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Chair: Mr. Joël Lightbound



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• (0820)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.)): Good afternoon, everyone.

It is now 8:18 a.m., and I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 136 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry and Technology.

Before we begin, I would ask you to consult the cards on the table for guidelines on the use of microphones and earpieces. These guidelines were put in place to ensure the health and safety of interpreters.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Monday, April 24, 2023, the committee is resuming consideration of Bill C-27, An Act to enact the Consumer Privacy Protection Act, the Personal Information and Data Protection Tribunal Act and the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses who are here again. They haven't been asked a lot at the last few meetings, and I have little hope that they will be asked anything during today's meeting. Having said that, I'd still like to thank them for being here.

From the Department of Industry, we have Samir Chhabra, director general, marketplace framework policy branch, and Runa Angus, senior director, strategy and innovation policy sector.

As I mentioned, we are continuing our study of Bill C-27.

Mr. Perkins, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Chair, I'd like to move or ask the committee to resume discussion where we left off last time on my motion on SDTC and the contribution agreements.

The Chair: You've moved your motion again.

Mr. Perkins is moving that we resume the debate where we left it last meeting on his motion regarding SDTC. If we are to resume the debate where we left it, we would usually need a vote, unless I have consent around the table to get back to where we left off.

I think I see consent around the table.

On that note, we'll go to Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): I'm sorry, Chair. I just have a quick question.

This is just a procedural one. From what I understand, the last meeting was suspended. Is that correct?

The Chair: No, the last meeting was adjourned.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: No worries.

Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Maybe I could just ask for clarification, just to jump back in and resume the debate on this.

Where were we?

I just ask because I know there were some amendments, etc., and there was quite a discussion. There was an amendment that didn't pass, and then I think we were on either another amendment or we were on the main motion. I can't remember which.

Could we just have a refresher as to where we are, Chair?

The Chair: That is actually a very good question, Mr. Turnbull.

I was hoping you would give us an answer, but I'll just check with the clerk to make sure we're on the same page. Just give me one minute.

We were on Mr. Garon's amendment, which added some aspects about redaction.

[*Translation*]

Before the meeting adjourned on Monday, we were debating Mr. Garon's amendment.

Mr. Garon, can you read out the amendment you were moving, just to refresh members' memories?

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): I suggest that we read out the motion and the amendment, so that we know what we're talking about.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: The text reads as follows:

The committee therefore orders SDTC and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) to produce copies of each contribution agreement between ISED and SDTC reinforced and signed since June 4, 2024, redacted of any reference to company names, in both official languages, within 14 days of this motion, in order to verify...

So this amendment involves two items. The first is to add the words “between ISED and SDTC”, to ensure that we're talking about contribution agreements. The second item concerns redacting references to company names.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Garon.

We're still debating that amendment.

Is there any discussion? Can we go to a vote on this amendment? Is there consent to adopt it?

Mr. Turnbull, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you for that, Mr. Garon. It refreshed my memory.

When we left off in the last meeting, I was saying that I wasn't sure how comfortable I felt with that. I've since reflected on this, and I'm feeling more comfortable with what Mr. Garon proposed.

I think, on our side, that we're prepared to support it.

● (0825)

The Chair: Okay. I was talking to the clerk. There is general support for the amendment.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: We're back to the main motion as amended by Mr. Garon.

Are there any comments?

Mr. Rick Perkins: I have a brief comment, Mr. Chair, so those watching know what we're doing here.

It's what's called a “production of documents motion” to produce documents that were referenced numerous times in our study of SDTC, the green slush fund. That reference was to something called a “contribution agreement”. Contribution agreements are referenced quite extensively in the Auditor General's report concerning the expenditure, in this instance, of \$58 million that was outside, as the Auditor General put it, of the contribution agreements. What those agreements are.... They're agreements between the industry department and SDTC on what they could spend taxpayer money on—the parameters of it. They're not public documents, so it's pretty hard to make a judgment on what's been going on.

We've also heard testimony in another committee—from a whistle-blower—that the government has amended those contribution agreements since they put a new governance board in place. Those changes should be made public, in my view—not only the original agreements but also the changes themselves, so we can see what new governance rules and restrictions the Liberals have put in place for the expenditure of the \$1 billion or so that the current foundation...because it hasn't been transferred yet to the NRC. What does it have in place for spending that money?

The Chair: Mr. Perkins. Or rather, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Rick Perkins: It's the hair. We get confused.

The Chair: It's early.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Yes, It's really early, Chair. We'll get you another coffee. You must be hallucinating.

I just wanted to say that we don't have any issue with the contribution agreement being reviewed by committee members. I question the objective of this being a good use of our committee time, to be honest. I think members will review that contribution agreement and be satisfied, and we can quickly move beyond this.

I know the Conservatives have continued to study this at multiple committees. I believe our committee time is really valuable. We had just agreed to a motion that schedules some of our time and accommodates a lot of the interests, objectives and some of the priorities of the different parties. We're trying to be very fair and reasonable. I think we came to an agreement on that, and then this was the very next thing.

I'm just letting you know that I'm opposed to this because I question the objective and the motive behind it. I think the Conservatives have made their points on the record very clear. They're interested in doing this to try to continue studying SDTC for evermore. I don't think that's necessary. We've had enough investigations and reviews. The government has stepped up time and time again to get to the bottom of this. I think we have held people accountable.

I would just say we're opposed to the motion as amended.

The contribution agreements are something I'm sure members will enjoy reviewing. Go nuts.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have been filling in at public accounts and other committees where this has come up as well.

Not to give you work, but in the meantime, can you maybe check in with the public accounts committee chair to see what they're doing on this? I'm just concerned about continually duplicating.

Industry is a huge file. I'm really happy we're going to move to the credit card study and the other stuff, too.

I have my understanding of what's going on there, but I would rather have it be chair to chair at some point in time, to discuss this. That's not unusual. When we were studying copyright at one point, I moved a motion to combine industry and...another committee. Oh, my goodness; it's going to come back to me later. It doesn't matter. Together we did a joint study.

I just wanted to maybe have you reach out to do that, so we know what we're getting into entirely, without relying upon rumours.

● (0830)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Masse.

I will do that.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you.

The Chair: Are there any other comments on the motion as amended?

Seeing none, I would ask the clerk to put it to a vote.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Thank you, colleagues.

This would bring us back to Bill C-27.

(On clause 2)

The Chair: We were at CPC-9.

We had left it at a subamendment by Mr. Perkins on CPC-9, so I'm looking at Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Yes.

I can do a quick reminder, because it's been a little while since we did this amendment, CPC-9, which is in regard to the powers of the Privacy Commissioner.

In essence, we are not supporters of the tribunal. We think it's an added layer of bureaucracy that's ineffective in some ways, like the Competition Tribunal is.

The amendment essentially transfers the powers proposed in here from the tribunal to the Privacy Commissioner, which we believe will lead to a more robust examination of privacy breaches by the Privacy Commissioner than he has the ability to do now. It would mean there were more legal ramifications for what the Privacy Commissioner does and enable proponents to go straight to court after that, I believe, if this were to go through.

Is that not the case? Appeals from a Privacy Commissioner ruling would enable those who are involved and who disagree with that ruling to go straight to court, rather than going to the tribunal.

The Chair: Before I let the officials answer, Mr. Masse, you have the floor.

Mr. Brian Masse: I'm just wondering if maybe we could hear from Mr. Turnbull.

I know we're committed to having the government come back with more of a nuanced position on this, so I'm wondering whether we should consider suspending at this point in time or work through these things. If they're all connected, I'd hate to continue to go in circles here and lose momentum where there seems to be some kind of joint agreement—well, there is, because we passed it unanimously—to hear back from the government on this. From what I understand, these things are intertwined.

I know we all came in here early and everything, but we had a good result in the last moments. I'm just wondering whether or not we're going to go through.... I know some of my concerns and amendments are also connected with the government...and might be reproposing some alterations. I'm wondering why we'd try to hash out the myths as opposed to the facts at this point.

