for reasons other than simply organizing conferences on China.

In response to the situation, I immediately called an emergency meeting of my executive committee, which represents the board. In our efforts to find a solution, one of the questions we asked was whether the money should be returned, and that's exactly what we recommended.

Keep in mind that this happened before my time as president of the foundation, so I had to try to piece together the puzzle.

I wanted to return the money. We sent a cheque signed by two members of the board, and they are still on the board. The cheque was sent back to us. After that, I kept digging, together with my chief operating officer, Caroline Lin, to figure out whether there was a problem.

The addresses seemed to be different and the receipts weren't the same, so I was trying to figure out what was going on.

In the course of my digging, I realized something that I had not been aware of for the first four years of my mandate, an association based in China had been in contact with foundation staff, and the correspondence wasn't about organizing conferences on China. From what I could gather—and I have to tell you, I didn't see everything—the association appeared to be giving clear instructions as to what should appear on the receipts issued by the foundation. That struck me as very odd and troubling.

As I said, I also realized that the address was in China, but the annual report indicated that the donation was made in Canada. The reality was that the tax receipt clearly indicated that the donation had come from China.

At that point, all kinds of things did not make sense to me. I wanted to get to the bottom of the matter and, above all, I wanted to know how I, as the foundation's president, should handle things with the federal government and the CRA. I had an obligation to report the inaccuracies and rectify the information that had been provided previously.

I brought in lawyers to ask them six questions that I had prepared in my capacity as the foundation's president. That's very important. I was going to stay another two years at the foundation. My term was ending on July 9, and I had already signed on for another two years, thanks to the tremendous confidence placed in me by the board.

I was prepared to stay provided that I be allowed to find out what happened and seek a special legal opinion that would be confidential. I wasn't planning on disclosing anything publicly, but I wanted to be able to shed light on all these things that didn't seem to add up and on the emails sent by the association based in China.

That's how I wanted to move forward, but it caused friction among the board members in terms of the type of mandate I should be given. I was looking for a broad mandate and the ability to examine six questions that would help me get to the bottom of things. The friction on the board, however, led to a breakdown in the relationship of trust, and eight people ended up resigning at the same time I did, on April 10, which was Easter Monday. The relationship of trust had broken down.

In conclusion, I would say that getting to the truth hinges on the independence of the investigative process. I wanted to seek the ex-

pertise of a law firm and an accounting firm. My chief operating officer, Caroline Lin, and I had uncovered a lot of information, and we just wanted to hand that information over to the lawyers and accountants, take ourselves out of the process and encourage the people who were on the committees at the time to recuse themselves. If they stayed on, even just to establish the parameters of the mandate, it could taint the very process. A reporter would have been able to say that the process wasn't completely independent.

• (0910)

I am here before you, before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

I wanted to protect the foundation, so that our investigative process could not be attacked by saying that people who were still on the board, including audit committee chairs and treasurers, should recuse themselves. I had obtained legal suggestions to ensure that this kind of recusal took place before we started the process. This was also the wish of the eight resigning board members. All the friction was around that process, both the scope of the term and who was to recuse themselves.

• (0915)

Mr. René Villemure: I have one last very brief question. Were you intimidated in the course of your duties or have you been threatened with legal action?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: There was no mention of any legal action being taken against me. The meetings we had on the board were very heated. There were some comments made about me that several board members and I felt were not justified. It was said that I may have been acting in bad faith in wanting to ensure that certain individuals recused themselves.

I am an attorney and I also received legal advice. I had nothing but good intentions to protect the foundation. I am an ethics specialist. As I mentioned to you, this year I did the podcast for the appointment of judges across the country, with two Court of Appeal judges, in this case in Quebec and Manitoba. I am very familiar with what is required. Often, more is required to make a process unassailable. Recusing yourself is very important. It protects the process and it protected me as well, because at that point, all I had to do with my operations manager, who resigned the same day I did...

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fournier and Mr. Villemure.

[*English*]

Mr. Green, you're next, for probably about 23 minutes now.

Mr. Matthew Green: Oh, oh!

The Chair: You have six minutes plus.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for being before us today, Ms. Fournier. Your testimony has been really helpful.

I'm going to ask you a series of questions in a rather rapid-fire way. Please don't take it personally if I interject to take my time back and move on to the next question. I will ask you to answer questions to the best of your ability, as briefly as you can and as directly as you can, given the complexity of the situation.

I'm going to pick up where my friend from the Bloc left off.

You mentioned that you had raised some concerns internally with the board and that you wanted to flag them with the federal government and the CRA as per your obligations to ISED and the CRA.

Did you end up doing that? You sought legal advice, but it wasn't clear to me. Did you end up flagging those issues?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I actually never received the legal advice.

This is why we got to where we got and I resigned, along with eight board members. I wanted to get the legal advice, and I had six questions that I needed answered. One of those questions—

Mr. Matthew Green: What were those questions?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I have the email here that was sent to the executive committee at the time. It's a privileged and confidential email that was sent, with the lawyers being cc'd. I have outlined in that email the six questions I was asking—

Mr. Matthew Green: Okay, I'm going to interject now. I'm going to demand that you submit those letters to the committee.

I know that you are loyal to the board, given your confidentiality, but you do recognize the parliamentary privilege that we have, so I will request that you submit those documents to this committee. We will endeavour....

Mr. Chair, can I call a point of order on myself?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Matthew Green: Okay, if you could pause, I want to know if, within the context of this committee, I could request that these documents be viewed confidentially within the committee at a later date. To alleviate Ms. Fournier from her obligation, I would ask that those documents be submitted and that the committee review them in camera at a later date.

Is that okay, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: I'm going to go to the clerk on that one. If Madam Clerk could help us out, that would be great. Procedurally, Mr. Green, I can't answer that question. I'm just not aware of that.

Mr. Green, I've been advised that we can ask for those documents. It would be a motion of the committee to determine the undertaking of those documents.

Furthermore, to your point on the confidential nature, that would have to be part of the motion— for the committee to deal with those documents in a confidential manner, obviously to protect privilege, but also to make sure that the committee has everything it needs in order to determine....

● (0920)

Mr. Matthew Green: In fairness to Ms. Fournier and understanding our parliamentary privilege, Mr. Chair, I'm going to re-

quest that those documents be submitted to the committee in an in camera fashion, in a confidential fashion, privileged to the committee. At a later date, perhaps, Mr. Chair, we can determine whether or not we want to make those public, but I'd like to move that motion right now.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Green.

I have stopped the time. The motion has been moved by Mr. Green for Madame Fournier to submit those documents so that the committee can deal with those documents on a confidential basis.

I have to deal with this right now.

Do I have consensus on the part of the committee to do so? I see consensus over here, and consensus over here.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I'm sorry, Chair. I agree with Mr. Green's motion, but can you clarify what the document request is?

The Chair: Mr. Green, perhaps you can clarify what....

I'm taking from Mr. Green that it's everything, perhaps, that Ms. Fournier has available to her that could be submitted to the committee.

