



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

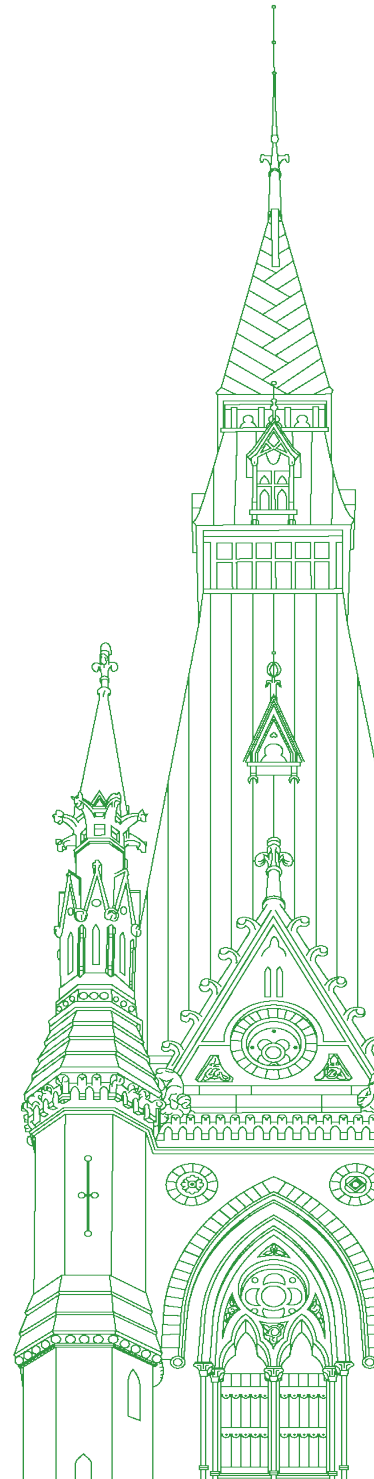
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 124

Tuesday, September 24, 2024



Chair: Mr. Robert Morrissey

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Committee members, welcome again this morning.

Welcome to Madame Gladu, who is joining us this morning for today's meeting.

The clerk has advised me that all of the virtual witnesses have been sound-tested, and they have been approved.

We have a quorum.

Welcome to meeting number 124 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to House of Commons rules.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): There's no interpretation, Chair.

[English]

The Chair: There's no translation.

How about now? The translators are giving me the thumbs-up.

[Translation]

Ms. Chabot, is it working now?

[English]

You have to be careful with the button you press.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): They're far too complicated.

The Chair: Yes, I agree. Anyhow, I've been given a quick crash course on how to use the mics.

Is it off again?

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Perhaps it's a problem with interpretation.

[English]

The Chair: We'll suspend for a moment while this is clarified.

• (1100)

(Pause)

• (1110)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

Thank you, committee members. We got the translation worked out.

Is that right, Madame Chabot?

Ms. Louise Chabot: Life is good.

The Chair: Good.

As I was indicating, today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. According to House of Commons procedures, witnesses and members can appear virtually. Today all the members are in the room. We have witnesses who are appearing virtually.

We have a couple of rules. You can choose to speak in the official language of your choice. In the room, interpretation services are available through the mics. If you're appearing virtually, please click on the globe icon at the bottom of your screen and choose the official language of your choice. If there is an interruption in translation, please get my attention by raising your hand in the room or by using the "raise hand" icon for those appearing virtually, and we'll suspend while it is being corrected.

I would remind all members to wait until I recognize them before speaking. Again, to get my attention, simply raise your hand or use the "raise hand" icon.

I also want to remind members, with regard to all their devices, to please turn off any alarms that could go off routinely. There was an incident at our last meeting. This is for the protection of the interpreters. As well, please refrain from tapping on the microphone boom. It does cause sound issues for the interpreters, and we do not want to do that.

Before we go to the witnesses, I want to clarify something. At the conclusion of Tuesday's meeting, Ms. Zarrillo moved a motion at committee. The meeting adjourned before there was a clear direction on that particular motion.

I want to advise members on the motion that was moved by Ms. Zarrillo. There is a procedure for that, given that the motion that was introduced without 48 hours' notice was on the subject matter that the committee was studying, but the precedent on that is that it must be rather general. My interpretation was that the study was on unionized wages in general, in a broad category, versus non-unionized. The motion addressed a change to a specific item. Therefore, I would rule it as non-admissible at that time. Given that, the motion has now been on for 48 hours, so Ms. Zarrillo would have the ability to move it as she chooses.

I raise that because I just want to advise members that I will continue with that precedent decision on motions that may be introduced without a 48 hours' notice on a related study, given the fact that it doesn't kill the motion. The 48-hour rule is the one that's been accepted and used, and that's the one that will take priority.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, February 26, 2024, the committee resumes its study on compensation disparities between unionized and non-unionized workers in Canada.

I would now like to welcome the witnesses. We have Tristen Wybou, executive vice-president of the BC General Employees' Union, by video conference. From the Canadian Labour Congress, we have Bea Bruske, president, and D.T. Cochrane, senior economist, by video conference. From the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers—District 140, we have Dan Janssen, general chairperson, who is with us in the room. From UA Local 663, we have Scott Archer, business agent.

We'll begin with Ms. Bruske.

Ms. Bruske, you have up to five minutes. The floor is yours, please.

Ms. Bea Bruske (President, Canadian Labour Congress): Thank you so much.

Greetings and good morning, Chair and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Bea Bruske, and I am the president of the Canadian Labour Congress.

The CLC is the country's largest central labour body, bringing together more than 50 national and international unions. We represent more than three million working people in Canada.

The CLC will be providing a detailed written submission in the days ahead, but for the moment, here are my comments.

I've been a trade unionist my entire adult life, and I know from direct experience that unionized workers enjoy more rights, higher wages and better benefits, but the goal of unions is the advancement of all workers through a strong labour movement and through high union density. By forming unions and bargaining collectively, unions reduce the power imbalance in the workplace and in the broader economy. On their own, most workers are at a huge power disadvantage with their employer, but when they join together, workers can build solidarity and collective power, and that's the basis from which to negotiate with powerful corporations and employers.

By organizing, unions promote inclusion, equality and security, which reduces division, resentment and political instability. Unions are crucial for advancing rights for women, workers of colour, people living with disabilities, gig workers, migrant workers and other historically disadvantaged workers who have been excluded from accessing these rights. Workers gain effective access to important legal rights through their union and their collective agreement. That includes protection against discrimination in employment, promotion and layoff, and the right to grieve management's arbitrary decisions.

Make no mistake: Formal, statutory rights for workers for things like employment standards laws are vitally important, but too often they are weak, inaccessible and slow to adapt to changing work environments.

Without unions, employers are free to pocket 100% of the gains from productivity or to distribute them solely to shareholders. Unions demand that employers share a portion of productivity gains with workers, and they insist that firms redistribute portions of economic rents. Unions also compress wages within firms, bringing up wages at the bottom faster than compensation for top earners, thereby reducing inequality.

Unions also make work sites safer. A study from the Institute for Work and Health shows that unionized companies in Ontario's construction sector have significantly lower injury rates.

Unions help close wage and employment security gaps for the most precarious workers. For example, one in five early career workers is in a temporary position, but among these young temporary workers, those in the union earn 31% more per hour than their non-unionized counterparts.

Racialized workers face more challenges in the labour market. However, researchers with the Canadian Centre for Future Work found that the incomes of racialized workers in the union are more than \$3,200 higher per year.

Regardless of whether they're employed in the private sector or the public sector, unionized workers are much more likely to have disability insurance, extended health coverage, maternity and parental leave top-ups and other benefits. Statistics Canada recently found that four in five unionized workers have access to a workplace pension, while just 36% of non-unionized workers do.

Unions lift wages and conditions for unionized employees, but also for non-unionized workers, and they do so through the “union threat” effect. Non-union employers commonly match the terms and conditions negotiated in unionized plants in a bid to fend off organizing drives and to stay non-union. Non-union employers match unionized employers to reduce recruitment and retention pressures that come from inferior wages and conditions.

Unions also work to generalize gains won through collective bargaining to the broader workforce. Paid sick leave and paid leave time for victims of domestic violence are very good recent examples. Before being enshrined in legislation, these protections were already negotiated in many collective agreements. Unions demand paid sick leave, paid domestic violence leave and affordable, high-quality child care for all workers in every province and territory, and we are still fighting that fight.

We know that unions don't benefit just members. The wages and benefits that unions negotiate strengthen local economies and fund high-quality public services. Unions are the leading providers of skills training and vocational education in Canada as well.

Internationally, countries with strong labour movements have greater wage equality and stronger social programs and public services. In Canada, more workers than ever want to access unions. We need all governments to remove barriers standing in the way of workers who want to access being part of a union. After all, the freedom to form unions and engage in collective bargaining is a charter right in Canada and is protected under international law.

Thank you so much. I look forward to your questions.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Bruske.

Mr. Janssen, please go ahead for five minutes or less.