I'll just throw that out to the table.

The Chair: We can have that discussion.

I see that Mr. Perkins has something to say on that.

Mr. Perkins, the floor is yours.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I don't disagree, because there have been discussions, and next week—I guess not Monday, but a week today—we are moving on to the credit card study, but I'd hate to lose the opportunity, since everyone's here and has had a little breakfast, to propose another motion that's on notice.

Thank you, Mr. Masse. I'll take the opportunity.

I put this on notice last week:

That, given that the Government of Canada has invested upward of \$50 billion towards the creation of an EV battery ecosystem in Canada and has mandated that all automobile sales in Canada be zero-emitting by 2035, and given that:

(i) Northvolt's \$7-billion EV battery plant in Montreal, QC, has delayed construction for upward of a year while it undergoes a "strategic review" of its future operations, despite receiving 7.2 billion dollars' worth of taxpayer money;

(ii) Unicore's \$2.7-billion EV battery component plant in Kingston, ON, has halted construction, despite receiving 1 billion dollars' worth of taxpayer subsidies; and

(iii) Ford's \$1.8-billion EV expansion in Oakville, ON, has been scrapped and retooled to make gasoline pickups, despite receiving 590 million dollars' worth of taxpayer subsidies;

the committee therefore agree to conduct a four-meeting study, beginning in the first week of November, to review the feasibility of the government's EV strategy, given the significant amount of taxpayer support amid a global slowdown in EV sales, and that the committee agree to hear from witnesses submitted by members of the committee proportional to their representation in the House, report its findings to the House and request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

I put this on notice last week. In the media over the last number of months, we've seen that a number of the companies involved in this space are scaling back their production of EVs, including plans in Canada. As I said in the motion, after a strategic review, Northvolt has already announced 1,600 layoffs in Sweden, and they're not proceeding with certain plant construction in Sweden. Volkswagen has scaled back its plans for EV and part production in Europe. Ford lost \$1 billion on its EV sales last year and has scaled back.

The only place where we seem to be continuing with this thing that consumers and the markets aren't buying is where we have a massive government subsidy. In this case, when it comes to the Stellantis EV plants and Volkswagen plants, what we have is a 100% assembly subsidy from the taxpayer of Canada through 2029, as we know, and then it's 75% the year after, 50% the year after that and 25% the year after that. The result of all of that is perhaps it's not surprising that where these global companies are getting 100% taxpayer subsidies, they haven't changed some of their plans, but where they're not getting the 100% subsidies, such as Northvolt on the production subsidies, they're scaling back.

The free market is saying there isn't the capacity for this, yet the government is plowing ahead with what appears to be a fairly failed strategy of industrial engineering and selection in picking a particular technology that the market is not accepting and trying to put Canadian taxpayers on the hook. As a result, because over \$50 billion has been committed to basically the three or four plants here, if you bring the provincial money into it, we should have a study on it before the government starts doling out more taxpayer money on the production subsidy side of it and on the construction side of it. We should get an update on the construction of all these plants and whether or not, at this stage, it's a good thing to do.

• (0835)

I will leave it there for now. I'm sure others will have a few thoughts.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Perkins.

You have moved your motion. Thank you, too, for the short intermission on Bill C-27. You broke the ice this session, so it's appreciated.

There's a motion on the table.

I have MP Arya, Brian Masse and Ryan Turnbull.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Chair, before I speak, should the witnesses still be here?

• (0840)

The Chair: I'll give it a few more minutes to see how this motion goes, because I got scared by Mr. Perkins with the intermission on Bill C-27. We'll see how it goes, but we'll liberate the witnesses earlier if need be.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The transformation to a clean economy across the world has just begun. It may have started a few years back, but in the bigger scheme of things, this is a multidecade thing that has now started. There will be small hiccups, small changes, small adjustments, tactical adjustments, strategic adjustments, etc. that affect it.

Canada is at the right spot at the right time to make maximum use of this opportunity that is there and to make us a global leader in all things from mines to mobility. We have started supporting the exploration and development of critical minerals, which, I have to say, the United States is fully supporting, not just with words. The United States defence department is actually investing in Canadian mining companies. The Pentagon is investing. That is how important the critical minerals are, from there up to electric vehicles.

If you look back at the 20th century, that was the era of oil and automobiles, especially cars and trucks. Now, we are moving from that to electric vehicles, and the government has rightly put its money where its mouth is in trying to support this entire industry through our mainstream mobility strategy.

Northvolt is a big player in Europe, and the small changes it is making in Europe are not going to affect it here, as it has clearly said. It is time for us to encourage as many global players as possible to come to Canada and set up their plants. We should not interfere in their day-to-day operations, in their short-term strategic objectives or in the tactics they use.

In fact, this particular move by the government has attracted, and has resulted in, Canada being the second- or third-biggest recipient of foreign direct investment in the OECD countries, including the highest per capita foreign direct investments in any of the G7 countries. Therefore, it is yielding results.

In addition to the EV plants, the battery plants and the mining companies, we also need to focus on the processing of minerals, which is the sort of thing I think this committee should look into. We should check where we are in that part of the chain, from mines to mobility. We are being very active. We see a lot of projects in the critical minerals mining projects. We see a lot of battery plants. We see a lot of EV manufacturing plants.

In that chain, we are not seeing many stories about the processing of these minerals here. I think, if anything, the committee has to look into this segment or this sector. It is that sweet spot that we have to focus our limited time and limited resources on.

I suggest that, instead of this motion.... I don't think this motion is relevant at this time. Anytime there are small changes in corporate sector strategies, etc., we're going to see a lot of changes, a lot of positive things. Sometimes we may feel that some of the actions are not exactly very positive, but we have to give due credit to the corporate sector to do what is best in its interest, in its business, which does affect the overall benefit of this transformation to electric vehicles and the transformation to a clean economy.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Arya.

In the meantime, I consulted with the opposition. We can liberate the witnesses we have with us today at this point. Thank you very much for your presence this morning, and to our legislative clerks as well.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

Mr. Masse, you have the floor.

• (0845)

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: That was my question and intervention.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Next, we have Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I want to make a few points on the record about this. Hopefully, we can deal with this fairly quickly. There are many things to say about this, but there are some factual inaccuracies in the actual motion that concern me. Mr. Arya made some really good comments about this.

The green industrial revolution is not stopping because the Conservatives deny that climate change is a reality or deny that there's any need for that industrial transition. It's kind of shocking to see how they can't see the global trends that are going on around the world and that Canada is actually doing really well in terms of building out and attracting investment.

Canada is competing in the North American market for the EV battery supply chain. The fact is that we're number one in the world when it comes to.... BloombergNEF rates Canada as number one for the EV supply chain, which is fantastic. We've seen billions of dollars of investment that would not have come into our market.

We also see this as a really large transition that's global. Companies are going to have some challenges along the way. They're going to adjust their schedules. Some of that is to be expected.

The one factual inaccuracy that really strikes me here is that this motion.... I'm not sure who wrote it. I know Mr. Perkins moved it, but I don't know who wrote it. Maybe he didn't have a chance to read up on this.

The new numbers on ZEV sales in Canada show that there's a 30% increase, quarter over quarter, as of the last quarter. There were 65,733 new EVs registered in Canada in quarter two of 2024. Sales saw a rise and jump to 12.9% of market share, with Manitoba and Quebec actually leading the way. There was a 30% increase, quarter over quarter. That's significant. We want that to continue to rise. I think Canadians, rightfully, are showing interest in wanting to drive more EVs.

Globally, there are other trends that we could cite. There's an acknowledgement that this movement to electric vehicles is happening, whether the Conservatives like it or not. It's going to happen.

The question is, will Canada be competitive in that space? Will Canada actually be able to leverage all of its strengths and natural resources to truly be a global player and to be a player in the North American market, in the integrated supply chains that we have?