Mr. Green, am I correct in that assumption?

Mr. Matthew Green: That is correct.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Then to be clear, Chair, that is consistent with what I had suggested in the first round—all the information that was germane. Would that be captured by this motion by Mr. Green?

The Chair: I expect it is. He's nodding his head. The only difference is—and this is where I need a clarification from the clerk—how we would dispose of that on a confidential basis. We would need a motion to deal with that confidentially, and for the undertaking of the documents. That's clear.

On the motion, I see Mr. Fergus's hand. I saw you nod with consent before. I assume that you're still in that space.

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I think this is, of course, of interest to the committee. I would suggest, however, that we table this, allowing Mr. Green, perhaps when he's not on his questions, to consult with his research team, or with other members, to come up with the precise motion, and that we deal with it before the end of this meeting today.

The Chair: I think there's willingness on the part of everybody for the committee to receive these documents on a confidential basis. That's what I'm sensing

Mr. Green, if you want to table this, are you okay with that?

Mr. Matthew Green: Sure, I'd be happy to. Yes.

I just want to get to the heart of the matter. I want to respect the witness's commitment to her board, and also the understanding of the constitutional nature of our parliamentary privilege.

I will proceed with my round. I think I'm at about two minutes right now.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: May I just add one comment?

The Chair: Actually, no....

Ms. Pascale Fournier: That's okay.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Madame Fournier. We're going to continue with Mr. Green's line of questioning. Perhaps, at some point, if you want to make a point during your answer, you can do that, but please respect the member's ability to ask the question. Mr. Green has already stated that he's asking them in a pointed fashion for short responses.

Go ahead, Mr. Green. You have four minutes and 10 seconds left.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you very much.

Ms. Fournier, you mentioned that you had some tension at the board. We noted that you also mentioned that people left subsequent to that tension. You raised this issue. You certainly are a very learned academic expert in law, in constitutional matters, in board governance, yet there was friction with the board. With whom was the friction?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: We had a possible total of 18 board members, but at the time there were 14 board members. A motion was circulated by one of the board members, Ginger Gibson.

She is a former scholar as well. She had sent a motion suggesting that those who were in a conflict of interest or an apparent conflict of interest would recuse themselves. She suggested that a committee of three members with one possible alternate member would deal with this matter.

● (0925)

Mr. Matthew Green: I'm going to interject now. I'm going to ask, who were the members she deemed to be in apparent conflict?

Can you name them now, please?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: She did not name them. What she did was the opposite. That's to say, she said, I would like to suggest a committee with members who were not there at the time, who were appointed on the board after 2018. That committee and only that committee would be responsible for overseeing the law firm and the accounting firm that had to answer these questions that I had regarding these Chinese donations.

Mr. Matthew Green: Okay. I'm going to interject again.

Just so I'm clear, was Alexandre Trudeau part of the board prior to those members joining the board?

Would he have been one of the people who predated the decision for this donation?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Yes. Alexandre Trudeau currently is not on the board of directors. He's a member, but at the time he was on the board of directors and on the executive committee, which is the committee representing the board at the time of these donations.

Mr. Matthew Green: Sure.

I just noted that he requested to attend committee in this fashion regarding this. That's why I'm raising it.

Did you at any time as the executive member presenting to the board ever receive direction from the board that you felt might have been counter to your rules and regulations or any laws pertaining to the CRA or ISED in your reporting?

Was there anything that you felt was contrary to the best interests of the organization that you perceived as direction from the board?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I should mention that I am an emeritus lawyer of the Quebec Bar.

[*English*]

I called the Quebec bar. The CFO called the Ordre des comptables professionnels agréés du Québec. We both came to the conclusion that in order to continue working for the foundation, as upper management we had to build that process. Building that first process meant that those who were there at the time would recuse themselves from any meetings regarding dealing with that Chinese donation, dealing with the law firm, dealing with the accounting. That kind of decision-making process had to be totally independent. They had to recuse themselves. That is the advice that I received.

Mr. Matthew Green: They refused, is that correct?

Did they refuse to recuse themselves?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: There was a motion that was circulating. This motion received several votes from other board members around. They did not recuse themselves from these meetings, from the meetings that we had with the board.

Mr. Matthew Green: Who voted against?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I don't have access to all of my documents, I have to say. I had to give back pretty much everything. It's very limited, what I have. Several emails were sent from some of the board members who are currently on the board of directors, Bruce McNiven and Peter Sahlas, who would send emails back to make corrections around the mandate itself, what the mandate should be. That was the tension at the board level. The other board members would say, "You have to recuse yourself. We want a committee that's totally independent." That was at the heart of the tension that existed.

Mr. Matthew Green: This is my last question.

Knowing what you know about the law and about your obligations and about the fiduciary duties that you have in board governance, is it safe to say that all the people who resigned did so because they were quite aware of the apparent conflict of interest, and they were quite aware of a donation that was not a simple donation, but a very complex donation with complex implications politically, given the name of this foundation and the name of the Prime Minister and the people involved?

Did you step down because you weren't comfortable with your own legal standing?

The Chair: Give a very quick response.

● (0930)

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Yes, I had to step down, and the eight board members who stepped down with me on that day, the Monday... It wasn't the entire board that resigned together. There were different resignations. There was a block of the majority of the board that resigned on Monday, April 10, because there was a trust issue and there was this tension regarding recusing some members who were asked to recuse themselves.

[*Translation*]

So there was a breach of trust about getting to the bottom of this, to protect the foundation under the circumstances.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fournier and Mr. Green.

We will begin the second round. We will have only two five-minute periods, one for the Conservative Party and one for the Liberal Party, and two two-and-a-half-minute periods, one for the Bloc Québécois and one for the NDP.

[*English*]

I'm going to stick to the timelines here. We went way over in the first round. As we start the second hour, I'm going to reset. It will be very similar to the first round, so that each party will have six minutes at the beginning of that round.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Berthold, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Fournier, thank you for being here. Your testimony raises even more questions than I had. I think we'll get a lot of answers in the documents you're going to provide.

You have read about the donation agreement with the cultural organization you named. What is this organization and what do you find anomalous about this agreement?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: We had a donation contract, mentioning the University of Montreal, between the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, and two donors identified as individuals who provided their personal addresses in China. From July 9, 2018, until the end of February 2023, I understood that this contract reflected reality and that the two donors had provided their names and addresses. In fact, my predecessor, Morris Rosenberg, was sending letters in English and translated into Mandarin addressed to the donors in their personal capacity, to thank them.

Mr. Luc Berthold: You say it was on behalf of the foundation.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: These were letters on behalf of the foundation, individually thanking these two private donors. That was my understanding.