Mr. Dan Janssen (General Chairperson, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers - District 140): I would like to thank this committee for the opportunity to share my experiences as an airport worker on the need for better protections for workers subject to the RFP or request for proposals procurement process, referred to as contract flipping, and the need for living wages in aviation.

My name is Dan Janssen, general chairperson with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. The IAMAW represents 40,000 workers in Canada. Our airport members perform work at Air Canada, WestJet, Air Transat, Swissport, Menzies, and many other smaller service providers.

I'm a 24-year Air Canada employee, working below the wing. I got involved in my union after speaking up about safety issues at Toronto Pearson. I quickly realized that reporting safety issues and addressing them in a workplace as large as Pearson was very empowering.

I've been involved in the labour movement at Pearson for 13 years. I am a former co-leader of the Toronto airport workers council. I co-founded the Toronto Pearson worker health and safety forum, a groundbreaking workplace-wide safety committee. This safety model is being shared with other airports around the world by both the GTAA and the International Transport Workers' Federa-

tion. I've received an Eye on Safety award from the airport authority for improving safety culture, and I was involved with “\$15 and fairness”, which helped 1.5 million workers when the Ontario minimum wage jumped to \$14 per hour.

Aviation is a high union density sector, which has a positive effect on all workers, although workers employed by many service providers earn wages only slightly above or at minimum wage. Unionized workers enjoy the protections and values of having a contract in place. For non-union workers, wages may be comparable; however, some employers deduct the costs of benefits and parking, impacting their overall earnings.

One of my senior stewards, Francis, has worked for two decades at Pearson, providing wheelchair service to passengers. Because of contract flipping, he's had multiple employers and has had to start all over again each time the contract changed hands, except for the last time. That contract was awarded effective September 1, 2019, the same day successorship rights came into effect in the code. For the first time, Francis kept his 2015 seniority date and was able to make gains based on a portion of his previous experience.

There is a contract flip happening at Pearson right now. The GTAA has a tender out for baggage-handling work performed by IAMAW members at TBH services. This contract expires 28 days from today's date, on October 22, 2024, and there has been no confirmation about the successful bidder. Imagine not knowing whether, in 28 days, you will be working with your current employer or a new employer, or whether you will even have a job moving forward. TBH workers have expressed frustration with not knowing what will happen. Workers have literally broken down in my office due to the emotional toll the situation is causing.

The lack of a proper notice period is concerning and should be addressed by legislating that the RFP process provides no less than a 16-week requirement for notice of the successful bidder. This would align the timelines with the group termination provisions of the code.

MP Alexandre Boulerice's private member's bill, Bill C-330, would also be impactful. This would ensure that workers maintain the same collective agreement and union whether or not the employer changes. These protections should be enacted quickly by supporting this bill and passing it during the current session of the House. For TBH workers, whose bargaining agreement expires on October 31, Bill C-330 would provide peace of mind, knowing that their CBA is protected and their union will remain in place.

The GTAA released the Pearson standard in April 2023. Section 2.20.2 states:

Ensure that their employees have access to a safe working environment and earn a fair wage that allows them to afford adequate shelter, food, and other necessities.

Unfortunately, many service contract workers earning low wages struggle to afford the necessities.

The IAMAW is pushing for a living wage for all airport workers. A change.org living wage petition started by an IAMAW representative has nearly 9,900 signatures. I have an active House of Commons petition, e-5050, calling for an airport living wage. It is my understanding that the GTAA is lobbying the labour program and Transport Canada for an airport minimum wage. Airport workers deserve fair wages. Their work is essential to the safe operation of Canada's aviation transportation sector. They deserve a better minimum standard.

In conclusion, I am seeking help for my co-workers. Bill C-330 could pass in this session of the House. Legislation for an RFP notice period should align with the group termination provisions, and the minimum standard should be no less than living wages for all airport workers.

● (1120)

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Janssen.

Mr. Archer, go ahead for five minutes.

Mr. Scott Archer (Business Agent, UA Local 663): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, committee members.

I'm Scott Archer, business agent of UA Local 663, the pipefitters, plumbers and welders union in Sarnia, Ontario. I'm appearing today in place of my boss, friend and mentor, Brother Kayle McDonald, who is our business manager at Local 663. He is, regrettably, in the U.S. at present for a prior engagement, and not able to attend.

I'm here to represent our nearly 1,700 local members and the roughly 3,500 family members who depend upon them to provide a comfortable, middle-class lifestyle. Additionally, we're part of the UA's Canadian membership, which is 53,000 strong. There are 370,000 members across North America.

To start, I'd like to express our thanks for being invited to speak here today and for being afforded the opportunity to have our voices heard.

First, I'd like to speak to the issue of wage disparity between union and non-union workers in this province. Unions, as you

know, have long been the champion of the underdog and the source of a higher quality of life for working-class families.

This is not some new, mysterious process. It's achieved the same way it has been since the 1800s, and since the landmark Oshawa General Motors union movement of 1937, which was in fact spurred by the Sarnia Holmes Foundry labour movement two weeks prior to that. It's achieved through the strength of fair bargaining made possible by unions, with many individuals coming together to collectively forge a stronger bargaining position as a cohesive group. It allows the working man a more level playing field to negotiate things that society now takes for granted, such as a fair wage, safer working conditions and a 40-hour workweek. These advances in human rights would never have been possible for the individual worker were it not for their union brothers and sisters coming together to make it happen. Those stickers you see on our hard hats are absolutely true: "Unions: The people who brought you the weekend".

What appears at first glance to be a fairly impressive wage package is, in fact, a considerably larger amount than what the union worker takes home at the end of each week. A sizable percentage of union wages actually goes to support and protect our families, in the form of weekly contributions to things like medical and dental benefits, carefully curated pension plans and death benefits for our spouses and families. These are all things that we have worked hard to develop and nurture in the interest of keeping our loved ones safe, healthy and financially secure during hard times.

It's been proven time and time again that unions also serve a greater purpose to society in general by motivating non-union employers to provide safer, better working conditions, raise the prevailing wage as non-union employers strive to attract employees by providing wages that are competitive with the union workforce, and drive non-union employers to initiate contribution matching-style retirement plans, whereby the employer matches a percentage of the monies put into an RRSP by the worker. This is still a far cry from union pension plans, but it is an attempt by some employers to remain competitive in the labour market.

In reality, unions really have done the heavy lifting that has provided an enhanced quality of life for nearly everyone in our society through a trickle-down effect.

If time allows today, there are a few other key issues impacting our workforce that I'd like to bring to the committee's attention as well.

This past summer, UA Local 663 in Sarnia had nearly 300 members on our out-of-work list. These highly trained welders, steamfitters, plumbers and apprentices were unable to procure employment, while one of the most heavily government-subsidized projects in history employed temporary foreign workers just down the road at the Stellantis battery plant in Windsor. We encourage both the federal and provincial governments to continue supporting these types of projects, which will ensure that Canadian energy needs are met in the future. However, they must come with the requirement of Canadian workers building these projects. We would also encourage project labour agreements or, at the very least, prevailing wage policies to ensure that these massive government investments equate to good-paying jobs for Canadian families.

I can't stress enough the importance of UTIP grants—the union training and innovation program—which allow us to improve and continue our union training programs. These are programs that allow us to continue to supply the most highly trained workforce in Canada. Expanding these grants to include bricks and mortar investment would also allow building trades unions to increase much-needed training space and ensure the continued success of our training programs well into the future. When local unions are investing in the future of their members by building, renovating or expanding their training centres, we often run into issues with financing these projects through private sector banks. The Government of Canada could also offer financing options for these projects, streamlining the construction process and putting more highly skilled workers on construction projects faster.

• (1125)

My final concern to bring forward to you today is the need for government support for emissions reduction projects in the petrochemical industry. While we all want to combat climate change, we need to ensure that the government supports not only new construction but also emissions reduction projects in existing facilities. The petrochemical sites of Sarnia-Lambton can continue to secure the energy needs of Ontario and beyond. However, government support is needed to ensure that the client owners of these sites invest in their assets in Ontario, instead of closing them down, and that emissions reduction goals are set on realistic and workable timelines with government support.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I owe everything that my family and I have to being a union member—every family vacation we've ever taken, every memory of my children's smiles on Christmas morning, the ability to care for them in an adequate manner and provide them with a comfortable home in a safe neighbourhood, where they could grow and flourish and eventually raise children of their own. You can see us in February about that last one—my wife and I are very excited about being first-time grandparents.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee members, for your time today. I look forward to answering any questions or providing any insight that I can.

• (1130)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Archer.

Now to conclude, Mr. Wybou, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Tristen Wybou (Executive Vice-President, British Columbia General Employees' Union): Thank you for having me here today.

I just want to take a moment to very quickly introduce myself. I will translate right after.

[Witness spoke in Sm'algyax and provided the following text:]

Tristen di waayu, Ts'msyenu, G_a_nhada di pdeegn ada Kxeen di wil 'waatgu.

[Witness provided the following translation:]

My name is Tristen. I'm Ts'msyen, and my clan is the Raven. I come from a small town up north here in B.C. called Prince Rupert.