Obviously, we know that the United States and its Inflation Reduction Act changed the conditions in terms of Canada's being competitive. The things that the Canadian government has done have made us competitive and have drawn in investment.

The other factual inaccuracy is very small, but "Unicore's" is not "Unicore's", it's "Umicore's".

The other thing that we've heard, very quickly, is that Northvolt has said publicly that its Sweden restructuring doesn't impact the

work here in Canada. Its production schedule and construction schedule haven't been impacted. We also know that no federal funding—the minister has been clear about this—has actually gone to Northvolt yet.

The structure of these deals is done in such a way that a lot of the subsidy portions are related to production. It's related to the sales of EVs. If these companies don't follow through and don't sell EVs, they don't get the subsidies that were promised. If the Inflation Reduction Act doesn't continue or somehow is repealed in the United States, those production subsidies are no longer in place. This makes Canada competitive with the United States. It makes Canada competitive globally. It really is the reason we've seen this amount of massive investment come in.

• (0850)

All of that is to say that the motion is flawed in multiple ways. In terms of what our committee has said, we all agreed on a schedule, which includes hearing from the minister, having four meetings on the credit card study, which Mr. Masse put forward and we all agreed to, and then getting back to Bill C-27.

If we have other considerations for studies, they should be after Bill C-27. This is just not the right time for this particular study.

I also worry about putting the industry on trial here. It needs flexibility in order to manage its operations and make these very large investments. If it needs to slightly reschedule things, I think that's perfectly reasonable.

I don't agree with this motion. I think it's deeply flawed in terms of how it's been written.

I think there's a great story to tell about the auto industry in Canada and the supply chains that we're building here. The frame of this motion is not one I can support. I think we should move past this and get on with our committee work.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

I now give the floor to Mr. Badawey.

[*English*]

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is somewhat unfortunate. Once again, we're seeing the Conservatives put politics before business and people. They're really not ensuring that we move forward with what we're supposed to be doing up here in Ottawa, which is putting business before politics and, with that, being a mechanism and a partner with vision.

The bottom line, Mr. Chair, is that Canada is the front door to a new and emerging market in the EV sector, and we're doing that with partners, relationships and vision. Vision comes from the private sector working with the resources it has available to it from all levels of government.

In Niagara, we just announced a \$1.6-billion investment from the Japanese company Asahi Kasei, which is going to be a major supply chain partner with Honda. That was just announced in Alliston. We're looking at about 1,500 jobs and a lot of residual benefits when it comes to assessment growth, trade and the workforce. The list goes on, but I don't want to get into that, because I would be here for an hour and a half talking about those benefits.

I also want to mention that there's a reason that, for example, 94% of all manufacturing jobs in Canada are contained within Ontario. Quite frankly, in comparison to all 50 states combined, Ontario is performing well because of this vision and these investments. Once again, it's an "all hands on deck" approach, with all levels of government participating with the private sector to ensure that level of comfort and confidence investing in Canada.

Let me go a bit more granular, because there are many more benefits than just the obvious ones we see on the surface. Yes, there are big dollars. There's \$1.6 billion in Port Colborne, for example, from Asahi Kasei. There will be 1,500 jobs. It's really strengthening the trades and the workforce, but let's take the next layer and the residual benefits it applies to.

We recognize that in Canada, there is an urgent need for supply chain and logistics relationships. With that, and in today's interconnected world, a resilient and adaptive supply chain is no longer a luxury; it's a necessity. Unpredictable global disruptions and shifts in demand have highlighted the vulnerabilities existing in somewhat out-of-date systems that, sometimes, the government and even the private sector become content with and complacent about.

With this new, emerging market coming here to Canada, and Canada being the front door to this new, emerging market, it gives a lot more investor confidence that Canada is in the game, regardless of whether it's the EV sector or other sectors. We are leading by example when it comes to investing in Canada. To safeguard economic growth and ensure the timely delivery of essential goods within our supply chains, we're establishing comprehensive relationships that prioritize sustainability, innovation and efficiency. This is part of that. The EV sector is part of that. Once again, in leading by example as a country with our partner provinces, territories and municipalities, we're showing off Canada and strengthening Canada with respect to our international trade performance and the partners within that stronger international trade performance.

To meet current and future capacity needs, strategic investments must be made in these sectors, which leads me to my third point. Investments are needed in the capacity of our supply chains to create fluidity within themselves. While the government invests in these companies coming into the country, the residual benefits of those investments are the capacity and the infrastructure investments in water, sewer, roads, parks, sidewalks, recreation trails, policing, fire, public health and community services. The list goes on.

All of those growth-related costs, because of that one investment, are now being looked after because of the investments coming out of the federal, provincial and municipal governments. It lends itself to other investments that are going to accrue over time.

Don't let that be lost upon us with respect to the technology and the workforce development we'll also build and strengthen because of that one investment based on the vision of this country.

● (0855)

By securing the funding for critical supply chain logistics improvements through investments like this, in terms of this sector, the EV sector, we will reduce, for example—and this is my next point—the bottlenecks within our supply chains in those economic corridors. We'll optimize transportation networks. We'll better support industries dependent on timely and reliable delivery. That's all part of this.

We really, really have to ensure that we recognize what these investments are attaching to. To have a motion like this come up just discourages the entire concept of economic development and, therefore, in no way will I be supporting it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Badawey.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garon, you have the floor.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't have as much patience as my colleague Mr. Badawey to explain the green transition to the Conservatives. Everyone in the Bloc knows I'm a very patient man, but I no longer have enough patience to do that.

Furthermore, this motion seeks to put an entire industry on trial. This motion could have been drafted more in more productive light, but it sounds self-serving instead. I'm quite surprised, because two weeks ago, our Conservative colleagues and the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes were prepared to hand over the keys to our IT infrastructure to Elon Musk. If Elon Musk is now the Conservatives' guru, they might want to give him a call to talk about electric vehicles. The glass can't be half empty and half full at the same time. We can't get our heads around that.

Let's talk about China. They put tariffs on Chinese EVs. About half the new cars sold in China are electric, and yet the motion is founded on the premise that the EV market is collapsing. If they think the Earth is flat, they might as well go ahead and write that into the motion too. We can discuss that. The truth is, the EV market is growing. All industrialized nations have electric vehicle regulations. It's growing in the United States. So this motion is looking to put an entire industry on trial.

First of all, I don't feel the list of projects as presented is the right way to go. Northvolt is certainly of interest to us. If the National Assembly of Quebec wants to look at the part of the Northvolt project that falls under Quebec jurisdiction, it's free to do so. However, as my colleague Mr. Turnbull said, federal subsidies are done differently. There are provincial matters—we call them national matters in Quebec—in this motion that are the National Assembly's responsibility and we shouldn't be studying them here.

If the Conservatives want to put the industry on trial, first they have to acknowledge that the transition is happening. Plus, just because their constituents like putting edible oil products in their morning coffee, they can't decide to put an industry on trial for political reasons after one rough quarter. If they want to put the industry on trial, they have to look at all prospects in the battery and clean technology sector. It's a growth industry in Quebec, here, and for our partners and competitors. It's one thing not to believe in global warming. That's their prerogative. However, they can't deny that export markets are out there for technologies with high added value and that we'll be able to enjoy well-paying jobs and substantially ramp up productivity in Quebec and the rest of Canada. No matter what they think about global warming, and even how much Canadian emissions affect global warming, the market is real and we must allow it to develop.

It's as if the Conservatives were looking at the S&P 500, the 500 top companies in the United States, taking the 10 companies that are underperforming this quarter, putting them on trial and shutting them down. There's no way anyone would ever think that makes any sense. Do you want to know what's most dishonest about this? It's not even what they put in the motion—it's what they decided to leave out. You can take any sector of the economy and find a company that's struggling, having trouble raising venture capital or has just had a rough quarter. The Conservatives think it should all be shut down.