Mr. Luc Berthold: This is what you explained a little bit earlier.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Yes. One of the donors was part of this organization called the China Cultural Industry Association, which has ties to the Chinese government. I didn't know until the end of

February 2023 that it wasn't the donors who were corresponding with the foundation, but this association. In all the emails I could find from the foundation going back to that time, when I was not in office, at no time did either of the two donors correspond with the foundation.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Who had the authority to sign this agreement and who had the responsibility to ensure that the names were actually those of the donors?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: At the time, the foundation had a policy on accepting donations. This provided that for any gift of \$1 million or less, the president, Morris Rosenberg at the time, had to sign the donation agreement. For a donation of more than \$1 million, the board of directors had to pass a resolution.

Mr. Luc Berthold: How is it that Mr. Alexandre Trudeau's name is in the agreement?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I didn't know that, and I wasn't there at the time. In all honesty, I don't know that aspect of it. It would take a lot of research, but, yes, that was one of my questions from the beginning. Why was the signature not Morris Rosenberg's, especially since the receipts themselves were signed directly by him?

This is why donation policies ensure compliance. We have to accept a contract on behalf of the presidency. I used to sign all the contracts myself, and I was also the one who gave out tax receipts under my own signature. Otherwise, it can lead to...

Mr. Luc Berthold: What you are telling me is that a board member like Mr. Alexandre Trudeau did not have the authority to sign such an agreement on behalf of the foundation.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I did some research to understand this aspect, because Caroline Lin and I were trying to piece together the past. I could not find a board resolution, or anything in the committee minutes or board minutes at the time, that authorized Mr. Alexandre Trudeau to sign this contract. On the other hand, I was not there at the time, so I do not want to comment on the past.

● (0935)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Based on the emails you have reviewed, did the cultural association send any request that a signature or photo of a Trudeau family member was needed?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I don't remember that specifically. In fact, I have emails where they would ask not to list the names of the donors, but rather the name and address of a particular company. Then they would come back and ask to change the address to such and such an address.

It is important for me to mention that I was unaware of the existence of the emails until late February or early March 2023. At that time, I felt I should stop my research and have a law firm and an accounting firm to get to the bottom of the past.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Have you been pressured in any way since your resignation, either by members of the board of directors or by others at the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I am not in contact with any current board members. When I resigned, my computer and phone were immediately seized. So I was not able to send an email to the fellows and mentors to tell them I was leaving. I am not in contact with the current board members at all. I have absolutely no communication with them.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fournier and Mr. Berthold.

Mr. Fergus, you now have the floor for five minutes.

Hon. Greg Fergus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Professor Fournier, thank you for being here and for your testimony. The few questions I would like to ask are very specific. I am giving you the same message as my colleague Mr. Green: if I interrupt you, it is simply because I would like to get the answer within my allotted time.

Other than its fiduciary obligations to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada or the Canada Revenue Agency, what relationship, if any, does the foundation have with the Government of Canada?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Our partner, ISAIDCANADA...

Hon. Greg Fergus: I'm not talking about fiduciary obligations. Does the foundation have any relationship with the Government of Canada?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I can only attest to my five years as president. I had no connection with the government, except, of course, with ISAIDCANADA and the Canada Revenue Agency.

Hon. Greg Fergus: This was in addition to your fiduciary duties.

Let me clarify my question: what governance relationship did the foundation have with the Prime Minister or his cabinet?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Under my leadership?

Hon. Greg Fergus: Yes.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: While I was president, I had no connection to the Prime Minister's Office.

Hon. Greg Fergus: So you had no ties to the Prime Minister or his staff.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: That's right, I had no connection with them.

Hon. Greg Fergus: Thank you.

Professor Fournier, you've read the news and you're aware of all the controversy. Often, people conflate the foundation that has the same last name as the current Prime Minister with the current Prime Minister. However, you say that you had no connection to or obligation to the Prime Minister or his staff.

• (0940)

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I am answering your questions based on my personal experience. When I was president of the foundation at the time, I did not have any connection with them. However, I cannot speak for the other members of our executive or board of direc-

tors. Personally, I had no connection with the Prime Minister's Office, nor did I wish to have one.

Hon. Greg Fergus: In your opinion, did the foundation, under your watch, have a connection to the Prime Minister?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No, not to my knowledge.

Hon. Greg Fergus: In the annual reports, going back almost a decade, it says that the Prime Minister was not active with the foundation and was not involved in its activities. Can you confirm that?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: As I said before, I can only confirm this from 2018. From 2018 to 2023, I had no relationship with the Prime Minister. He was not invited to, nor did he receive any materials related to, our membership meetings or our board of directors or governance committee meetings. He did not receive invitations or materials of any kind.

Hon. Greg Fergus: I'm going to go a little bit more in-depth.

Did the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry have any involvement with the foundation during your presidency?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: None.

The Hon. Greg Fergus: Did he play a role in the appointment of the foundation's board members?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: In fact, the foundation has a particular governance. Its bylaws provide for up to 18 members serving on the board. Two members are appointed by the government, that is, by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, two members represent the family of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and 16 members are ordinary members appointed by the membership. At this time, the government category is empty, as the department has not submitted any nominations for many years. Under my leadership, there were no appointments.

As for the membership assembly, six people, out of a total of 30, can be appointed by the government, that is, the department. At this time, there is only one individual out of six who represents the governmental category. There are also three individuals who can represent the family, but at the moment there is only Alexandre Trudeau. Finally, there are 21 seats for ordinary members.

If I can summarize, in terms of governance, the government has the ability to appoint up to nine members. Currently, there is only one member in this category, as the other positions have not been filled for several years.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fournier and Mr. Fergus.

Mr. Villemure, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you, Ms. Fournier. With the two and a half minutes I have, let's try to do the best we can.

At the end of our conversation, I asked you if you had been bullied. You told me that people had made certain comments about you. In an April 12 article in *La Presse*, a board member said that he had seen bullying and even threatening behavior at the foundation and that he could not recall seeing that in his career. Can you describe these events?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I assume these comments were made anonymously.

I can tell you that the board meetings were very heated in my last few weeks. I was accused of being in bad faith because I wanted to get to the bottom of this and make sure that the people who were there at the time recused themselves. I wanted to do that, not because I thought they had done anything, but as a lawyer and an ethicist. We had meetings unlike any I had ever seen before. Before, all meetings were respectful. We never raised our voices, never attacked people personally.

I was indeed personally attacked by members who raised their voices and made insinuations that impugned my integrity and intentions. These behaviours took place in the context of an emergency meeting that I myself called on March 31, at the request of three trustees and in accordance with the foundation's bylaws. I invited a lawyer who specializes in these matters, as well as an accounting firm and a crisis management firm to the meeting. We were to discuss who should recuse themselves and what mandate we should give these firms to ensure that we got to the bottom of this matter.

Mr. René Villemure: Because of the two and a half minutes, I'm going to have to cut you off. What do you think were the motivations of the people who were causing the problem?

• (0945)

Ms. Pascale Fournier: As you know, I was not there at the time, between 2015 and 2017. I was only able to piece together part of the matter, and I wanted to stop researching so that a forensic accounting firm could get to the bottom of things. I don't know what I don't know.