[English]

I was thinking about what to say here for quite a while, and all I ended up preparing was a couple of speaker notes. The thing that sat in my notepad for the longest time was simply to remember who was really, truly a friend and what was there when you needed it. That has been my experience as a union member.

I started as a councillor in a BCGEU-certified job when I was quite young. At that time, I was still being granted the patience and the grace to learn things as I was getting going, to be introduced as a new union member, to join the local executive and to eventually get involved with my labour council. During all of that, in the background were many colleagues I hadn't yet met who fought for things like a low-wage redress, which significantly supported my own income at a time when I greatly needed it as I was going through things like medical transition and mental health concerns resulting from a long series of intergenerational traumas in my community and in my family and home.

What I learned from much of that experience back then was that the union is where the people who look out for you are. It's where folks invite you to a barbecue. It's the place where people come and help you pack up when you decide you need to move at the last minute and think you can do it entirely by yourself. I enjoyed much of my experience then learning that, as I was growing and adjusting, there were so many people fighting alongside me for the things that I needed to get through when I was young and new and fresh to start and that I did not know would be as important as I know them now.

I later ended up moving down to the Lower Mainland, where I live now, and I unionized my work site down here for a small non-profit. Coming in, I knew at that point already that my livelihood was meant to come from a unionized work site and that this is where I would receive gainful employment. As someone with disability, it's imperative to me that my job security is protected, that there are anti-discrimination policies in place and that I have a say in the structure of the conditions around my work.

We unionized to lock in much of the compensation that we already had, knowing that we wanted people doing equal work, out of the gate, as soon as they came in, to receive equal pay and benefits. We wanted to address wage parity. We had means of making sure our voices were properly heard when doing the work that impacted other communities, and we represented ourselves with doing the work that we knew we needed. Ultimately, however, what we truly came to together, upon coming down here, was realizing that the folks you organize with are the people who extend beyond just a contract.

Unionism is the collective bargaining regime. It is coming out of the law of contracts and coming into something where you have a little bit more equal say in power, but it's also about working to see your communities thrive, smile and thrive. It's those whose labour upholds everything, and yet they find themselves still at the mercy of their paycheck at the end of each couple of weeks.

Worker power has the ability to secure equal pay for equal work. Worker power and solidarity have the strength to carry you forward when you need to fight for change so that you can do what matters in a way that's safe, that's accessible, that's informed and that keeps us up with the costs of what it truly takes to keep you going, whether that's spiritual, emotional, financial or physical.

I want to leave it there and keep it short and sweet. I'm so grateful for the other witnesses on this panel saying so much of what I had percolating in my head about the way in which unions can stand against things like two-tiering and the way in which we can stand and protect our fellow members against things like contract flipping. There are so many important things that have come to benefit all of us, unionized or not, as a rising tide raises all ships alongside it.

What I ultimately would like to impart is the knowledge that, as one big union all together, people, as workers, have the power to invoke change and make sure that all of us get home from work safely at the end of the day and keep it so that one job is enough.

Thank you.

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wybou, for your presentation.

Just before we begin, there's only one time slot for questioning today, so we'll go directly to one o'clock.

We'll follow the approved speaking order, beginning with Mr. Seeback for six minutes.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Archer, I want to start a conversation with you.

I'm the proud father of a union son whose life got immeasurably better when he started working for a company that was unionized, so I agree with everything you say about how unions make working conditions better.

You mentioned the Stellantis battery plant and some of the challenges happening with employment. Yes, unions provide better wages, except when government policy ends up losing union jobs. Then there are no wages, so it's not actually a better wage. Policy has so much of an implication on that.

One of the things I heard is that the lack of unions at the table when those large government investments were negotiated for those plants has led to the conditions where there are, in fact, workers coming from other countries to perform the work that our skilled union members could do. I wonder if you could speak about how your being at the table matters, and whether you raised these concerns with the government.

Mr. Scott Archer: Thank you.

I believe it was more of an issue of us being promised one thing and something else materializing.

There ended up being a lot of pipe showing up on site that we were told came from Korea, but the paint on it was still wet. There is a lot of shifty business going on with that employer. It's quite frustrating. That project was funded by such a massive amount of taxpayer dollars, and we had the old switcheroo pulled on us, for lack of a better term.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: That resulted, obviously, in lost work opportunities for members of your union and others, I suspect.

Mr. Scott Archer: I would say so, certainly.

We had, as I said earlier, roughly 300 members on our out-of-work list. A lot of people were looking forward to that job being a bit of a financial saviour for them—timing being what it was. However, it did not pan out or amount to that, as it could have and should have.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: One other thing I hear so often when I travel and meet with unions all across the country is that there is a need for apprentices and funding for apprentices.

Now, there is a massive amount of taxpayer dollars going to these plants. Were any of those taxpayer dollars tied to ensuring there would be opportunities for apprentices at these plants? If not, do you think this is something the government should be doing?

Mr. Scott Archer: I know a few of our local contractors had quite a few apprentices on site, but I couldn't comment with much accuracy, to be honest with you, on the ratio of apprentices there, the ratio of our local people to people from other jurisdictions.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: If they're putting that amount of money in, shouldn't the government say the company has to pay for a certain number of apprentices to be on the job to get that training?

• (1140)

Mr. Scott Archer: Certainly.

We normally operate with a given ratio of apprentices to journeymen. We try to stick to that, because the whole root of the apprenticeship program is learning on the job. It's important to be on a job in order to learn.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Dan, I want to quickly switch to you and talk about the issue of contract flipping. It's very interesting, and it's great to see you again in order to talk about the issue of contracts.

One thing I want to say is this. You talked about Mr. Boulrice's private member's bill. Unfortunately, it's not before the House of Commons. It won't be tabled for second reading until sometime in the spring session. He has seven other private member's bills that have been put forward, so we don't even know whether this bill is going to be the one he moves forward with. There's very little chance of it being passed in this Parliament.

One of the things on contract flipping that I looked at is this: Section 47.3 of the Canada Labour Code eliminated contract flipping for those in the security aspect of being at the airport. It says in there that the Minister of Labour, on a recommendation to the Governor in Council, can add other areas to that. The government could have done this seven years ago. In fact, the NDP government... They were part of that. They could have required it to be done, simply, by OIC.

Do you think that would be a great way to get it done?

The Chair: Do you have a point of order, Madame Zarrillo?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Yes. I would like the member to correct the inaccurate misinformation about who the government is, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: The member has heard Ms. Zarrillo's comment. I'll have to allow him to deal with that. It's not a point of order.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: It's a point of order. It's misinformation, Mr. Chair, and you should correct the record.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Zarrillo.

Mr. Seeback, please use correct terminology in your question.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: As part of their supply and confidence agreement, they could have told the government that they needed to fix this. They chose not to do that, so it didn't get fixed. Do you think that would be a great way to solve the issue, rather than...? For a private member's bill to go through, it takes a long time. The government could actually, tomorrow, fix it. Would you recommend that the government fix it tomorrow by having the minister make a regulation by Governor in Council?

The Chair: We'll have a short answer because the time is up.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: I have 30 seconds. The interruption didn't count.

Mr. Dan Janssen: Yes, I think the government should be working to fix the issue of contract flipping. It is unfortunate to hear about Bill C-330. That would go a long way to helping groups like TBH Services.

I will say, on section 47.3, that it was something our union advocated strongly for, for our CATSA security members. The language there has been used to help many other airport workers through contract retendering to provide them with equal remuneration and successorship rights, and also as part of section 189.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Janssen.

Thank you, Mr. Seeback.

Mr. Long is next for six minutes.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Good morning to my colleagues.

Thank you to the witnesses for coming in today.

I remember coming home in 1988. I had my first job, at Canada Packers. My salary at that point was \$20,000. I remember coming in the door, talking to my dad and telling him that I made \$20,000. He had this blank look on his face: "You're making \$20,000?" I said, "Yes. Dad, you've worked at a non-unionized place for 40 years, so what do you make?" Dad, at that point, was making \$15,000. I dug into it at that point, and I realized very quickly that although he had a steady job, he had no benefits. He had two weeks' vacation after 40 years, no health plan and no pension plan, nothing. I did some comparison of other plants where he could have worked and quickly realized that he could have made a lot more.

We're doing this study, and I'll read part of the motion: "unionized workers receive more powerful paycheques; the impact of unionization on benefits and pensions; and the reasons behind such disparities". That's what this study is about. We're here to study unionization: why companies that have unions pay better and do better. We always say that union wages set wages for the middle class.

Mr. Archer, my question is for you. I also want to thank you for your comments on the union training and innovation program. We've had some wonderful announcements in my riding of Saint John—Rothesay on UTIP, with the Heat and Frost union, IBEW and others. It's a wonderful program.

I do want to get your thoughts and comments. A Stats Canada labour force survey in 2023 confirmed that unionized workers made an average of \$35.73 per hour in 2023, compared to \$32.60 for workers who weren't unionized. That's a big difference. It's a difference of \$3.13. You're probably not surprised by that, but does that align with your experience and what you've seen?