I understand that the Conservatives are touchy about this. I understand that there are subsidy programs. I understand that the government's way of doing things may not be their preferred route. It may not be mine either, in some cases. However, they are relentlessly looking to put this industry on trial, and it's an industry of the future that Quebeckers believe in. I don't see how the Bloc Québécois could ever support a motion like this.

• (0900)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Garon.

Mr. Patzer, the floor is yours.

[*English*]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you, Chair.

Well, I think part of what we can do here, too, is to take a look at where these subsidies are going. We know that Volkswagen got subsidies. We know that Stellantis got subsidies. Let's take a look at what's happening within those companies.

Volkswagen, over in Germany, is going through a restructuring, with 4.4 billion dollars' worth of capacity cuts. While Volkswagen is cutting good-paying union jobs—not here in Canada, but around the world—this government is making sure that the executives are getting big handouts yet again.

For Stellantis, what's happening south of the border? Again, we have to take a look around the world to see what the context is. The United Auto Workers are filing unfair labour practice charges against Stellantis because of their desire to move their vehicle production into Mexico and out of the United States, which again would impact good-paying union jobs.

When you start to look at what some of the companies within the industry are doing, these companies are actually benefiting from Canadian subsidies. Meanwhile, they're doing all these things around the world that are having a negative impact on jobs, with layoffs while the corporate elites are getting paid big money. I think that is something that should be alarming for everybody around this table, regardless of which party they represent.

I don't know, there are a lot of... There are a few other worrying trends. On China, for example, everyone's talking about how there are these great EVs being made in China. Well, what else is China doing? At one point, they approved 214 gigawatts of new coal-powered generation to stabilize their grid. Now, they're not bringing that much online. They've lowered that number a bit, but the fact remains that in one quarter alone they brought in 10 gigawatts of coal power to fuel their industrialized complex that they're building over there.

I think we have to take a look at the whole picture here when we talk about what's happening. In looking at some of these other examples around the world, I think there's a very compelling case for this committee to take a look at what's happening with the EV industry, particularly here in Canada. When you see the companies that we're subsidizing and you see what they are doing in other parts of the world, that should be worrying for Canadian workers and Canadian jobs, particularly if we're going to try to build out any kind of industry in this country, whether it's EV or not. We should look at what some of these trends are, and I think it's important that we look at what's happening with these companies.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Généreux, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our colleague Mr. Garon from the Bloc Québécois put on a great show for us. He's running out of patience, and so am I.

We're tabling a motion to basically substantiate our point of view on certain matters. We've never said we don't agree on climate change. We've never said we don't agree technology is changing. We've never said we're against electric vehicles. We've never said that we're against the development of a new industry in Canada, or in Quebec. It's completely ridiculous to say all that about the Conservatives.

We learned that the boards of directors of certain organizations had made certain expenditures or that funding had been granted to companies that were in a direct conflict of interest.

We're talking about at least \$50 billion the Canadian government will invest in this sector over the next few years. The Bloc Québécois's cousin in Quebec City, the Parti Québécois, is currently asking perfectly legitimate questions about the Northvolt project in Quebec. So I don't see why we shouldn't be free to ask perfectly legitimate questions of the government and experts here in Ottawa to find out whether that money started out being invested in a fair and just manner.

I hear that it takes 20 years to develop mines to a point where they can supply factories in Canada. We've just levied a 106% tax on Chinese vehicles, and we may eventually have to tax manufacturing inputs for batteries that will be assembled in Canada. These inputs will further drive up the price of batteries. The public still won't be able to afford them.

I think this motion is very simple. It seeks only to monitor what's happening right now with money we're investing in Canada.

The Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois clearly couldn't care less how the money is being spent here. In 10 years or so, we'll have to go back to see how it was spent, why those decisions were made and why no one was monitoring expenditures. Once again, we're seeing this kind of thing happen with spending. We're talking about billions of dollars, and then further hundreds of millions for the greening government fund.

Here we are once again questioning things we shouldn't have to question. We don't have a problem with that money being spent, but someone needs to verify how it gets spent. I think that's the simplest and most logical thing to do. Anyway, wouldn't any party in power want to make sure it checks what the industry or the economy is getting out of that money in terms of economic benefits?

Where in the motion does it say that the Conservatives don't believe in climate change, don't want to invest, don't support electric vehicles and don't believe in the transition? It's completely ridiculous to say that.

I will stop here because I could say a lot more. I sincerely believe that this motion is simple, concrete and direct. As parliamentarians, it's in our interest to ensure that such significant investments follow the rules, and that they are being certified and verified along the way. We can't wait 10 years only to realize that certain investments were a mistake.

● (0905)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Généreux.

We'll now give the floor to Mr. Masse and then to Mr. Garon.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The timing of the motion is difficult to deal with. There's no doubt about that. I see it as a direct threat to the credit card study that I have. It requires a specific date that we have to break off on, and it also shifts us into a different direction. It's probably going to be shopped around to other committees, too, given the behaviour of

the Conservative Party here, so we have to deal with that as well. That's something that I think is important.

As for the Conservatives, and with regard to Ottawa, I was here when Jim Flaherty said that we don't pick winners or losers. We had to fight like hell to get investment to save General Motors and Chrysler at that time. That had been done before. In fact, the Canadian government made money over it. The first time it actually came to support Chrysler during the economic recession of the 1980s, we made money on it. In fact, when we were done with the General Motors investment, the government, under Harper, sold the shares short, and we lost money because of that. Had we held on to the shares, we would have actually made more money.

I've long been after an auto policy in this place—since I started here—and we've gotten a bit closer, because some of the incentives that we're talking about here today are tied to actually manufacturing the products. It's not going to the companies without actually having product deliverables. That has been a shift that's changed.

I also remember programs that the Conservatives put in place, such as the ecoAuto “feebate”. People probably don't remember that one too much, but that was \$110 million that they provided to the auto industry. Get this: It was an incentive for cars to have greater fuel efficiency.

What they did—and we warned them of this and they didn't believe us—was that they decided they would allow the industry to do whatever it wanted with the car to increase the mileage. What happened was that Toyota, with the Yaris, ended up getting about \$96 million of \$110 million, because they took out the rear airbags to make the car able to go farther as it had less weight.

That was the Conservatives' auto policy at that time. They basically gave a direct subsidy to Toyota, which later on went on to a number of different things that they didn't address, including the emissions issues, and also the Prius, with regard to the policies around not making them accountable for the braking system, which was actually due to software all along. Canadians had to live through all the excuses they provided, with no follow-up from the government, about Canadian mats that were put in the cars being responsible for the deaths of people and for the crashes.

I'm surprised that we don't have an Ontario Conservative here, because I also see this as a part of their internal problems with regard to attacks on Doug Ford and his government. Doug Ford and his government are contributing \$500 million to the Oakville plant, the Stellantis plant. They're at \$500 million. For the General Motors plant, they're at \$259 million. For the Honda plant, they're in for \$131.6 million. For the Umicore plant, there's money into that as well.

That's the summary of the Ontario commitment. I'm surprised that we wouldn't have an Ontario MP from the Conservative Party raise this, because I know that some have toured some of the battery plants they've actually been criticizing. They've actually been at the announcements sometimes. Also, they went and toured over the summer. I was there when a Conservative member was touring a plant with me, which was good. That's been helpful in discussing some of the challenges here. Why there is an attack on Doug Ford, I don't know. I'll let the Conservatives sort that out. We already know that they have sore spots.

I can tell you that I'm not happy with Doug Ford, because, as Mr. Badawey would know, I'm fighting hazardous material waste getting into my community. For me to come to the defence of Doug Ford in terms of their investments here is not what I would want to do, as I'm at the same time trying to stop hazardous material coming across on the Ambassador Bridge in the province that's going to shirk that responsibility. I'm trying to get the feds to deal with it and the province to deal with it. That tells you where I am with this.