Mr. René Villemure: What were their motivations?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I have no idea.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Villemure.

[*English*]

Mr. Green, you have two and a half minutes. Please go ahead.

Mr. Matthew Green: Ms. Fournier, who raised their voice at you in those meetings?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Once again, I find it peculiar to have to provide names. I would be inclined not to, out of a sense of confidentiality and loyalty to my former employer.

[*English*]

Do you insist on my giving names?

Mr. Matthew Green: You can, because you're here before a parliamentary committee and I've asked you that question. I've put that

question to you. I acknowledge that you've been asked that question under the duress of the parliamentary committee, but that question has been put to you.

Who raised their voice at you at those meetings, specifically?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pascale Fournier: There were two individuals: Bruce McNiven, the treasurer, and Peter Sahlas, a board member and chair of the finance and investment committee...

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you.

The CBC article published on April 12, 2023 cites a statement provided by the foundation. It says that of the \$200,000 donation to the foundation, you "had only received \$140,000, in the form of two \$70,000 payments."

As the CEO of the organization, did you provide an investigation regarding the payments falling short? What types of policies and follow-ups did you have, given the \$60,000 gap between what was reported to be donated and what was received?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: The last portion of the donation was due on July 1, 2018. I started my mandate on July 9. The former CEO, Morris Rosenberg, had not asked to receive that part of the donation.

I read the contract. I didn't have much in the Chinese donation file, but I read the contract and saw immediately that money had to be spent only to organize conferences around China and around the relationship between Canada and China. Given the fact that I was adopting a new strategic plan and going in the field with different cohorts, I had no intention of organizing conferences on China.

The last portion of that donation was not asked for. This was prior to my mandate. It had nothing to do with the new strategic plan, so I did not do anything in that regard until I received a letter from the dean of the faculty of law at the Université de Montréal.

[*Translation*]

This was a letter addressed to Alexandre Trudeau himself that had been physically sent to the foundation. Then it had been sent to my email address, but with a request that I deliver it to Alexandre Trudeau. In this letter, the Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Montreal asked that the money sent to the University of Montreal be returned. Apparently, Alexandre Trudeau had had conversations with people at the university.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fournier.

[*English*]

That concludes our first hour of testimony.

We are resetting to six minutes per round.

We received the motion, or the clerk has, in writing from Mr. Green. It's been sent to translation. I'm hoping we can have it back in a reasonable time. We'll see.

Mr. Cooper, you're next. You have six minutes. Go ahead.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you very much, Ms. Fournier.

We know from the agreement that there were two so-called, purported donors—two individuals. We know, based upon the tax receipt that was issued, that a company was listed, which was Millennium Golden Eagle International Canada.

Is that correct?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: That was on the receipts, yes.

Mr. Michael Cooper: You have stated that the China Cultural Industry Association had been corresponding with staff at the Trudeau Foundation.

Do you believe the true source of the donation was the China Cultural Industry Association?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: That's why I wanted to have a forensic audit with everything regarding that foundation. The legal advice that I received...

Again, I want to mention that at the time, when we gave back the money, with the executive committee of the board, those who were there at the time signed the cheque to give back the money. I did not sign the cheque myself. From that moment and in the weeks after, I started to read some of these emails. I had no idea about these emails. I immediately asked for help from lawyers.

The advice that I received, now that the money had been sent back to the foundation, was to not give it back now, because we needed to understand everything around that donation. It was that it's not a good idea to send it back; we should just freeze everything and not touch it. It was that we're going to ask all of these questions, look at the emails at the time and meet witnesses. We'll talk to some of the board members, some of the members, possibly former employees and try to understand what happened with that donation.

I cannot answer your question. I was not even there. That's why I wanted to have a forensic audit.

• (0950)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Thank you for that, Madame Fournier.

La Presse reported that a foundation document states that one of the foundation's members, who was a director in 2016, phoned a senior staff member of the foundation to say that the real donor was not the same donor as on the tax receipt.

Who was that former director and current foundation member who contacted the staff member as reported in La Presse, do you know?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Yes, I do know.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Who is that?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Her name is Farah Mohamed. She's a member currently not on the board and was on the executive com-

mittee, on the board, at the time. In the emails that are part of the file and the server at the foundation, she was in these emails on that contract itself and so on, and I have no information regarding these donors. I mean, I was not even there at the time.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Who did she say was the donor? Who did she ask that the cheque—

Ms. Pascale Fournier: She did not say who the donor was.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Okay.

Upon your review of the various emails between the foundation and the donation, was there correspondence either to or from officials in the PMO?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Can you repeat your question?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Upon your review of the emails, did you identify any emails between the foundation and officials in the PMO, the Prime Minister's office?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I don't have anything with me now, but I vaguely remember some emails with the PMO and Elise Comtois, who was the executive director. I don't have anything with me, but I believe there were emails regarding the press release, because there were articles in the newspaper in 2016 about the Chinese donation. I don't remember precisely.

Mr. Michael Cooper: There were emails from 2016. Can you elaborate on what those emails were? Why was the PMO suddenly contacting the Trudeau Foundation about this donation?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I have no idea.

Mr. Michael Cooper: You have no idea.

Were there other emails you noted, other than in 2016, between the foundation and the PMO?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I have not seen other emails. With the CFO, we immediately reached out to the board for emergency meetings and said we didn't want to look into this matter—that we wanted experts to look into these emails and to understand and reconstitute the past. I don't have more information.

Mr. Michael Cooper: On March 1, you issued a statement in which you stated that the foundation had “refunded to the donor all amounts received”. Those were the precise words in that statement. Of course, the money had not been refunded to the donor.

Who was involved in drafting that statement, and why was it stated that the money had been sent back to the donor when, in fact, that had not happened?

• (0955)

The Chair: I need a very quick response here.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: It was the executive committee of the board of directors. The two individuals who signed the cheque were Peter Sahlas and Bruce McNiven.

The drafting of the declaration was done with the executive committee of the board, Peter Sahlas, Bruce McNiven, Ted Johnson, Martha Durdin and Dyane Adam. We drafted that declaration together with some help on the communications side, and it was accurate that we were on that day issuing a cheque signed by Bruce McNiven and Pete Sahlas. It was physically sent to the address we had on file, so there was nothing incorrect about that. It was about two weeks before the cheque was finally sent back to the foundation.

The Chair: Mr. Cooper, I'm going to ask you to pick this up in the next round of questioning, please, because we're over time.

Mr. Bains, I believe you're next for six minutes.

Go ahead, sir, on Zoom.

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witness for joining us today.

My first question, Madam Fournier, is this. The foundation was set up with a \$125-million endowment, which it invests. Is it the foundation's primary source of revenue?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: It is. At the foundation we live off the interest, so we can't touch the \$125 million. We invest that endowment and we live off the interest. It is the primary source. It is public money.