• (1145)

Mr. Scott Archer: Yes. I'm not surprised in the least by that, depending on whose stats you believe. Some are slightly slanted in one direction or the other, but just a quick google of it last night brought me to wage gaps between 11% and close to 40%, according to some people's stats. I think that's pretty accurate, and our workforce is definitely worth every penny of it, due to, as others have mentioned, the higher level of training.

You can look at our area in southwestern Ontario. We have the best rating for TRIR anywhere in the universe, to my knowledge, in terms of workers not being injured. That's pretty accurate. Having a safety record that's absolutely impeccable is part of it as well.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you.

Witness Wybou, I want to see if you have some comments on that. Is that your experience too? Have you seen that with respect to wage differences between unionized and non-unionized workers?

Mr. Tristen Wybou: Yes, definitely.

Throughout my career, I've worked mostly in community and social services. I've worked at both unionized and non-unionized work sites. A really big thing that makes it imperative for me to be at a unionized work site is some of these differences, not only in wages, but also in things like benefits compensation. That's especially important to me as someone who's at quite a high risk of psychological injury doing the type of work that I do, as well as just physical injury due to my own chronic pain-related disabilities. There are really big differences that I've noticed within the non-profit and community services sector between areas that are unionized and not unionized.

At the work site where I am now, I'm happy to say that we actually started off pretty well. As it was mentioned, we had a work site that wanted to keep up with unionized wages and compensation. Locking that in and getting to bargain higher really helped us quite a lot during that period of inflation throughout 2021 and 2022. It really made a big difference.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you for that.

When I was going door to door in 2015, there wasn't a unionist.... Saint John—Rothesay is a very unionized city. It's a blue-collar town. There wasn't a unionist household that I went to that didn't talk about Bill C-525 and Bill C-377. Obviously, I had to quickly learn what Bill C-525 and Bill C-377 were. To call a spade a spade, they were obviously union-busting bills on redundant and unreasonable reporting, and difficulty forming or joining unions.

Obviously, there was a call for our government to reverse Bill C-377 and Bill C-525, which we did. I'm very proud of that.

My question is for you, Ms. Bruske. Can you just give us some comments and thoughts about Bill C-377 and Bill C-525, and how detrimental they were to unions in Canada?

Thank you.

Ms. Bea Bruske: Thank you for the question.

Both of those bills were egregious attacks on labour, quite frankly.

Bill C-525 made it much more difficult for workers in the federally regulated sector to organize and form a union. As we have all heard already, the pathway to the middle class is having a union card in your back pocket. Making it harder for employees to actually sign that union card and be certified to bargain collectively with their employer.... That bill stood in the way of that.

Bill C-377, of course, was the requirement for unions to do extensive reporting absolutely every time they bought new computers for their office, or every time they had to reimburse a worker based on a health and welfare trust fund claim that worker might have.

• (1150)

The Chair: Thank you.

We've gone over the time. You can follow that thought in another answer.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot for six minutes.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Chair.

Good day, everyone.

I want to thank the witnesses with us today, as well as those who preceded them last week, when we started this study.

Before entering politics, I was a union leader for over 30 years. When this study was proposed, I had my doubts. All the witnesses today are repeating what others have told us: there are advantages to being a union member. This has been amply demonstrated, and no one questions it, except those on the right, who wonder what the point of unions is. In this respect, testimony from today and previously are clear. I don't know if our committee needed a study to bring this to light, but it will be.

Mr. Janssen, when I was just starting out as a Bloc Québécois MP, we were called upon to mobilize on behalf of maintenance employees at the Montreal airport, in a situation where contracts were being overturned. It's a totally unacceptable situation because, in my opinion, it's dismissals in disguise. A new call for contracts is issued, the same people are rehired at an hourly wage cut by \$10 to \$20, and their minimum rights under the collective agreements are not renewed. This was the first battle on this file, and the current government's Minister of Labour was very sensitive to the issue.

Do you believe this kind of practice is an obstacle to freedom of association or unionization?

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Janssen: Thank you for your question, Ms. Chabot.

It can be an obstacle, yes. I believe there's always an opportunity for an airport authority to flip a contract and have it go to a non-union employer. At the end of the day, the rights that those unionized members had under the collective agreement would no longer be there, which would mean that the new employer would be able to change the terms and conditions of employment following the contract flip. Previously, before the equal remuneration rates came into effect, it was considered a race to the bottom. Where employees may have made gains over five to 10 years, once the contract was flipped, they had to start all over again.

Thankfully, we've come a long way, but there is still more work to do. Again, I believe that maintaining the collective agreement and the rights of the union would successfully protect members who are subject to contract flipping.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: I congratulate you on your efforts in this field. The IAMAW's contribution is important, whether in aerospace or aviation. As we know, this field is not always the government's priority. But working conditions often match the importance attached to a given sector of our economy. This is a very important one. So you're fighting on two fronts, and I congratulate you for it.

Ms. Bruske, the Canadian Labour Congress brings together unions from across Canada and Quebec. You bring together major unions. You mentioned all the advantages of unionization, and I agree with you on that. We could even name others.

That said, you also talked about the obstacles to unionization. In Canada, the public sector is highly unionized. On the other hand, we can observe a decline in unionization in the private sector.

Furthermore, one of the important role of unions is also to give a voice to those without one.

Could you tell us about obstacles to unionization that you are seeing?

• (1155)

[*English*]

Ms. Bea Bruske: Thank you for the important question.

It is very difficult for workers to make the decision that they are going to unionize. That is fraught with fear and anxiety about how the process will unravel—

The Chair: Just a moment, please.

Madame Chabot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Chair, there was no interpretation. Can Ms. Bruske please repeat her answer?

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Bruske.

Ms. Bea Bruske: Thank you for the question.

Unionizing is very difficult for workers. It is fraught with anxiety and fear about what the process will do and the disharmony it may cause when employer interference is part of that equation.

Unfortunately, we've seen many regressive governments across the country—provincial and territorial governments—change how workers can unionize by requiring more than a simple signing of union cards and also requiring an additional step by having a follow-up vote.

When we elect politicians, we ask once for people's voice on that. When we choose to become unionized, it's often a two-step process across this country, where workers have to make the decision to, first, sign a union card, and then, after a certain period of time, to go and vote. That gives the employer many opportunities to run interference and to provide all kinds of inappropriate context and feedback to those workers, creating a lot of fear and division within that workplace while this process is under way. That is what we see time and time again.

What it's going to take to get more workers unionized is good legislative action requiring simply the signature of a union card and having a majority of those workers choose to actually gain a bargaining opportunity with their employer.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[*English*]

I had stopped the clock while the interpretation issue was corrected.

Ms. Zarrillo, you have six minutes, please.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Chair.

I wanted to ask witness Tristen Wybou my first question.

You introduced the reality of persons with disabilities and how they experience unionized versus non-unionized work environments. I wonder if you wouldn't mind just sharing what benefits led you to adopt the stance, which I see you've openly stated, to not work in a non-union environment after working in one. Can you share why you adopted this stance in the frame of a person with disabilities?

Mr. Tristen Wybou: Definitely. Thank you for the question, because I believe this is a really important one. Rates of disability in Canada are fairly high, and barriers to employment are even higher. The reasons behind my really needing to have a unionized work site are multifactorial. Some of it is securing, say, in benefits packages, the pieces of compensation that support the additional costs I have in my life due to my health care and the wear and tear that my body and brain take from my work.

Some of it is also that we live in a reality and a society that have a lot of ableism and a lot of misconceptions about people with disabilities, which can create further barriers in my work. Sometimes what is really helpful is being able to have not only my other members there to stand alongside me but also access to really good servicing representatives who are able to come in when I need, to process grievances, to join me in joint labour management and to help me in health and safety. These are the sorts of committees I've sat on, and they've also given us the opportunity to bring in ADRs—alternative dispute resolutions—for both indigenous and non-indigenous employees so that people have multiple ways of resolving issues as they come up, and to advocate for accessibility in the work environment.

These are things that I have found to be just not doable within non-unionized environments. Actually, much of the time when I've engaged in a version of my own joint labour management in non-unionized work sites, what I have found is that we might as well put a union in there and make sure that our protections are actually much more sound legally.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you so much for that important testimony as we think about the government looking at employment opportunities, as you said, in this ableist society we live in.

I want to thank every witness today who has shared their personal experiences and stories. It's so important to understand that we're talking about people and how safe work environments affect their daily life.

My next question is for Dan Janssen.

You mentioned that we had a lot of discussion in the last two meetings around contract flipping. We know there are issues around contract flipping. Today you introduced the RFP process. I'm just looking at an article in which you talked about what's happening at Pearson Airport in terms of the RFP documents right now and how there is no language about labour standards or Canadian labour rights and protections. Can you just expand on what changes need to be made to the RFP process in federally regulated industries and work sites?

• (1200)

Mr. Dan Janssen: I believe we can look to the building services act in the province of Ontario. There was a contract flip that happened with the baggage cart-handling team. These workers fell under the building services act and, within the RFP, or the request for proposals procurement process, the laws were all laid out, including the seniority list with the names of employees, so that the new contractor would fully understand their expectations under the Ontario law.