Here's what I am concerned about. Mr. Patzer did raise an interesting thing that's taking place at the Stellantis plant. Here's what they're doing. They're actually contesting the agreement on the investment in Windsor, Ontario. If you look at the history, it was Bob White who broke away from the UAW. We actually broke away. We were part of a United Auto Workers alliance across North America, but because Canadian interests were always subverted, we broke away from that.

• (0910)

Bob White formed the CAW at that time. The CAW is now Unifor. We have had to fight tooth and nail for these investments, including a product in Windsor, which is now being contested by the UAW, because they have their own agenda for American workers. We actually have Unifor for Canadian workers, and when we start to open up these things here and have all kinds of testimony on that in front of us, that's going to get highly complicated as well. We need to support our workers, not drag them under the undertow by accident, which is going to happen in this.

Again, that's why we specifically... If you're not familiar with Bob White, he's one of the biggest union representatives that Canada has ever had. Breaking away from an American union that was so powerful was very difficult to do. It also came from the fact that we actually lost the Auto Pact, which I don't want to get into here today, Mr. Chair. I don't think it's fair to run down the Auto Pact, but the whole thing with the Auto Pact is that it was a privileged trade agreement that was created and worked really well. We compromised on other things that we lost because we signed the free trade agreement.

I want to conclude by saying that the issue over Quebec in this is important, too, and is not to be underestimated. We've finally got Quebec back into being a major player in the future of automotive. That's huge. My father was an executive for Chrysler who worked under Yves Landry, and when we lost the Sainte-Thérèse plant and other plants across Quebec, it was a huge hit to manufacturing industrialization, not only in Quebec but also in Ontario. Getting Quebec back in the game on this is huge.

I would not want to compromise that right now, because we have witnessed decade after decade of Quebec not having its share in where it really is very influential because of its automotive past and the aerospace issues, which actually complement each other. That's a huge issue for this.

For many different reasons, I can't support this motion at this time. I think I have outlined some of them right here. We could go on for more, but I won't do that. If in the future we want to do something on auto once we finish the business and the agenda that we have, I'm totally open to doing that, but, hopefully, it would be something that would be more sensitive than just a hit-and-run attempt on certain different projects.

• (0915)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Masse.

Mr. Garon, the floor is yours.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

What was said earlier requires a response. I question the intent of the motion.

Mr. Généreux is basically saying that we're putting on a show here. I agree, but I'm obviously not the only one. When you read the motion, you see that it's about validating all kinds of things. Mr. Généreux is a "chief validator". These are all validation points. We want to look at the entire government strategy. That's quite a validation!

How is it that here, the government strategies that gave Canadians' money to the oil companies have never been validated? The Standing Committee on Natural Resources will probably do it, but we're not exactly duplicating the committee. In any case, when this kind of issue is raised there, there's a filibuster. How is it that these subsidies to oil companies aren't being validated, just to see if everything is going well?

I'll get to the motion shortly.

Mr. Poilievre is opposed to industrial subsidies of any kind. That's quite a validation! We really want to make sure that all is well when it comes to industrial subsidies and government strategy. I'm putting on quite a show, aren't I? The implication is that I was being dishonest. It may have been colourful—we are what we are—but it was certainly not dishonest.

Let's talk about climate change. I'm going to have the kindness, decorum and class not to name him, but I remember walking on Parliament Hill with a Conservative who told me that in his province it was already snowing in September; he then turned to me to say, in English, of course, that some people claim that the planet is warming. Do you want me to give you more anecdotes like that? Western Conservatives were interviewed. Of course, the Conservative Party of Canada has the Quebec wing, but it's almost capable of holding its caucuses in a photo booth. The reality is that the west calls the shots, and Quebec shouts. That's how it works.

Yes, the Conservatives are opposed to industrial subsidies. They're not just opposed to the government's strategy. The Conservative leader said that they were opposed to any government subsidy and industrial development strategy, whereas the United States has one, and we agree that they're not communists. China is something else, but European countries have one too.

So what's this business about only wanting to validate things? We have the right to question the intent of a motion and to point out what's missing. They tell us that Quebec wants to do it, and they're talking about the Parti Québécois. I don't know why, but they've been very interested in the PQ in recent weeks. Maybe they're afraid, and they certainly have reason to be. They say the PQ wants to study this. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary can confirm this, but so far, I think Ottawa has invested a total of zero dollars, taxes included, in Northvolt, because it's a production subsidy.

I'm not announcing my personal position or that of the Bloc Québécois on the form of this agreement between Quebec City and Ottawa, but one thing is certain: Just because the Quebec National Assembly is asking to study an issue doesn't mean that we in the federal Parliament should take the time we should be devoting to the issue of privacy and AI to study the issue, when the federal government hasn't yet invested a single cent in this project. That logic is completely lofty. Are we going to meddle in Quebec City's affairs because the National Assembly is studying a health or education issue? How many times has the Bloc Québécois said this?

I repeat that this is not a show, that the Conservatives' position is clear and that the wording of the motion isn't even subtle. I don't see under what circumstances we could make intelligent use of our time by doing this in the first place.

● (0920)

I would remind you that Bill 25 was passed in Quebec. We're waiting for some alignment on privacy issues. The National Assembly is also very concerned about this.

Right now, we're completely stuck, because we're moving from one motion to the next. We know what the Conservatives are up to. Since they figure they'll be in power in who knows how many weeks, they decide to block everything in the hope that they will be able to do whatever they want.

The reality is that everyone here is paid from the public purse. We have resources, and we receive competent witnesses and officials. We invite them to testify, but we send them home. We don't care about them and their schedules when we could be working. It isn't the content of the motion that's important, it's the use of our time.

Don't tell me I'm putting on a show. If the tone I use, the way I speak and, of course, the coffee can help members wake up—the meeting starts early—all the better.

That said, it's anything but a show.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Garon.

Ms. Rempel Garner.

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I actually think I need another coffee. This is a lot for a Thursday morning at 8:15 with half a cup in me.

If I heard my Bloc and NDP colleagues correctly, the issue perhaps is less with the content and more with the timing, so I propose an amendment to this motion.

It would be in the third and final paragraph of the motion. The first sentence would be changed. It reads, “the committee therefore agree to conduct a study of not less than four meetings, beginning in the first sitting week of”, but then strike the word “November” and replace it with “January, or after the credit card study is complete, whatever is earlier”.

I propose that amendment, which I'm hoping my colleagues will support.

Surprise, Rick.

I think that might address some of Mr. Masse's concern. I am very keen to start the credit card study as well. I certainly contributed to the witness list. I think a lot of people in my riding echo some of the concerns that are outlined in the study. I'm keen to get going on that.

I want to look at the content of this motion and perhaps make an argument for it.

Some of the Liberals have suggested that the wording of this motion is meant to suggest there isn't a need for a vibrant EV industry in Canada. I think that having an EV industry in Canada is a very important thing. Certainly, having lower-emission cars is something I think many consumers are keen to do. We're all partners in finding ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but doing so while ensuring the cost of living is kept low for Canadians.

There's nothing in the motion that suggests, as the Liberals have said, that we don't want an EV industry. It's actually the opposite.

Colleagues, if we want to have an EV industry in Canada, and this government has put a lot of money—a lot of tax dollars—behind this.... I want to remind us all that we have a fiduciary responsibility as members of Parliament to ensure tax dollars are being well spent. If they're being dedicated towards one company or another company and it's clear in the media those companies are experiencing issues, then it behooves us to ask the question that my colleague Mr. Perkins is asking here, which is to review the government's EV strategy. That's all this asks. It's asking if we are investing in the right spot and if the investments the government has made still make sense given the news that's happened recently.

Colleagues, I'll direct your attention to an article from CBC News, which is hardly a bastion of Conservative thought. It was published on September 1. It said, "Northvolt's EV battery plant in Quebec could be delayed up to 18 months".

The government's entire argument on the allocation of billions of dollars as part of their environmental narrative hinges on plants like these. Now that we've heard this plant could be delayed, it behooves us to ask the question that's in this motion. Does this impact the government's EV strategy?