Mr. Parm Bains: What percentage of the foundation's revenue comes from charitable donations?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I don't have the exact number, but it is a very small proportion compared with the rest of the money we spend to fund the scholars, fellows and mentors.

Mr. Parm Bains: How many scholarships did the Trudeau Foundation award in 2022?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: In 2022 we had 13 scholars, six mentors and four fellows.

Mr. Parm Bains: Do you know how many the foundation has provided since it was created?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: It's probably around 285.

Mr. Parm Bains: What engagement, if any, does the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation take part in during Canada's elections?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I have not witnessed any involvement.

Mr. Parm Bains: During your term, did you notice any influence at all from other countries or foreign influence agents?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No.

Mr. Parm Bains: Are there any misperceptions, or maybe inaccuracies, that have been reported about the Trudeau Foundation that you would like to clear up?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Well, I did mention, as part of this file that I was dealing with, that in December 2016 there was an article in the National Post in which the former CEO, Morris Rosenberg, talked to the journalist about this Chinese donation. I will quote from it very briefly:

In a letter responding to the Post's initial report, Trudeau Foundation president Morris Rosenberg emphasized that the...foundation does not count the \$200,000 donation from Chinese nationals Bin Zhang and Niu Gensheng as a foreign donation since it was made by a company registered in Canada.

This was a declaration on behalf of the foundation to say that it was not foreign money, that it was Canadian money—this was in the annual report as well—when in fact the tax receipt itself mentions China. I think this is something that is misleading to Canadians. Indeed, there's a difference between what the tax receipt said, mentioning China, and the fact that it was presented publicly in terms of interviews, and publicly in terms of the annual report that is currently on the website of the foundation, as Canadian.

Mr. Parm Bains: Going back to the donation, I think you mentioned that you were trying to figure it out, but why was the donation ultimately returned by the foundation?

• (1000)

Ms. Pascale Fournier: We issued a cheque with the name that was on the tax receipt. We sent it to that address. They attempted to go several times to this place to find the donors, because obviously you need someone who will receive the cheque and sign, physically, that they have received it. There were several attempts.

Finally, they could not find anybody who would take the cheque. The cheque was sent back to the office of the foundation on March 23. From March 1 to March 23, there were several attempts to deliver that cheque.

Mr. Parm Bains: This year?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Yes.

Mr. Parm Bains: It was ultimately returned.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: It was ultimately returned to the office of the foundation, mentioning that no one took the cheque or no one was there to take this cheque.

Mr. Parm Bains: Ultimately, what are the principle objectives of the Trudeau Foundation as to what it could do with that money? Was it to have scholarships awarded? Do you know exactly what the money was used for at any time?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: This money was never used, because it could be used only to organize conferences around China and the relationship between China and Canada.

Mr. Parm Bains: Did those conferences never happen?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: The conferences never happened, so that money was never spent. It was kind of a deferred donation that could be spent only if we were going to meet the contractual obligation of organizing these conferences on Canada and China.

Mr. Parm Bains: The money just came and went. It came, but it never got spent, and then it was attempted to be returned to somebody.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: It was attempted to be returned and, as I mentioned, after finding out about the role of that Chinese cultural association industry and so on, we—

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Fournier.

[*Translation*]

Once again, I'm sorry.

[English]

I have to cut people off. I don't like that part of my job, but we have to be fair to all members in their time.

[Translation]

Mr. Villemure, you have the floor for six minutes.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Fournier, very early in your testimony, you mentioned that the foundation was possibly receiving guidance from China. Can you tell us more about that? Who was receiving what? What kind of directives were they, or at least what was your impression of them?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: The emails were from this China-based association. They were sending emails to the foundation's employees to mention what information should or should not be included on the tax receipts, such as names or addresses. So there was a lot of email traffic between foundation employees and this China-based association.

In fact, the donors were virtually absent. Their names did not appear in the emails. For example, in some of the emails, the association simply said that the donors were thanking the foundation, but as far as I could see, there was no direct link between the donors and the foundation. The link was between this association and the foundation. It was as if communications were done through proxy parties.

In 2017, under an access to information request, some 160 pages of documents were sent to the Globe and Mail. These pages included almost everything: the contract, employee notes, employee emails, copies of tax receipts. All of this had already been sent. I, for one, was unaware of it; I didn't learn about it until early March. This access to information request was very important. It all pointed to the pressure, I might say, that was being exerted as to what should appear on the foundation's books.

Mr. René Villemure: Are these typical of requests the foundation might receive from other donors?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No, not at all.

I was the person at the foundation who adopted a policy to accept donations. Under my stewardship, when there was a significant donation, a firm of lawyers was responsible for checking who the donors were, where they were from and what their intent was. I would carry out an in-depth review of donors before signing anything. In 2018, we began to do the same thing to check on scholars, fellows and mentors to ensure that governance was totally sound and irreproachable.

I wasn't at the foundation prior to 2018, so I don't know what the practices were at the time. However, based on what I was able to see in the foundation's books, there were no background checks of donors by a lawyer. Nor did a law firm look into the contract itself or the person who signed it. Based on what I was able to determine with the head of financial services at the foundation, Caroline Lin, there had never been an exercise of that kind.

• (1005)

Mr. René Villemure: You mentioned earlier that the policy on accepting donations had been different, depending on whether it was under \$1 million or over \$1 million.

What is the average value of gifts that you receive?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I can tell you that at the time, it varied. We often received small gifts. The vast majority were from foundation alumni, and around \$100.

Mr. René Villemure: What about gifts from other sorts of organizations, which I would describe as major donations?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: That was unusual.

Mr. René Villemure: Okay.

Are there donations from citizens of other countries who do not have any direct link with the foundation?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No.

Mr. René Villemure: It's hard to see why they would.

So that was the only instance.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: To my knowledge, yes.

Mr. René Villemure: Right.

Earlier on, you described the tense environment at your office in the period prior to your resignation. Were things strained, at least in part, because you were asking certain people to recuse themselves, which I believe was only to be expected. I'm assuming they didn't want to recuse themselves.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: That's right.

Mr. René Villemure: Who were these individuals?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: The chair of the board of directors, Mr. Edward Johnson, was at the time the chair of the financial audit committee. In this capacity, he signed letters jointly with the chief executive officer. So he was the one who signed, together with Morris Rosenberg, the letter stating that there was, to their knowledge, no fraud. He was therefore the one who was asked to recuse himself, and he chaired a number of committees and was a member of the board of directors.

Bruce McNiven, who is currently the treasurer, was also asked to recuse himself. At the time, he was also a member of the financial audit committee.

There was also Peter Sahlas, a foundation member who, I believe, had also been on the financial audit committee since 2017.

What we, the eight members of the board of directors and I, were requesting, was for those who had been there at the time to recuse themselves. That meant the three people I mentioned. We asked them to make a self-disclosure stating that they were there at the time and that they were now recusing themselves, including from specifying the scope of the mandate for the lawyers and the accounting firm, so that they wouldn't have a role to play in setting any parameters.