I believe that if we went in that direction, workers would be much better protected, and they would feel comfortable knowing that no matter what happened with the contract retendering process, they would be protected and have their jobs following the contract flip.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you so much for that.

I'm thinking about the employees at Pearson who are under stress and pressure right now, having no real visibility into what their work is going to look like in the next 28 days. Can you just explain to this committee how having a more transparent RFP process or a process like the one you just outlined would help employees like those who are looking at the next 28 days with bated breath?

Mr. Dan Janssen: I've done a lot of work at Pearson discussing improvements to our overall safety culture. I can tell you that when workers are stressed out, when they have anxiety, when they don't know their future, that has an impact on the safety culture, because their minds are not on task.

Having a longer procurement process would allow workers to fully understand what's going to happen with their jobs. I believe that aligning it with the group termination provisions of the code—16 weeks' notice—would go a long way to ensuring that workers understand who their new employer might be. That new employer would also have a long time to get to know those workers prior to the contract changing hands officially and the new employer taking over that working group.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: That's great.

I would just ask witness Bea Bruske if she would also like to make some comments about the RFP and potentially some transparency and notice on RFPs in federally regulated workspaces.

Ms. Bea Bruske: We 100% support what my colleague Dan has already submitted. We think transparency is critically important. Employees deserve to know what their work life is going to look like. Employees deserve to have their protections continue. The processes should be clear that those protections need to continue going into the future regardless of which successful new company is coming in.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Zarrillo and Ms. Bruske.

We'll now go to Mrs. Falk for five minutes.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Thank you very much, Chair.

In response to MP Long's misleading remarks, the Conservative leader has been very clear, and publicly on the record, that a Conservative government will not allow, nor permit to be passed, bills like Bill C-377 and Bill C-525. I just want to make sure that's on the record. I think it's been mentioned more than once in this committee what is actually on public record, and there have been attempts to mislead that.

I come from a union household. My father works in the energy sector. I'm from Saskatchewan in western Canada, so I am very familiar with the benefits that being part of a union has, not only for an individual family but also for the community, including younger kids. I know that my dad's local union, for many years, was giving scholarships to kids going into the trades or whatnot. I think that's a very important aspect to also highlight.

Mr. Archer, I want to congratulate you on becoming a grandparent for the first time. I hear it's more fun. I'm not there yet, but I hear it's more fun. Congratulations.

I do want to focus on some of your opening comments regarding the Stellantis battery plant in Windsor. The Prime Minister's offer of \$44 billion in taxpayer money to a massively profitable corporation didn't even come with a promise of jobs for Canadian workers, or that it would create those jobs. In my opinion, it's a slap in the face to not only Canadian taxpayers but also Canadian workers. I believe we have the skill and the talent to build Canada, to build the things that Canadians want and that Canadians need. When the news of the 900 foreign workers was breaking, we heard excuses from the government that these replacement workers were needed, as they were contributing a specialized skill set that was needed.

From your perspective, do UA Local 663 members and our Canadian labour force have the skills and the specialized knowledge that would fill these roles and that could fill these roles?

• (1205)

Mr. Scott Archer: Mrs. Falk, I'd like to first thank you for your congratulations.

We absolutely have the skilled workers to fill those positions. As I said, my local union specifically had roughly 300 people on the out-of-work list. We are known across North America for our welders and for their skill level.

Some of those people at the Stellantis plant were claimed to be specialized workers. I have some photographs on my phone of some of the welds they did. I have an eight-year-old who's been helping me restore an old truck, and his welding skills are far surpassing anything they did. Some of that was an absolute disgrace. I know it set the project back. Our skilled unionized workers have spent a lot of hours cutting out those garbage welds and replacing them with welds that meet the standard of the TSSA.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: It's not efficient, then, if we're having to redo the work that's been done.

Mr. Scott Archer: That's correct. It's grossly inefficient to have us come back and repair the stuff that was substandard.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Did the government's failure to ensure that the taxpayer-funded jobs were given to Canadians undermine unions?

Mr. Scott Archer: I don't think things ended up going in the direction they were supposed to, that's for sure. I don't really want to jump to one side or the other politically here, but that job did not go in the direction it was supposed to go. We're all pretty disappointed with the outcome.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: What is the direct impact on Canadian workers when jobs like yours, specialized and skilled, are displaced by foreign workers? What is the direct impact on your fellow employees, your brotherhood?

Mr. Scott Archer: We have a lot of members who, due to a shortage of work, were unable to make the minimum requirements for hours worked for EI, things like that. People are concerned about car payments and mortgage payments. It's really impacting people at the family level and their financial security when things like that happen.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you very much.

The Chair: We now go to Mr. Coteau for five minutes.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity.

I want to thank all of our witnesses today. It's been a really good conversation. In fact, the witnesses on the previous occasion were also very valuable. Thank you for being here and speaking on behalf of Canadians, on behalf of organized labour.

I'm a big supporter of unions. When I first got to the Toronto District School Board, in 2003, we were trying to fix a lot of the damage that common-sense Conservatives did in Ontario to the education system. The last time common-sense Conservatives had power in the province, there was a complete dismantling of public education, to such a degree that we saw more than half of the school days gone because of that labour disruption.

We've had members here talk about the leader of the Conservatives' track record on the relationship with organized labour. The fact is that when Bill C-377 and Bill C-525 were brought into the House of Commons by the Conservatives, the leader of the Conser-

vatives voted in favour of those bills. So it's not what he's going to do now; we just need to look at the track record of Conservatives to really understand what may happen in the future.

But here we are today, and the reason we're studying this specific topic is to let parliamentarians know and to let Canadians know that when we put in good legislation to support unions—and I think one witness said, “good legislative action”—it allows us to build a better workforce and increase productivity, but most importantly, it allows for families, for workers, to be protected and to have better-paying jobs. I want to take this opportunity to thank unions for weekends, for holidays, for workplace rules that prevent certain types of injuries, for child labour laws and for pensions. There are so many elements that come from organized labour, and I want to say thank you. I want to be on the record saying thank you for the work that folks do every day to preserve unions.

My big question—and maybe I'll go to you, Mr. Archer—is about what we can do to build on good legislative action in the House of Commons as parliamentarians to better support unions and to make sure, at the end of the day, that we get the legislation right, from all parties, and that we can continue, especially as the economy is changing. We're seeing fewer unionized jobs in certain sectors and a decline in unionized jobs. What can we do to strengthen unions in Canada?

• (1210)

Mr. Scott Archer: Thank you, and you're welcome.

As I mentioned earlier, for something like that Stellantis job, having agreements in writing that Canadian unionized workers are absolutely to be employed on jobs like that going forward is essential, possibly with a PLA. Things like that are essential, because it seems like a bit of a bait-and-switch on that job, to be honest with you.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Can you give us an example where you saw it happening? Conservatives didn't even agree with that type of investment in Ontario. There was a lot of rhetoric in the House of Commons that said that we shouldn't be using tax dollars to invest in projects like that. As the economy changes, we are making more and more investments into the new economy, and it's important that we get it right.

Have you seen an example in Canada of where that type of investment has gone in a positive way to support workers overall? Do you have an example?

Mr. Scott Archer: Yes. I don't really want to get drawn into a discussion about whose sign is going to be in my front yard come election time, but—

Mr. Michael Coteau: You don't have to. We just want good advice from you. That's all. We'll deal with the politics on our side.

Mr. Scott Archer: There's been a lot of work done countrywide that has employed union folks, but the Stellantis one sticks with us the most. It's most recent, and it stings a little bit.

As far as other projects go, with the battery plant coming up in St. Thomas, now is the time to get ahead of it and make sure that things are correctly in place to ensure that Canadian unionized labour is used on something like that. That project, if I recall correctly, is physically covering about five times the real estate of that in Windsor, and the Windsor one is absolutely massive.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you again. I appreciate the answer.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coteau.

[Translation]

Ms. Chabot for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to take advantage of these two and a half minutes to propose a motion, which I duly tabled over 48 hours ago. It too concerns workers, albeit from a different angle. The motion reads as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Committee undertake a study of the situation of workers in the seasonal industry with regard to the inadequacy of the employment insurance program to meet the needs of these workers, who often face job insecurity and financial difficulties for themselves and their families; that the Committee devote 3 meetings, including 2 to hear witnesses—

In short, seasonal workers in the regions or rural regions often have to deal with having no income or employment. This study seeks, then, to examine the situation with regard to employment insurance.

I'm seeking your support.

• (1215)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Chabot.

The motion is in order, and it has been given proper notice.

Is there any discussion on the motion of Madame Chabot?

We have Mr. Fragiskatos.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to keep listening to witness testimony. I don't doubt the sincerity of our colleague. I know that's an important issue for her, but it's a matter that could be taken up in committee business, as well.

With that, Mr. Chair, I move to adjourn debate on the motion.

The Chair: We have a motion to adjourn debate on the motion of Madame Chabot.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 9; nays 2)

The Chair: The motion to adjourn debate has been upheld. We'll return to testimony from witnesses.