What I've heard here today, colleagues.... I understand there are politics behind us here. I understand that some of my Liberal colleagues might not want to ask this question. If people actually care about reducing greenhouse gas emissions by producing electric vehicles, then we should be asking. If there's a story in Canada's major broadcaster that this plant might not come to fruition, maybe we should ask if adjustments need to be made in the strategy to ensure that the objectives the government has tried to sell us on actually come to fruition.

• (0925)

There's one more thing. There's been a lot of talk about Quebec politics and Ontario politics and who's here and who's not here. I just have a couple of comments, folks.

Yes, I'm an Alberta MP, but I understand what it means to pull emitting cars off the road to reach greenhouse gas emissions targets, so I have been such a big advocate for the boondoggle that has been the Green Line in Calgary, which should have pulled 50,000 cars off the road by now. Just because I'm from Alberta, that doesn't mean I can't have something to add on asking whether the strategy is still working. I just want to say that.

Second of all, we have to be careful about talking about what regions are represented and who's not represented. I'm literally the only woman on this committee, so let's just park some of those things for a minute.

On the topic of Quebec politics, if we want to talk about this, it is now becoming a political issue. I ask for forgiveness from my colleagues from Quebec, but there is an MNA, Frédéric Beauchemin, and I think he's a Liberal MNA. He's criticizing the Legault government for putting all of its eggs in one basket.

Now we're descending into territory where there are billions of dollars at stake, potentially laudable objectives about producing electric vehicles, and we don't have a clear line of sight on what the government is going to do, if anything, to correct course. Maybe it doesn't want to correct course. Maybe there's a reason for that. Some of my colleagues have made passionate arguments that there's no need to correct course.

I think it would behoove us to spend a couple of meetings, given that there are billions of dollars on the line here, to have maybe some of these executives or the government officials come. We could say, "Do you know what? Even though we hear news that this plant is going to be delayed by 18 months and that the parent company has had a massive problem in its home company, it's still good, and here's why." The government has not done that.

The other examples that my colleague Mr. Perkins has raised in this motion are equally concerning. What the government is asking us to do, colleagues, is to continue to allocate billions of dollars to companies and plants that are not on the track that the government announced, so it is our responsibility to ask how the plan is progressing given these significant changes. I think that the amendment.... I'm looking in good faith to my colleagues. I want the credit card study to happen. I want to talk about electric vehicles, and I want to hear what the government is doing to make sure that, despite these reports, our country is still on track to make some of the targets, given the opportunity cost of the billions of dollars.

For the billions of dollars being directed here, at a time when there needs to be legitimate climate action in Canada, if it's not going to achieve the results that the government is saying it will in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and job growth, then we need to have a rethink about what the strategy is and how we're going to get there. That's why I support this motion. I disagree with the characterization that this is somehow irresponsible. We need to have smart solutions to address climate change, but if the government is putting billions of dollars into projects that are not going to come to fruition, there needs to be a rethink for all of those reasons.

I hope you'll support this amendment. It is the mandate of this committee to review strategies exactly like this. I hope you will support this and that we can move on with doing our jobs. Thank you.

• (0930)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Turnbull, you now have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you, Chair.

Based on the conversation that we've had on this particular motion, I don't have a lot of hope for the Conservatives salvaging this right now. That's the feeling that I'm getting from the other colleagues around the table. I think we've all spoken passionately to where we stand on this. It's clear that the framing of this is the problem. I think there are some underlying assumptions in the whole frame of the motion, which, fundamentally, I disagree with.

Therefore, Ms. Rempel Garner's changing the slight timeline, to me, doesn't fix the motion. I just think that it would be easier for us to revisit this when we finish Bill C-27. I think that if you and the Conservatives have questions for the minister on the changes to some of these, you're going to have him for two hours sometime in the next two weeks, which we've committed to.

The Chair: The minister is confirmed for one hour.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Excuse me. It's one hour.

You'll have your time with the minister to ask those questions. I think we brought that into the scope of the motion to ensure those questions are.... It's anything to do with his priorities and mandate. That was how we left it. I think that's good news.

I say we dispense with this motion by voting on it, and then we can revisit this later on down the road when we've finished Bill C-27. We can say, "What does this committee have as priorities?" We can all put our thoughts into what our next priorities are and have a mutually beneficial discussion on reaching some consensus around what else we would like to study. The EV industry is something I'm interested in. I would love to think about how we might do something later on down the road on that, but I don't think, again, that now is the time.

It's the framing of this particular motion that I take issue with. I've heard very clearly from colleagues that they see it in a somewhat similar light. Actually, they made better arguments than I did, quite frankly.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

Before we deal with the motion, we have to dispose of the amendment that was presented by MP Rempel Garner. We're still on the amendment right now. We've all heard it.

I have MP Rempel Garner.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: My colleague has talked about taking issue with the framing of the motion. I want to go through it very clearly and put on record that I don't agree with the assertion that there's a problem with the framing. The motion, literally, is fact, fact, fact, fact and fact.

It says:

governments have invested upward of \$50 billion towards the creation of an EV battery ecosystem

That's a fact.

and has mandated that all automobile sales in Canada be zero-emitting by 2035

That's a fact.

and given that:

Northvolt's \$7-billion EV plant in Montreal, QC, has delayed construction for upward of a year

Unless they're saying that CBC News has put out fake news, that is a fact. It has been reported. Eighteen months—

The Chair: Wait one second, MP Rempel Garner. We have a point of order.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: We're not the ones who've ever said that the CBC puts out fake news.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Yes.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: It's the Conservatives who say they're going to defund the CBC; then they use their headlines as evidence to make their arguments in committee.

• (0935)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: That's not a point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Turnbull, I agree. That's not a point of order.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Thank you.

It is a fact that the CBC has reported that the Northvolt plant will be delayed by up to 18 months.

Point two says that "Umicore's \$7.2-billion EV component plant in Kingston, ON, has halted construction, despite receiving \$1 billion dollars' worth of taxpayer subsidy." That is also a fact.

"Ford's \$1.8-billion EV expansion in Oakville, ON, has been scrapped and retooled to make gasoline pickups, despite receiving 590 million dollars' worth of taxpayer subsidies." These points are also facts. The framing is that these are statements of fact. There is nothing torqued in here. These are statements of fact that we should all be concerned with.

The operative cause of what this is asking to do is a four-meeting study to review the government's EV strategy, given the significant amount of taxpayer support amid a global slowdown in EV production and sales. There has been a global slowdown in EV production and sales; it's not just Canada. That is a fact. The committee agreed to hear from witnesses submitted by members of the committee.

My colleague suggests that an hour with the minister, when we have a litany of other issues, is sufficient to address this issue. That is not correct, number one; it's just not. That's a preposterous assertion. It's preposterous.

The second thing is that we need to hear from some of the executives and not just executives. If this passes, I would put on the witness list, hopefully, someone with a background in emissions modelling to look at what the delay in these plants means for the government's forward projections on emissions reductions, given the level of subsidies that they've directly committed to this. How have these changes changed the government's forward modelling on greenhouse gas emissions? Canadians are being asked to pay a lot. If we're not getting that reduction and certainly not getting the jobs in the period of time that they said, then what is the government doing to reverse course?

My colleague opposite has brought up the concept of politics a lot here. If I were going to make an assertion on why the Liberals don't want to do this, it is that the Minister of Industry is setting up for a leadership bid—that is public knowledge—and I think that his hallmark project, knowing that there are arguably some issues with it that might come under public scrutiny, would be problematic for people who might be seeking his favour in a leadership race. If we're going to ascribe motive, that's my gut feeling here.

I do not understand why anybody on this committee who cares about job creation in the auto sector, good, wise stewardship of tax dollars and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions wouldn't agree to a forward move study.