Mr. René Villemure: That would simply be sound ethical practice, would it not?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Based on my legal knowledge of ethics, yes.

Mr. René Villemure: Could you tell us briefly about Mr. Edward Johnson, given that his name has only just come up.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Edward Johnson was one of the founding members, as was Bruce McNiven. They had therefore been there from the very start of the foundation.

At the outset, 20 years ago, the foundation had a number of members, and one of their important roles was to appoint the board of directors. As I mentioned, there could be as many as 30 members, which is a rather large governance structure, and up to 18 members of the board of directors. These are two distinct entities. Governance of the foundation would accordingly be handled by approximately 50 people, whereas there were only 10 employees. That's a rather small team for such a large governance structure, in terms of the volume of work and the number of committees. There were a lot of committees at the time.

Mr. Johnson had worked as Pierre Elliott Trudeau's chief of staff. As I was saying, he was one of the founding members of the foundation. At the time I resigned, he was the chair of the executive committee and the governance committee. He was the chair of the board of directors and also sat on the finance and investment committee, and the appointments committee. He is therefore very knowledgeable about the foundation's governance, having been there for 20 years.

Apart from what happened at the end, I very much enjoyed working with him.

• (1010)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fournier and Mr. Villemure.

[*English*]

Mr. Green, you have six minutes, sir. Please start.

Mr. Matthew Green: On that note, according to the registered charity information return for September 1, 2017, to August 31, 2018, the total eligible amount of all gifts for which the charity issued tax receipts was \$25,374.

Given that the donation of \$200,000, or \$140,000 actually received, occurred in 2016, would that year be an outlier in terms of donations the foundation received?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I didn't understand your question.

Are you talking about the 2017-2018 fiscal year?

[*English*]

Is that correct, that it's 2017 to 2018?

Mr. Matthew Green: That's correct. It said that they received only \$25,000 the following year.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I can't comment on the books for the period preceding my arrival.

What I can tell you is that the foundation did not run major fundraising campaigns. It was financed from the interest on an endowment

to create leadership programs for scholars, mentors and fellows. We wanted to do some fundraising. In the final years, we were preparing a package of supporting documentation to demonstrate that we had leadership schools. However, it never became one of the foundation's main activities.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green: To be clear, this is an endowment of currently \$156 million with an operating budget of about \$6 million. Is that correct? There are \$6 million for fellows and board-directed programs, yet we have a \$200,000 endowment that seems to be conditional, from an unverified third party source, potentially foreign.

In your work, were there any other donor-directed funds? Just give a simple yes or no, please.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Was it if there were other donors? What was your question again? I'm sorry; I cannot hear well.

Mr. Matthew Green: Donor-directed funds....

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No, we had individual donors, mainly former members. We had a matching donations program with the McCall MacBain Foundation.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green: Okay, thank you. That satisfies.

This was the only donor-directed, conditional donation that was provided. In your time, you brought in a little due diligence, through the governance structure, to ensure that donors were vetted and that you had a proper board risk analysis. I myself have spent some time on a pretty solid, historical board here in Hamilton, and I know that we had lots of policies—we were eyes wide open for every donor. However, it didn't exist before you got there.

In your opinion, if you had been receiving \$25,000 or \$30,000 per year in donations, and then you received a \$200,000 donation, your testimony is that you would embark on an investigation as to the origins of the donor. Is that correct?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: In 2016, there was a policy on the acceptance of gifts. I amended that policy to make it stronger, but the policy at the time mentioned that the president of the foundation had to obtain legal advice with regard to the contract itself and the origin of the donors.

There was a policy. We made it to the next level, if I may say that, and in 2018 we also adopted a policy on responsible investment, which I am really proud of. However, there was a policy in place that required that this kind of background check be conducted.

Mr. Matthew Green: Sure.

With more specificity, this is not a traditional foundation; this a foundation named after a former prime minister whose son is the current Prime Minister. From a governance standpoint, to ensure that you are beyond reproach, what special policies are implemented within the board level governance to ensure that there is no perception of foreign interference or foreign influence, i.e., the use of the name for purposes that might provide a foreign interest?

Did you have any consideration around that in your risk analysis?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Under my leadership, I would conduct that kind of in-depth research—not myself. I'm a firm believer in the independence of the process, so I had a law firm that would come back to me with what they found, and then I would go back to the development committee and then back to the board to say, I will go ahead with that donation; this is the risk analysis that was conducted.

I was conscious of the name and the perception that individuals might have regarding the name, and I was exceptionally careful with regard to donations. I cannot comment on the past, obviously, but I can tell you that there was a policy in place.

• (1015)

Mr. Matthew Green: You would also have to have that consideration, given that the Prime Minister's brother was an active member of the board, understanding our conflict of interest rules and code of ethics within Parliament. Is that correct?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Matthew Green: You freeze the money, essentially. You don't use it because you're not comfortable with a foreign entity using your organization's name to further foreign interests through academic conferences and the like. Is that correct?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: We did not touch the money because the only way to touch the money was to organize these lectures around China, which had nothing to do with my mandate. I had adopted a brand new strategic plan. We were going to a different destination. We were not going to China, and we were not doing anything with regard to China.

Mr. Matthew Green: Was it part of the previous mandate? When you took on the organization, did you see within the mandate or the board governance...?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No.

Mr. Matthew Green: This was brand new.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Yes.

Mr. Matthew Green: Okay, so a reasonable person looking at this could suggest that a \$200,000 donation to the Trudeau Foundation, for the purpose of furthering Chinese interests in Canadian academic spaces, could be either interference or influence.

Would that be fair to say?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: If I may answer very quickly, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation is about academic knowledge. One of the key themes is Canada and the world, so we could imagine having conferences around China, Brazil or Brussels. It could be done in an academic milieu. I don't see a problem with that.

The problem to me was what was done in terms of the background check regarding these donors. I had many questions, and I wanted the law firm to help me.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Green.

That concludes our first round. We're going to our second round now, and I am going to start....

Go ahead, Monsieur Villemure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair. I'd like to introduce a motion that would enable us to call Mr. Edward Johnson. The motion is currently being drafted and we will submit it to the clerk.

[*English*]

The Chair: Has the motion been circulated, Madam Clerk? No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villemure, could you introduce your motion when you have the floor? You can't introduce a motion on a point of order.

Ms. Thomas, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you.

Ms. Fournier, I'm curious. If you were to point us to those who have the most pertinent voices with regard to this matter, who are the most important people that we should be hearing from at this committee?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: That's a great question.

The vice-chair of the board of directors, who has resigned, Dyane Adam, a former language commissioner here for 10 years, was asked to become the chair from a legal standpoint. She was approached by our lawyers and they asked her, given the fact that the current chair was there at the time and was the chair of the audit committee. They said, "It would be good for you to become the chair to handle that matter." I think it would be very important to hear from her, given the fact that the lawyers contacted her and asked her to take a proactive role.