Your time is up, Madame Chabot.

Next, we have Ms. Zarrillo, for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's disappointing to see the Liberals and the Conservatives continuing to team up to shut down really important conversations around workers in this country.

I want to thank all of the witnesses today. I appreciate all the outstanding work that all of you do.

I, too, wanted to follow up on a motion that I brought at the last committee meeting, when we heard about the detrimental impact of contract flipping on workers. As I said last time, we as parliamentarians must do what we can to protect workers from contract flipping. We heard about it again today.

Notice has been given, so I move:

That in the opinion of the committee the Canadian Labour Code be amended to close a loophole that annuls existing labour contracts or collective agreements when there is a change of employer for subcontractors working at Canadian airports by implementing amendments outlined in NDP PMB C-330 titled An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (successor rights and obligations—airports), and that the committee report this to the House.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Zarrillo.

You are correct. The motion has received the proper notice for it to be moved.

Now we'll move to discussion on the motion of Ms. Zarrillo.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I still have the floor.

I just want to thank Madame Chabot. For two meetings in a row, Madame Chabot has put forward and made excellent comments about airport workers. I thank the Bloc for the work they've been doing there.

I also want to thank my Conservative colleague for talking about the fact that there are opportunities to have action.

I brought with me today section 47.2. It's not enough. We need to have this in legislation. I hope that all of my colleagues will support this motion and that we will really start looking out for workers in this country where there are loopholes in the code that are not protecting them.

Thanks so much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Zarrillo.

Is there any discussion on the motion?

Mr. Fragiskatos, you had your hand up.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Thank you, Chair.

This could be taken up in committee business. I want to keep listening to witnesses. I think the majority of colleagues feel the same way.

With that, I move to adjourn debate on the motion.

• (1220)

The Chair: We have a motion to adjourn debate on the motion of Ms. Zarrillo.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 9; nays 2)

The Chair: The motion is carried. That means debate is adjourned and your time is up, Ms. Zarrillo.

We'll move to Ms. Gladu for five minutes, please.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

I think my colleague Mr. Coteau is caught in the past. I want to bring him up to date. Ten days ago, the Conservative leader said, "A Common Sense Conservative Government will not introduce or pass bills C-377, C-525 or right to work laws. Period. This commitment will be written in my election platform." That's good news.

I want to start with questioning Scott Archer.

Let me brag a little bit about the trades in Sarnia—Lambton. There are 5,000 skilled trades jobs that are the envy of North America and perhaps the world in terms of their quality, their productivity and their safety performance.

Mr. Archer, you outlined a few of the concerns that you have about threats to receiving ongoing powerful paycheques, like temporary foreign workers and some of the difficulty getting funding for apprenticeships. Are there other things that you think are threatening the health of union jobs in your area?

Mr. Scott Archer: One thing I mentioned was the lack of a government initiative to help with existing plants and their emissions decreases. That's something that could definitely keep a lot of plants open in our area, keep a lot of jobs in our area and keep food on the table for folks. It's not just about expanding; it's about maintaining what you have. Some of these plants work together and serve specific functions to support other refineries. It's a tough loss when one link in the chain goes. It can have an exponential impact instead of linear. It can really have a ripple effect that's quite devastating.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: You may be referring to the actions of Minister Steven Guilbeault to shut down the INEOS facility instead of addressing emissions reduction, which is a technology that was available and could be put in place.

Let's move on to the next question.

Part of compensation for good union jobs is benefits. The government is considering introducing what it calls a universal single-payer pharmacare system. That would mean that everyone would lose the payment system they have now. Most union payment plans—I used to be on the Local 663 one—cover 15,000 medications and other services, whereas the public plans tend to cover only 4,500. Would you be in favour of giving up those hard-fought-for union benefits if the government goes ahead with its plan?

Mr. Scott Archer: I would definitely not be in favour of touching our benefits. We've worked hard for them.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: I would expect to hear similar answers from the Canadian Labour Congress. Would you be in favour of giving up your hard-won benefits for the federal government to manage your critical medications?

Ms. Bea Bruske: I've sat at many bargaining tables, and benefits are hard fought for. Nobody is prepared to give up benefits.

However, it's critically important that we actually gain a national pharmacare plan because, unfortunately, the reality is that while 80% of unionized workers have supplemental health benefits, 56% of non-unionized workers have zero benefits. In order for us to take care of all workers in Canada, we need to make sure we have some universal plans. Those plans can also augment the existing union-negotiated plans, leaving some of the additional money that would be saved by those employers—

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Thank you.

The government is intending to replace your union plans. I just wanted to get on the record that that wasn't a good idea.

Let me talk again about the Stellantis facility and the other battery plants. There's been \$55 billion of taxpayer money put in to create what turns out to be about 3,000 jobs for Canadians. If you do the math on that, you should have just given people the money and they'd never have to work again.

What do you think should be done to ensure that, going forward, all government contracts protect Canadian jobs? We've heard comments from the Stelco workers about not including Chinese steel in Canadian contracts like they do. Would you have any advice, Mr. Archer, for future contracts?

● (1225)

Mr. Scott Archer: Yes, there definitely needs to be verbiage in future contracts that the work needs to be done by Canadian workers. The way it has gone, as we've discussed on the Stellantis job, has been definitely less than optimal.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gladu.

Mr. Fragiskatos, you have five minutes.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for appearing today.

First of all, let's be crystal clear about what pharmacare is from the government's perspective.

In what I have read in the legislation, and in what the government has also said on the matter publicly or privately in discussions that have happened within our caucus, there's been nothing about taking away benefits from anybody. That is not the view of the government. I could go back and talk about how Conservative friends across the aisle wanted to move retirement or OAS eligibility from 65 to 67. That's on record. We know that was a fact.

However, Mr. Chair, I do want to begin my questions with Ms. Bruske.

Ms. Bruske, how critical are union dues for the functioning of unions and members?

Ms. Bea Bruske: It is absolutely critical that unions have the resources to properly represent their members. Things like negotiations, member education, providing those scholarships that one of your colleagues spoke about, those are all things that are funded by union dues. Union officials are democratically elected. Their members have access to all financial information; that is within their purview to review. There are financial committees that review how unions spend their money.

It is critically important for unions to do the work that their members expect of them. We're obligated under provincial and federal legislation in terms of how we represent our members to actually have the resources to do the work that we need to do.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Thank you very much for that.

In light of what you said, I know where you're going with it, but I think it's still important for us to hear this. What is your view with respect to some U.S. states where so-called right-to-work laws are in place that would starve unions of membership dues?

Ms. Bea Bruske: We know that "right to work" means the right to work for less. The reality is that when you do not have the resources to file those grievances, to go to arbitration on a case, to properly negotiate, to get member input and to properly represent your members, you cannot fully do the job of a union. Members having the ability to be free riders, to opt out of paying dues that are, quite frankly, income tax-deductible, is a huge problem in terms of our ability to do our work and to properly build a middle class.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Thank you very much.

Are you familiar with the Conservative Party's official policy document and what it says about right to work?

Ms. Bea Bruske: I am familiar with the policy document. I am familiar that on page 6, and I think page 7, it indicates that the party stands for the opportunity for people to make the decision as to whether or not they want to contribute to their union.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I know Conservative colleagues are anxious to say that Mr. Poilievre has said he would not pursue right-to-work legislation if his party formed government and he became prime minister. However, if that were sincere, then that document, which was updated as recently as 2023, would have been changed. He would have ensured their official policy document made it clear that the Conservative Party of Canada does not believe in right-to-work laws. However, it's quite the contrary, isn't it? Because as you said, Ms. Bruske, on page 6—

Mr. Kyle Seeback: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: There's a point of order.

Clearly state your point of order.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: The member knows very clearly that the Conservative leader cannot alter a policy document and—

An hon. member: That is not a point of order.

The Chair: Just a moment.

That is not a point of order, Mr. Seeback.

Mrs. Gray, do you have a point of order? Clearly state it.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to remind the committee of the purpose of this study. I will read it. It refers to the "compensation disparities between unionized and non-unionized workers in Canada". Stay on topic. It's union wages and workers being out of work.

Thank you very much.

● (1230)

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Gray.

That's a decision I will make as chair. I give quite a bit of latitude to all members when they have their time. I ask all members to respect that.

Mr. Fragiskatos.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: It is a sensitive matter, as we've seen, for Conservative colleagues. However, I'm thrilled Mrs. Gray raised her point of order, because the point about disparities is perfectly on point.

Ms. Bruske, how do right-to-work laws impact pay, ultimately? My understanding is that, if unions are starved of membership dues, they lack the financial resources to carry out, among other things, collective bargaining, which is so central to ensuring good pay for workers.

Am I right in saying that? Is there an issue of disparity with respect to right-to-work laws? Is it relevant?

Ms. Bea Bruske: It's 100% relevant, because the reality is that, in states that have right-to-work laws, the average wage of workers is considerably less than that of their unionized, fully functioning counterparts in legislative areas that do not have right-to-work laws.

We can provide you with reams of data to support that argument.

The Chair: Your time is up.