The operative clause here on the purpose of this study is to review the government's EV strategy. There's no motive that's given. It's just saying that there have been massive changes and that we should be reviewing the government's EV strategy.

You guys all know that there are problems here. There are structural problems with these deals now, and the wheels are going to come off the bus of these deals. At that point in time, we are going to look back to these meetings and the arguments that have been made here, where we are having members of the House of Commons saying, "No, we shouldn't look at that. We shouldn't look at billions of dollars of subsidies." I know I will be. There are a lot of things that were said here today that I'm taking furious notes on, like, "Yes, they said that. Okay, not a problem," and, "Turnbull at 9:10 on the thing," because it's preposterous.

I hear in the House of Commons all the time about rich corporate executives. You guys are literally letting rich corporate executives off the hook. When a company like Northvolt announces that they're going to delay a plant by 18 months after basically shuttering their operations and their parent company, we're like, "Oh, no, it's okay. It's fine. We don't need to scrutinize this." Even in January.... It's a sad state of affairs.

Anyway, I am now proposing that the amendment on the table seeks to address the concerns of my colleagues on the opposition side on timing, which is reasonable. I also want to get to the credit card study. I hope that you will accept the amendment and that my colleagues will think carefully about not supporting this.

• (0940)

The Chair: Thank you, MP Rempel-Garner, for reminding everyone that we are dealing with the amendment. I've been very generous in my interpretation of the amendment, but we should be addressing the amendment right now, before we come back to the motion.

Mr. Badawey, go ahead.

Mr. Vance Badawey: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I said earlier, both the amendment and the motion really discourage the intent, what our government and, quite frankly, all of us—regardless of which party we belong to up here in Ottawa—are trying to nurture as well as strengthen when it comes to our economic opportunities over and above what we've been reliant upon in the past.

Again, I go back to what I said earlier about my province, Ontario. There's a reason that our production and performance have been at the level they're at, and it's that all levels of government are working together to ensure that this growth continues, especially, as I said earlier, with Canada's being the front door to new and emerging markets. There's a reason for that, and it is a matter of all of us working together to that end.

I want to make a final point—and I want to really drill down on this, coming from my former life in municipal government and now here in federal government—about how important it is that we participate in the investments needed within our supply chains and economic corridors with respect to capacity. That's the residual benefit of investments like this. It's not just going to the company. It's

also going to the investments needed to really strengthen the capacity, creating fluidity within our economic corridors.

Mr. Chairman, I leave it at that. What I suggest now is that we simply go to a vote, so we can move on with our business of the day.

The Chair: It's a suggestion I like, and I see no other speakers on the list.

On the amendment...I put it to a vote.

(Amendment negated: nays 7; yeas 4)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: We're back to the motion proposed by Mr. Perkins.

Do any other members wish to speak?

Mr. Perkins, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Perkins: No, it's not on the motion.

The Chair: Well, we are on the main motion. I put it to a vote.

(Motion negated: nays 7; yeas 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I know there are people watching right now and probably tuning in to see what's going on with Bill C-27 as we're talking about this. There has been a bit of what I'll perhaps say is a confused characterization of the status of Bill C-27 by Minister Champagne, with comments in Montreal yesterday where he said the three opposition parties were filibustering Bill C-27. Somebody, perhaps MP Turnbull, should update the minister on the status of this bill.

We've had 10 meetings so far for clause-by-clause, and in the last five meetings, the Liberals have filibustered one amendment. If the minister wants to get up to speed about the status of his bill, he waited a year between introduction and second reading before we even got to second reading in the House, so he delayed it a year, or at least his House leader did.

The Liberals have been filibustering in the last five meetings. It was actually the Liberals who agreed and suggested we delay Bill C-27 and proceed with the credit card study while they sort out their problems with their broken bill and the bad elements of it, particularly the creation of a new Liberal bureaucracy with the tribunal.

In regard to that, the committee needs to send a message directly to the minister that we appreciate neither his lack of knowledge of what's going on at this meeting nor the misrepresentation he is making in the media about our work on Bill C-27.

With that, I will move the following motion:

That, with regard to the committee's ongoing study of Bill C-27, and given that Minister Champagne has accused opposition parties of slowing down consideration of the bill, but given that:

(i) the minister delayed consideration of the bill for a year by leaving it on the Order Paper, preventing its consideration in second reading; and

(ii) Liberal members of the industry committee have continually filibustered consideration of the bill for five out of the 10 meetings held on clause-by-clause, to prevent the passage of amendments recommended by the Privacy Commissioner;

the committee therefore express its disagreement with Minister Champagne's comments in Montreal yesterday and order the clerk of the committee to draft a letter to the minister requesting that his members stop their filibuster of Bill C-27.

● (0945)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Has the motion been sent to all committee members?

[English]

I'm not sure if it has been sent to members, and no notice was given, but technically we are on Bill C-27 in this meeting, so I will allow it.

[Translation]

Next up will be Mr. Garon and Mr. Masse.

Mr. Garon, the floor is yours.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank my colleague for moving this motion. We're waiting for it in both official languages so that we can look at it in detail, because it was read quickly.

In Bill C-27, it's hard to know who's blocking what. It's blocking on all sides for a variety of reasons. I listened to Mr. Perkins read his motion. It must be said that it contains nothing but facts. It's true that this bill was inadequate, that it was the subject of numerous government amendments, and that it complicated matters. It's also true that this bill dates back to 2022, that it's taking a long time to study, and so on.

At the same time, I think we need to work in a spirit of co-operation. We don't know how much longer Parliament will last, but we do know that, among the elements addressed in Bill C-27, the first part on personal information is important. I'm still hopeful that we'll find a way forward.

Since we're on CPC-9, we can speak to it. There was the famous tribunal issue. As we said here in committee—it's no secret—we're more or less in agreement on the creation of the new tribunal, and we were prepared to find alternatives.

For the Conservatives, CPC-9 is a good amendment. They did what they could. We understand that the Liberals don't want to give the commissioner all the powers, but there is a way forward without the tribunal. However, it seems possible to me that the minister or the department felt a kind of rigidity, which made the parliamentary secretary's task almost impossible. When you ask the parliamentary secretary to create a tribunal on which the three opposition parties in a minority Parliament disagree, you find yourself unable to do so.

I understand that there are filibusters on both sides. By the way, Mr. Chair, even though the topic at hand was electric vehicles, what we faced today is in many ways a filibuster against Bill C-27. We still sent the witnesses home.

It's important to tell the truth. If CBC is reporting hockey scores, are we going to do a study on those scores? We've arrived at this type of argument to postpone the study, and the Conservatives seem to agree. I just want to confirm that I'm not moving a motion.

Obviously, there are facts. I think that the minister needs to keep a certain reserve, and he knows that when it comes to the first part and the way forward, everyone is talking to each other, everyone is being constructive. This is true in the case of my colleague Mr. Perkins and his cronies. It's also true in the case of the parliamentary secretary and Mr. Masse.

I also think that, if the minister wants to make things easier for us, he needs to keep a certain reserve in public. We no longer know where the blockage is coming from. It's everybody's fault and nobody's fault at the same time.

We'll look at the text of the motion to see if we adopt it. If the minister is listening, I ask him to appeal for calm, to trust the committee, his parliamentary secretary and the discussions that will lead us to find this path forward.

● (0950)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go to Mr. Masse.

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse: I haven't heard or seen the media reports yet, but I believe that what Mr. Perkins has expressed is possibly true, because it's been out there before.

I see this as another part of an unfortunate decline in Parliament here. Here you have a committee that's come back. It struggled through a couple of controversial elements that had been proposed. We have basically a toxic House of Commons, which I haven't seen in my 20-plus years. We have a toxic environment outside the House of Commons as well, which I haven't seen in my 20-plus years here.

Now, as we're trying to broker a potential solution for an issue that has seized the committee, we have.... You can use the word filibuster or you can say it's extensive questioning of repeated measures—whatever you want to do—but it's true that the government side has been delaying in terms of what it wants to do here.