I would also mention the board members who resigned together on that day. I think it would be very important for you to hear from them—given the fact that we had an emergency meeting on March 31 and that they resigned 10 days later—about the motion that they circulated and how it went in their opinion.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Earlier you said that you had items that were "taken" from you. That is the word you used. I'm wondering when that happened. When were the items that you were using in your role as CEO taken from you?

• (1020)

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I resigned on Monday, April 10, and it was at the end of the day that I resigned. I sent a letter to the board members and to the members. On that day, they immediately shut down my email access so that I couldn't reach out to the scholars, fellows and mentors to explain to them that I was resigning. That's the first aspect.

If I remember correctly, it was the day after that the foundation asked the IT individual to come to my house to take my computer, my iPhone and the Internet access that I had, so I bought a new phone, computer and so on. They asked me not to keep any documentation, anything that I had access to.

When I came to you today, I had almost nothing. I have annual reports that are public. I have some documents that are of a public nature. I did ask for a few emails from individuals who had received them and asked if they could send them to me so that at least I could speak to you today, but I do not have all of the information I had at the time.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

I'm curious that they came to your house. Is that customary?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I don't know if it is customary, but what they mentioned was that because they were paying for my phone, my computer and my Internet.... They were at my house from six o'clock until 12 at night to make sure that they would leave with everything, any possible access to computers, iPhones, Internet and so on.

They insisted on the fact that they wanted to read all of the text messages, and that I was not allowed to touch any of the text messages. I collaborated and obviously gave back everything that I had.

You will understand that I have access to almost nothing. I remember a lot of from memory, but I had some individuals who sent back some emails so that I could testify today.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

I'm just going to touch base on the donation being returned. You said a cheque was written and a cheque was delivered. Was a cheque cashed?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No, the cheque that was sent had to be actually received physically from the donors themselves. That's how it works. You send something, and you cannot just give the cheque to anybody. The donors themselves were not there from March 1 until March 23. They attempted several times to go and find the donors so that they could take the cheque and really take the money. They could not find them.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: To this day, then, it hasn't actually been returned.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: What happened when it was returned was that I received legal advice not to give back the money and actually to have that unrestricted forensic audit to understand everything regarding that donation, with the possibility that the donors themselves were not the real donors. All of that had to be understood with experts, so I found the experts.

The Chair: *Merci*, Madame Fournier. Thank you, Ms. Thomas.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Can I have a short answer? Tax, or no?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: When I was there, no.

The Chair: I'm sorry, but that concludes the round. We're a little over time here.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Martinez Ferrada, you have the floor for five minutes.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Fournier, thank you for being here with us. I have a few brief questions for you. I'd like to return to your expertise in ethics. Throughout the period during which you headed the foundation, did you take part in any partisan activities?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: When you began working there, you must surely have studied the donations and previous financial reports of the foundation. You prepared a strategic plan, so I'm sure that you must have studied everything that happened prior to your arrival, like any serious person who is going to manage such a large foundation. Were you able to determine whether the foundation had spent any money to engage in partisan activities with any party?

• (1025)

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I began on July 9, 2018 in a very specific context when there were virtually no employees left at the foundation. I wanted to point that out. When I arrived, there were no employees, and there was no team. So I myself had to quickly hire people. I had no one in communications, no one in programs, no one in finance, and so I couldn't...

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Did you check the political background of each of the people you hired? Did you check whether they had been involved with a political party?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I checked whatever it was legal for me to check. I was previously a commissioner at the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Did you check on the donations, for example? Donations are public, in our electoral context. We can see whether or not people made donations. Did you check whether the employees you hired had made donations to political parties?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: We don't look into that.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Have you yourself ever made a donation to a political party?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No, I have not donated to any political party.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: During the time when you were heading the foundation, were you ever pressured, in connection with the donation we've been talking about, to organize these conferences on Canada-China relations?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Did you ever receive a letter or email from the association that made the donation to the foundation requesting that, in connection with the donation, these conferences be held?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: On the university side of things, were you ever pressured to include studies on Canada and China in the strategic plan?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: The strategic plan had nothing to do with Canada-China relations. That's something we came up with ourselves.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Did you ever feel any obligation with respect to Canada-China relations owing to the donation the foundation had received?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: The current government has been in office since 2015, which predates your arrival as the CEO of the foundation in 2018. Did you see any of the emails from 2015 or later asking the foundation to hold these conferences in order to meet the requirement of the contract signed in connection with this donation?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: They never asked, which I found odd, by the way. If there's a \$70,000 gift in 2016 which requires the foundation to organize a conference and it doesn't do so, you would expect to hear from them.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: All right.

Were you required to select the universities that would attend, for example, from the Chinese community?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Did the selection process for scholars meet ethical academic procedures?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Yes, absolutely.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: So there was no interference in the workings of the foundation after you arrived as the CEO. Is that right?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: From 2018 onward, I can assure you that the proceedings of the committee under the chair and members were never interfered with.

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Can you tell us today whether any members of the board of directors, during the time you were heading the foundation, exerted pressure to take part in political events? Were you invited to take part in political events?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: No. I never received any invitations of that kind and never took part in any political events.

The Chair: Your speaking time is up. Thank you, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[English]

We'll go to Mr. Villemure next, but I will advise the committee that, in light of information from Mr. Alexandre Trudeau about his desire to come and speak publicly to a committee, I had the clerk

send out an invitation to Mr. Trudeau for next Wednesday. We have set aside time from 4:30 to 6:30 next Wednesday afternoon.

Madam Clerk, we have confirmed the time for a committee meeting, given the availability of Mr. Trudeau.

I want to advise the committee that I took my prerogative as chair to take him up on his offer to come and speak to a parliamentary committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Villemure, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am proposing the following motion.

That, in the context of its study on foreign interference and threats to the integrity of democratic institutions, intellectual property and the Canadian state, the committee calls Edward Johnson, founding member of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, for a 2-hour session as soon as possible.

The motion was sent to the clerk in both official languages.

• (1030)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Villemure. The motion is in order.

Madam Clerk, did you receive the motion? Can you confirm that it was sent to all members in both official languages?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Nancy Vohl): Yes.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Villemure, do you wish to speak to the motion?

Mr. René Villemure: Yes.

I asked Ms. Fournier a question earlier. Since the start, we have spoken about several members of the board of directors. The three persons who remained were named, and there has been discussion of two of them, but not much about Mr. Johnson. In view of his presence at the foundation since its establishment, he is a privileged witness, in my view. It would seem to me that he could explain a number of things. For example, why were there no longer any employees in 2017? What was the context in which the donation was made? Why did Mr. Johnson not want to recuse himself, when best ethical practices required that he do so in such a situation to protect himself and the foundation? It strikes me that he is a key witness we should be hearing from as soon as possible.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Villemure.

[English]

The motion is on the floor.

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus: I haven't received the motion yet. Give me a moment to check my emails.

The Chair: It's a very straightforward motion, Mr. Fergus.