Mrs. Gray has the floor for five minutes.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here today.

I have a couple of questions for Mr. Archer that are directly related to the topic of the study here today.

You advocated previously calling for the Line 5 pipeline to remain in operation. You called on the Prime Minister to reach out to the American government on behalf of “citizens of Canada, skilled tradespeople, and the families who depend upon the oil and gas industry to provide their livelihood and sustain their quality of life”. In your opening statement today, you talked about a recent point in time when 300 of your members were on an out-of-work list.

My first question for you is this: When it comes to the oil and gas industry, have the choices of the current Liberal government—whether it be killing pipelines like energy east and northern gateway, or restricting the ability to get oil and gas projects approved through unconstitutional red tape like Bill C-69—negatively impacted those tradespeople and workers and their families, who rely on the oil and gas industry for their livelihoods?

Mr. Scott Archer: As you're well aware, the oil industry in this country is currently in quite a slump. I think, honestly, that there needs to be some attention directed to reviving it instead of directing things towards electric vehicles, wind farms and things of that nature, which have proven to be ineffective.

I think the focus should be more on converting existing facilities to hydrogen use and production. Honestly, that is a more realistic path forward for the future. I think that would be money better spent. It would preserve existing Canadian jobs and create some new ones, as well.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you for that.

I want to ask you something on a similar topic.

We know the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources has a just transition plan. From September 20, 2022, it was estimated that this plan would lead to the elimination of 2.7 million jobs in sectors like agriculture, energy, manufacturing, construction and transportation. That's right in the government's own document. I've heard a lot of uncertainty around this, which is incredibly stressful for workers.

What are your thoughts on that?

Mr. Scott Archer: It feels like we've had everything coming at us in the last few years, as you mentioned, with Line 5 and the oil and gas industry in general, and we just seem to be taking hits over and over again, so it's pretty stressful for all of us in the industry. I know I lose a lot of sleep over it. My wife is seated in the gallery behind us here, so you could probably get her opinion on how much sleep I lose.

It's just something that I wish we could move forward with more productively. There are a lot of opportunities that I feel are not being exploited as they should be. This obviously is the greatest country in the world to live in, and we have so much to offer, so I would just like to push some of our strengths more than I currently feel they are being pushed.

• (1235)

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you very much for that. I really appreciate that, and I appreciate the personal aspect as well, because we know that these types of stresses are really hard on families, so thank you very much for sharing that.

The other thing I wanted to ask you on this is about how governments will talk about re-skilling workers. In particular, with this just transition plan, this document talks about re-skilling to other positions, such as janitor as an example, which is an important job and a very respectable job, but may or may not have the same compensation, whether it's union wages or benefits.

I'm wondering if you have seen, with some of this re-skilling, when different positions have been lost and there's a re-skilling of a position, whether it's always comparable. Is it unionized? Is it the same pay? Does it have the same benefits? Are there concerns that this really isn't what might be happening?

The Chair: Mrs. Gray's time has gone well over, so you may be able to answer that on another question.

We'll now move to Mr. Van Bynen for five minutes.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): I think I'll be splitting my time with my colleague, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Collectively you have five minutes.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Right.

My wife was born in Windsor. She had to endure some of the very difficult times when the auto industry was failing, and her family is still there now. They say that Windsor is alive and well and bustling as a result of these investments, so I think we need to put this into a proper perspective, that things are moving along well for Windsor as a result of the government's decision to support the auto industry and the shift in the auto industry.

However, that's not my question.

We did a study here in this committee that talked about artificial intelligence and its impact on the workforce, and it had a number of significant recommendations. With the emerging trends with artificial intelligence, with gig work and remote work, how do you feel that will impact unionization rates, as well as compensation? What do you see would be the role of the union going forward as technology has its impact on the industry?

That question is for Ms. Bruske.

Ms. Bea Bruske: Thank you for that important question.

We certainly have seen significant changes in the workforce over the last number of years with AI, with gig work, with technological changes. The most critical thing for us as union workers is to make sure that we have a seat at the decision-making tables about our future. That means we need to be consulted in a meaningful way when it comes to these changes that we're experiencing in various sectors.

Therefore, I was very heartened to see the Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act recently passed, which actually gives workers a seat at the decision-making tables as we deal with some of the challenges of getting to net zero and moving jobs into a clean economy type of situation.

More specifically, with regard to gig work and AI, we need to look at some legislative priorities in terms of how we manage those particular issues. The definition of what a worker is no longer really fits with the new gig economy that we have. Is that worker in fact employed, or is that worker a freelance person? We haven't caught up in our provincial, territorial and federal governments in terms of how we actually define "workers" and what rights, privileges and benefits they actually have under existing legislation, so that has to be a very high priority for us to ensure that those workers also have a powerful paycheck.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Thank you.

I'll turn it to Mr. Collins.

The Chair: You have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Thank you.

My question is for Ms. Bruske. She referenced in her opening statement the fight, sometimes, with big corporations in terms of securing benefits for workers. Sometimes those fights, though, are with governments.

I referenced in our last committee meeting the fight that unions had with former premier Mike Harris and his "common sense revolution", and the days of actions that led to thousands of employees taking to the streets. Legislation from Prime Minister Harper was referenced today in terms of targeting unionized workers. Then, of course, I can point to Bill 124, with Premier Ford completely undermining the collective bargaining process, trying to cap wages outside of that process and really violating the rights of union members and of the people who represent them at the bargaining table.

I have a quick question for you, Ms. Bruske.

We look at wage disparity between union and non-union workers. Sometimes Conservative governments have it in them to pick a fight with unionized workers. Can you advise the committee on how we deal with those instances in terms of trying to correct some of the damages that have been done to that process over the years and how we can support, as a government, workers by just supporting the basic rights they have in terms of what they bring to the bargaining table?

• (1240)

Ms. Bea Bruske: Thank you for that question.

Obviously, first and foremost, listen to what union workers have to say. When you looked at Bill 124 in Ontario, you saw the lowest-paid education workers being told that they had to accept a collective agreement that was well subpar in terms of wages and benefits. The threat of using the notwithstanding clause in our Constitution to prevent those workers from going on strike for a fair deal was absolutely egregious.

It's the overreach when it comes to fair collective bargaining that is most at stake when we deal with these kinds of situations. We need to ensure that all employers, whether in the public or private sector, understand that when you get to the bargaining table, you need to put in a fair day's work of actually getting to a fair and reasonable deal based on what the economics currently provide. Too many times, we see interference in that particular process, and that is the problem.

Mr. Chad Collins: Thank you for the answer.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Collins.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Chair.

I'll try to ask a question on something that falls under federal jurisdiction. We must remember that, generally speaking, Quebec and the provinces have jurisdiction over labour laws. Here, when it comes to strengthening unionization or labour laws, obviously, we have to focus on aspects that fall under our jurisdiction. If the task were to critique various provinces, be they run by a Liberal, Conservative or another government, then so be it, but I don't think that's the goal.

I'd like to ask about an obstacle to bargaining rights. In fact, I'm not sure whether it's an obstacle or not. This question is for you, Ms. Bruske.

Apparently, a section of the Canada Labour Code stipulates that binding arbitration can be used to end disputes. Do you think that's an infringement of the right of association and bargaining rights? What reaction did the Canadian Labour Congress have to that analysis?

[*English*]

Ms. Bea Bruske: We don't necessarily want to have an arbitrated or an imposed collective agreement on parties. We think that when there is already an out that the employer can point to, their commitment to actually reaching a deal at the bargaining table is not 100%. We saw that in the most recent strike at the railways, where the employer coming in advocated for an arbitrated solution to that particular round of bargaining.

When, in November, the employer comes to the table in a federally regulated area and says that they want to have binding arbitration resolve this issue for them, we have to question how much time, energy and effort they're actually putting in at the bargaining table to reach that collective agreement by having a good conversation about the issues that really matter. Also, it's not only wages and benefits; it's safety for workers and for our communities that is at stake. Therefore, we need to be mindful of those legislative components and what they actually mean.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: You have 30 seconds remaining, Ms. Chabot.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Janssen, do you have an opinion on the fact that binding arbitration can be imposed on collective bargaining?

[English]

Mr. Dan Janssen: Yes, I believe that workers and the companies should be able to negotiate a fair agreement at the bargaining table. That's where it should happen. The threat of using expedited arbitration prevents the company from actually bargaining in good faith.

• (1245)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[English]

Ms. Zarrillo, you have two and a half minutes.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to start by congratulating ATU Local 1724 president Joe McCann and all of their members today on ratifying a contract with Transdev and HandyDART. I know this was a long-fought battle for them. They secured increased wages and also a reduction in the use of taxis, which this committee would be interested in, as this serves people with disabilities who were being subjected more and more to transportation that did not suit their needs. I wanted to congratulate all of the HandyDART workers. Thank you again to the president of Local 1724.

I want to thank member Wayne Long for allowing us to shine a light on the corporate practices that are driving down wages and the new generation of worker exploitation that actually necessitated unions in the first place.

I will ask witness Dan Janssen if he could share some workplace practices he is seeing that are eroding the rights of workers, which Parliament should be addressing with legislation.