Then we came back, and I thought it was helpful to have the government say it was willing to put something aside to do a study, and that it'd come back with something that maybe we'd be able to deal with. I thought that was actually one of the more positive things I've seen here.

I don't know whether this is going to pass or whether we'll get to it today or not. I would still like to see the media reports, because I hate to respond without seeing the media report myself. That's my only concern in this: I haven't seen it. I have no reason to not believe Mr. Perkins on this, and I'm not saying that, but I want to make sure that the media reported it correctly. That's more the question that I would have. He has been fast and loose on this before—I've seen it in the House of Commons before—in responding by blaming others for where we're at.

Perhaps this might be another moment that will self-correct to where we need to get to. If we're actually going to save all the work that we've done on the privacy element of this bill, I'm not sure whether we can legitimately get to the AI stuff. I've said that a number of different times. Even if we wanted to get to that second part of the bill, it's probably logistically not even possible, if the Parliament went its whole length to get through the Senate, given what the Senate is going to do with this bill.

The privacy elements, with all of the work that we've done, all the money that we spent and all the different things we've gone through, has legitimate life and has legitimate value for Canadian citizens. Whatever happens after this Parliament, it probably will be a benefit for whatever government comes into place or whatever opposition comes into place, because they're good measures. If we all agree on them, we're at least going to leave something so that the next Parliament—whenever it comes and whoever is in it—is not going to have to deal with it and can get to other issues that are important to Canadians.

I'm not sure I want to vote on this today. I'm struggling with that in terms of making sure that the media report.... I've seen in the past that there are media reports about something that don't always reflect what has been conveyed.

I actually appreciate this being raised in the sense that, hopefully, this will end the nonsense and we can get to a genuine conclusion on the components that we really think there's some genuine agreement on with regard to the Privacy Commissioner and the tribunal, which is really the major blocking point. I think there are a few other things, but it's more about coming to grips with those.

I'll leave it there. It's just disappointing to me, because here, when you think you actually have something done, we have another scuttling of the committee, in some respects, to where we really could be going.

The Chair: Mr. Masse, you're not moving to adjourn debate, are you?

Mr. Brian Masse: No, I don't want to do that to my colleagues.

I prefer not to deal with this today until I see the report, but I'm not sure where my colleagues are.

I personally don't like to shut down debate unless I have to. I appreciate bringing it back, but again I haven't seen the report. I haven't seen Mr. Perkins's motion. It's not his fault. He's able to do that. I haven't seen any of those things. Those are the challenges I have in front of me at the moment with regard to it.

I don't want to adjourn debate, because I think there are other colleagues on the list. I hate to shut down debate without consensus from others.

• (0955)

The Chair: I'm not sure about the order, because sometimes I don't look to my right enough.

I have MP Turnbull, Mr. Garon and Madam Rempel Garner, but I'm not sure what the order is.

Can we go like this?

Mr. Rick Perkins: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: Yes, the motion has been sent around.

MP Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you, Chair.

I'll say, briefly, that I've tried to operate in good faith in relation to Bill C-27. We've methodically worked through quite a number of debates, and I think that was productive. I believe the bill has been strengthened through our work together on many components as we moved up to the tribunal.

Certainly, we've reached an impasse. However, by no means would I consider my interactions with officials on this committee, the deep debate, the questions we asked them, the clarification they provided us or the differing perspectives we had on the tribunal.... I take issue with that being called a “filibuster”. It was not a filibuster. It was me, the Conservatives and all the other members of this committee asking the officials for clarity. Yes, we disagreed and had some vigorous debate. However, again, I take issue with that being characterized as a filibuster. I want to put that out there.

The other thing is this: I think the minister is saying publicly that he's advocating for us to continue our work on Bill C-27. We recently said, “Okay, we're at an impasse on the tribunal. Let's take a pause. Let's do another study in the interim and have productive negotiations and conversations behind the scenes to try to work out our differences and find a path forward on Bill C-27.” We all agree that this piece of legislation is paramount to Canada's interests. It's in the public interest for us to have new, reformed legislation on privacy and artificial intelligence.

I don't think this is productive. The committee writing a letter of this kind doesn't seem, to me, to be at all helpful in terms of moving us forward. I'm looking to help us move forward—all parties collaborating to try to work out a path forward on Bill C-27.

That's where I stand. I think this is something we should take up in a future meeting if members choose to do so.

I will move to adjourn debate on this.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Turnbull has moved to adjourn debate. It's a dilatory motion, so it calls for a vote right away.

I will ask for the vote, Madam Clerk.

(Motion negated: nays 6; yeas 5)

The Chair: We will go back to our list.

I'll go to Madame Rempel Garner, because she hasn't spoken yet, then Monsieur Garon.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: To address my colleague Mr. Masse's concern, which is reasonable, I'll direct the committee's attention to an article in *La Presse* that was published yesterday. It's an article specifically on this issue. With great apologies to my colleagues from Quebec, I won't make you listen to my anglicized French. Thanks, Dad.

This is my best translation into English: "I deplore the fact that the opposition parties, for over a year, have done everything possible to slow the legislative process. However, now I think we have to put partisanship aside and think about the interests of our innovators, businesses and citizens," said François-Philippe Champagne in a press scrum on the sidelines of an event at the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations on Wednesday afternoon.

To alleviate my colleague's concern, this is something that has now been reported by one of the biggest media outlets in Quebec. I mean, we have the parliamentary secretary, any time we move a motion, saying, "Oh, well, colleagues can just use their time when the minister comes for an hour to address these concerns." Then he's out there casting aspersions on the work happening in this committee. When he's quoted as saying, "Now...we have to put partisanship aside," I don't think.... Well, he shouldn't have taken a partisan dig at the work of this committee if he wants it to be productive. I think that was unfortunate.

I support my colleague's motion.

Thank you.

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Garon, you now have the floor.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Chair, I can assure you that I didn't vote against adjournment because I was having too much fun, obviously. I voted against the motion because I think that if we end the meeting now, we'll start talking about it again the next time. In other words, we won't be done with it. What I'm about to say is a bit ironic, but I don't think we have a better use of our time for the next 15 minutes.

Since everyone is blocked at one point or another, myself and others, voluntarily or involuntarily, directly or indirectly, we are going to have to vote on amendments and subamendments to the motion. We'll ask ourselves who's to blame, and say that the Conservatives and the minister did this or that.

I'd like to thank my colleague Ms. Rempel Garner for her reading. I'll take her at her word, of course. I think that in this case, the

source of the problem is that the minister publicly meddled in the committee's affairs and that what he said was not in line with the committee's conversations.

Personally, I would make the following suggestion. In fact, I talked about it informally with Mr. Perkins.

Rather than adopt this motion and spend two hours discussing the amendments and subamendments, I propose that we drop the motion and ask the clerk to write a letter to the minister urging him to be more careful in his public statements about the committee's work.

The Chair: It's an interesting suggestion, but I think it would be more appropriate if the letter came from me, as chair of the committee, rather than from the clerk.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: With all due respect, Mr. Chair, [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

I was obviously referring to you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: That's perfect.

It's not really an amendment to the motion. It's a suggestion for a way forward, but I don't know if Mr. Perkins—

[*English*]

Mr. Perkins, you would remove your motion.

The Chair: With unanimous consent. Do I have consent from the Liberals? Yes.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Yes, you do, Chair.

The Chair: I will draft the letter and send it shortly, probably by tomorrow.

Go ahead, Madame Rempel Garner.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Thank you, Chair.

Just so that it's clear that we are referencing facts, could the letter also include a reference to the article in *La Presse* as well?

Mr. Brian Masse: That's fair.

The Chair: That's fair? Okay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garon, thank you for your constructive contribution to getting us out of this impasse.

Unless someone wants to move another motion—I'm looking at Mr. Perkins out of the corner of my eye—I'm going to end the meeting. It's ending on time and on budget.

The meeting is adjourned.

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