[English]

Do we have any further discussion on the motion from Mr. Villemure?

I don't see any. Do we have consensus?

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Villemure, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Mr. René Villemure: Ms. Fournier, You spoke about Mr. Johnson and his presence with the foundation from the outset. What do you believe his ties to the Trudeau family are ?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I know that Mr. Johnson worked for Pierre Elliott Trudeau as his executive assistant. He knew his children, Alexandre, Justin and Michel, and spent a lot of time with them over the years when they were younger. He went on canoe trips with them. He told me all kinds of stories and about the strong ties he developed with them over the years. He has remained very close to the Trudeau family and is extremely fond of them.

Mr. René Villemure: Would you say that he would take a bullet for them, to use the popular trope?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: He's someone I very much enjoyed working with. I wasn't there when he was closest to the family, but I do know that he's still close to them.

Mr. René Villemure: You said that when you arrived, there were almost no employees left. Likewise, the board of directors had been renewed around 2017. The board members were already there, but many had left. Why do you think they jumped ship?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I can't give you a clear answer. I know that Mr. Morris Rosenberg's departure at the time had been stormy. Several board members left when Mr. Rosenberg departed. When I got there, someone had been appointed by the board of directors to do some crisis management in the foundation's offices for about nine months. Many of the staff had left and in some instances they were involuntary terminations. Indeed, there was almost no one there when I arrived.

Mr. René Villemure: For example, Isabelle Hudon, who was on the board of directors and who was close to Justin Trudeau, resigned or left at that time.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I don't think she was on the board, but had been invited. We had...

Mr. René Villemure: I read it in the annual report.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: She had been a guest at one of our conferences. I may be wrong, but I don't think she was there at the time.

In 2018, at the beginning of my term, I had pointed out that I wanted to tour the country and promote diversity. I wanted the board members, the scholars, the fellows and the mentors to reflect Canada's population and also be representative of regional, racial and gender diversity, and gender parity. We made sure that people on the board represented diversity at all levels in Canada.

In 2018, an incredible group of highly diverse people arrived, and these are the people who, along with me, resigned on April 10.

• (1035)

The Chair: Thank you Ms. Fournier and Mr. Villemure.

[English]

Madame Fournier, I want to pick up on something that Mr. Villemure said before I go to Mr. Green.

Was Mr. Rosenberg fired from the foundation for his role in the donation?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I was not there at the time. I cannot answer that question.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Green, you have two and a half minutes, please.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to go back to your early analysis of the donation. You would have been seized with it. Obviously, you took great steps in your leadership role.

In your estimation, what was the relationship between Mr. Zhang Bin and the government of the People's Republic of China?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: What I noticed was that he was the chair of the board of that association based in China. That association had a relationship with the government. He was the chair of that association, and he was one of the donors. I don't have more information than that.

Mr. Matthew Green: Is it fair to say the association was an extension of the People's Republic of China—of the government?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: There was a very strong proximity. I don't know if I would say “extension”, but it was clearly under the guidance. I think the expression used on their website was “under the guidance” of the government.

Mr. Matthew Green: The same association was the one providing the direction on the details of the donation. Is that correct?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: That's correct.

Mr. Matthew Green: One could infer, then, through that line of reasoning, that there would have been guidance from the People's Republic of China on dealing with the matters related to this particular donation.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Possibly. That's why I wanted to have an unrestricted forensic audit. It was to understand what happened before I became president and CEO of the foundation.

Mr. Matthew Green: Is there anything you would have done differently, knowing what you know now?

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Yes.

At the time, when we gave back the money to the donors, I was under the impression that there was not this relationship with the Government of China or that association, nor all of these emails. The cheque we sent back was signed by the two board members—Peter Sahlas and Bruce McNiven. I believed this was the right course of action at the time. It was later on that I found out about these different emails.

The more research I did, the more I wanted to do an investigation and not touch the money anymore. To have that unrestricted forensic audit was very important to me.

The Chair: You have five seconds, Mr. Green.

Mr. Matthew Green: Ms. Fournier, I want to give you the opportunity, subsequent to this meeting.... There's going to be further testimony. There are probably going to be some responses to the statements you've made. I want to invite you, under parliamentary privilege, to have the opportunity to reply to this committee in writing should you feel that you are being maligned or misrepresented in any way.

I just wanted to extend that invitation to you.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I really appreciate what you mentioned right now, because I did not ask to come to testify. I am doing it in good faith, and I believe in transparency and in democracy. I really did make sure that nothing I was saying to you today could be used against me, and this privilege is not just in theory, but in practice, so I don't receive any intimidation or attempts to attack my reputation.

I want to mention that I was just renewed for two more years with an impeccable record at the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation. I surely hope that there is not an attempt to try to say something else about me.

My entire career has been built around my reputation for integrity and transparency.

The Chair: Okay, we'll leave it at that.

Mr. Green, go ahead.

• (1040)

Mr. Matthew Green: Mr. Chair, as you know, I had a motion that I wanted to put—

The Chair: It was tabled earlier, yes. My understanding is that the motion has been distributed in both official languages to all members of the committee.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you.

The Chair: We did agree to table that earlier, so I will take it up.

Before I do, Mr. Green, I want to say thank you to our witness today for coming forward.

I want to reiterate what Mr. Green said. You came here today under summons from this committee, Madame Fournier. If at any point you feel intimidated or threatened in any way, I want you to advise me, as the chair, through the clerk, of any of those circumstances.

I'm also aware, as well, because...I saw a tweet about trying to malign your character in your role as the president and CEO of a foundation. It was floated out there by the media, for anybody who felt that you had maligned or not conducted yourself in any way in a professional manner to contact them. I was actually quite disturbed that this would happen.

I want the assurance to be made to you that this committee will do everything it can not just to protect your privilege, but also to ensure that your character is maintained and that you're not intimidated as a result of your appearance today. I want to make that very clear, as chair.

Thank you.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: I really appreciate that. Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Fournier.

I'm going to dismiss you now. I appreciate, on behalf of the committee and on behalf of Canadians, your being here today and your stellar work in all aspects of your life.

Thank you.

Ms. Pascale Fournier: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Green, I'm going to go to you now, sir.

Please go ahead.

Mr. Matthew Green: Thank you very much.

I move:

That the committee order the production of all documents in the possession of Pascale Fournier related to the matters currently being studied by this committee, and specifically concerning certain donations received by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, provided that these documents shall be deposited with the clerk of the committee within two business days and shall be circulated to the members of the committee, on a confidential or in camera basis, once they have been translated into both official languages.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Green. This motion is in order. It's been circulated in both official languages among all members of the committee by the clerk.

Are there any questions or comments? Do we have consensus?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: That concludes the meeting for today. I want to thank the clerk, who I know—and I will say this—has been under a tremendous amount of pressure to ensure that we get everything in order today. I want to say thank you to the clerk, the analysts, all the technicians, members of committee and Madame Fournier.

The meeting is now adjourned. Thank you.

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