If we have time, I would also like to ask that question of witness Bea Bruske.

Mr. Dan Janssen: I think contract flipping in the airline industry is eroding workers' rights, 100%. Although it's come a long way, I do believe there's much more that can be done to protect workers who are going through this process.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you so much.

I would just ask witness Bea Bruske as well.

Ms. Bea Bruske: Outside of contract flipping, the issue of casual labour versus permanent positions is becoming more widespread. Rather than hiring for a permanent position, term positions keep getting extended over and over again. Just before a worker might be eligible for an increase in wages and some benefits, that's when their term suddenly ends, only to be renewed maybe a month down the road because they actually do still need that position.

The other piece that we spoke about earlier is the issue of gig work. When you have an employee employed as a gig worker, they are not technically employees in many instances, so those workers don't have the same rights and benefits. They don't have the same workplace safety and health protections. They don't have the same ability to garner things like vacation pay, severance pay and the protections other employees have under various legislative mechanisms.

On a federal, provincial and territorial basis, these are issues that we need to be turning our minds to. These are issues where workers are struggling to make ends meet because they are not technically permanent workers. Even organizing those kinds of workers has been more difficult.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Zarrillo.

Mr. Seeback, you have five minutes.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Great.

Mr. Janssen, what will happen if the contract for the workers you represent is flipped and goes to a non-union company? What will happen to the employees you represent?

Mr. Dan Janssen: I very much hope that the new non-union employer, if it does go that way, will respect the Canada Labour Code and the equal remuneration and successorship laws. However, it's not guaranteed.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: If they don't, what happens?

Mr. Dan Janssen: If they don't, we as a union will have to fight to help organize those workers so that we can protect them under a contract, or those workers themselves will have to approach the labour program to complain that their employer has not complied with the Canada Labour Code.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: There's an opportunity, as I said earlier, under section 47.3. The Minister of Labour could expand section 47.3 to cover just this circumstance.

Would you urge the current government to have the Minister of Labour do that, so that your workers don't risk lower pay, etc., if the contract flips?

Mr. Dan Janssen: I would urge the government to do whatever it takes to help this group of workers.

As I said, Bill C-330 is there, if there's an avenue to get that passed through the House. If there's an avenue for the minister to step in and protect these workers, anything would help right now.

With 28 days' notice, they still don't know what's happening. These workers need some help.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Ms. Bruske, I wanted to ask you a question.

The government just recently did a section 107 referral to end the rail strike. The Supreme Court, in 2015, actually found that the right to strike is constitutionally protected under section 2(d) of the charter. Would you agree that by sending this union to arbitration through a ministerial order and removing the right to strike, the government violated the constitutional rights of those unions?

• (1250)

Ms. Bea Bruske: That union certainly is taking legal action, asserting exactly what you've just identified. We strongly believe, as I indicated earlier... In this particular case, this employer advocated for an arbitrated settlement on day one of negotiations. That is troublesome to us. We want employers to come to the bargaining table, to be respectful of the process and to fully engage in the process of getting a fair deal.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Archer, I actually look at data on unionization rates. Unionization rates in forestry, in oil and gas, and in mining have really gone down in the last little while. You talked about some of the challenges with the environment right now. Would you say that some of the government decisions with respect to oil and gas and mining are leading to union job losses in those sectors?

Mr. Scott Archer: You could definitely interpret stats that way. As I mentioned earlier, just based on our safety record.... In my jurisdiction, we have a 98% union market share. That is a huge part of why our safety record is absolutely impeccable. It's due to our higher level of training, our higher level of skill and everyone being completely invested. I think that alone is worth a look for union labour. Everyone gets home safe at the end of the day, and you get a superior product. I think that's an awfully strong selling point.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Seeback.

Mr. Long, you have five minutes.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, thank you to our witnesses. This is a long session for you.

Ms. Bruske and witness Wybou, I just want to get your opinion on the decline of union membership. Stats Canada came out with a report in 2022, which basically says that over 40 years, from 1981 to 2022, union membership declined from 37.6% to 28.7%.

We'll start with you, Ms. Bruske. Can you comment on what might have contributed to that decline in union membership? Also, how has that decline in membership correlated with trends in earnings?

Ms. Bea Bruske: We can certainly see that, in many instances, larger workplaces that used to be unionized are not as large as they used to be, for one instance, and they're not as concentrated as they used to be. When you have a plant with 400 to 600 people working in one area, organizing one plant with a concentrated mass of employees is relatively simple, compared to the kind of unionization we have now, where we're trying to organize at different places at the same time, where workers are spread out and where there is not necessarily the same commonality of interest in terms of geographic location. That is one particular challenge.

I spoke earlier today, as well, about the different labour legislation and how that impacts unionization rates. Trying to organize a multi-tiered process to getting recognition and having bargaining rights is much more complicated than it has been in the past. That is egregious, and that's something that we work on with our provincial and territorial partners.

The decision to make application to a union is not an easy decision. It's a kitchen table conversation that you have with your family, because there is a lot that goes into that kind of decision. If my employer finds out that I'm trying to get unionized, am I going to lose my job before I can actually have union protection? Those are very real concerns that workers have.

Lastly, I would say that there is a changing demographic. Workers aren't staying at their places of employment for very long. It's very common to have workers working two or three different jobs

at one time. The commitment to staying with one employer isn't as great because they don't see a future with that particular employer, in terms of actually building up into a middle-class job.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you for that.

Witness Wybou, do you have anything you want to add to that about what you've seen?

Mr. Tristen Wybou: I will add to and emphasize what witness Bruske has said here.

One thing in particular that I've found in my own experience, too, is that in the evolving work landscape, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, we do see people living in various areas and doing remote work. Trying to organize within the virtual setting is quite difficult, because people are becoming increasingly siloed. I think some of that siloing is happening through cultural and societal shifts in general, which is making workers feel much more disconnected.

Also, the hostility of retaliation and the consequences of retaliation only get higher in the face of a housing crisis, collapsing health care and lower resources within your communities. If you're looking at needing to cover leases, mortgages, children and whatever it might be, that fear of retaliation is really high, and the need for worker solidarity is *n*-fold beyond it. The more we are siloed and the more we worry about that, the harder it is to have those kitchen table conversations where people do feel supported and where they have the capacity to go ahead with a card check.

• (1255)

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you.

I have no more questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Long.

Thank you, Mr. Wybou, for your good testimony to the committee.

That concludes the questioning round with the witnesses. You can leave at your will.

I need clarification on two items and the direction of committee members. Does the committee wish to accept the brief submitted by Starlight Investments? This is a witness who was, I'll say, controversial. The request was to provide a written brief. The written brief—and I'll ask the analyst to speak—came in after the deadline that the committee had set.

I'll ask the analyst to speak briefly to that.

Ms. Vanessa Preston (Committee Researcher): I'll just clarify that the brief from Starlight was received after the deadline that the committee had set to receive briefs as part of the investments in housing study, approximately a month after the fact. I'm just seeking clarification from the committee if they would like to include that brief as part of the evidence for the report.

The Chair: Ms. Zarrillo.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I know that you know that I feel strongly about the fact that this witness was allowed to get away with twice refusing to appear before this committee. I also know that the Liberals and the Conservatives teamed up to give this person a free pass and opened the opportunity for them to send a brief.

I think we've seen on CBC that they've been covering the business practices of Starlight Investments. We've certainly seen the displacement and the exploitation of tenants. We're now in a situation where tenants are having to unionize against their landlords. I think that if the Starlight Investments CEO has something to say, we certainly would like to hear from him in this committee in a forum where we can ask him questions.

Equity is in question here. I think there is a class war going on right now between landlords and their tenants. Certainly, I understand why the Liberals and the Conservatives would team up to try to protect these corporate landlords. As an NDP member, I will not accept a submitted submission written by someone who twice refused to attend this parliamentary committee, right in the face of Canadians who are right now living in cars because of the practices of these types of landlords.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Zarrillo.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor.

Ms. Louise Chabot: I don't think we should accept this brief, which was submitted well after the deadline. That shows scant regard for our work. We can be flexible when the deadline is missed by a few days, but in this case, it's inopportune. When there's a rule, you have to stick to it.

I won't comment further.

[*English*]

The Chair: Just to be clear, the deadline was June 21, and the brief was submitted on June 29. It was seven days.

I'm directed by the unanimous or majority decision of the committee. I've heard two speak against accepting it, so I'm taking it that everybody else is agreeable to accepting the brief. Based on that, the majority of the committee chooses to accept the brief to be included in the report.

Ms. Zarrillo.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I'd like a recorded vote, please.

The Chair: Okay. That's no problem. I would need somebody to move a motion to accept the brief.

● (1300)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: It doesn't matter. It's not a big deal. We don't need to vote.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I'll move a motion to not accept the brief.

The Chair: Okay, we have a motion—

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: Yes, it is too late.

Committee members, thank you. I haven't arrived at a decision on this. I will revisit it.

With that, we have reached the conclusion of the committee's time. The committee is adjourned.

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