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Chair: Mr. Joël Lightbound



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• (1550)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Good morning to one and all. It's a pleasure to see you again. I would have preferred that we wait until Thursday, but by necessity, we meet again today.

Welcome to meeting number 97 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. Today's meeting is being held in hybrid format, in accordance with the Standing Orders.

[*English*]

We're meeting today pursuant to Standing Order 106(4) to discuss a request to address employment concerns at the new Stellantis-LG battery manufacturing facility in Windsor, Ontario.

We'll now begin by opening the floor to discussion on this request to meet, and I recognize Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, committee members, for responding and coming today. I know that some would probably like to be in the chamber right now, but there we go.

For those who are watching us right now, and not the Minister of Finance, perhaps I could start by explaining what we're doing here. It is that we—a number of the opposition members—moved a motion or sent a letter requesting that we have a special meeting to discuss the media reports, which came out late last week, that up to 1,600 jobs at Stellantis, the new EV plant in Windsor, would be filled by residents of South Korea.

I know that some claim that this is not the case, but for some strange reason, the ambassador from South Korea actually thinks it's the case, since the ambassador for South Korea held a number of meetings in Windsor with Windsor officials, saying that they needed to find accommodations in Windsor for 1,600 people from South Korea who are coming to work at the battery plant.

Obviously, this is a great concern. It's a great concern because I go back to the original announcement of the EV battery plant for Stellantis in Windsor. I believe it was back in March. The first one was before President Biden brought out the IRA. It was an agreement from, I believe, the federal government to pay about half a billion dollars of the construction costs of this new plant, under the

strategic investment fund, the SIF program of ISED. At that time, the Minister of Industry said that this was great news for Canadian jobs.

Subsequent to that, when the IRA came in from President Biden, the government signed another contract with Volkswagen, as we all know, in southwestern Ontario. This was a contract of \$778 million in federal government subsidy to subsidize the building of that plant, and another \$15 billion of subsidy for the battery assembly—not manufacturing. These are assembly plants.

Just so people are clear, these are assembly plants that right now are not manufacturing batteries but are actually assembling batteries for EVs. Right now in the world, 80% of the parts for EV batteries are manufactured in China. These parts will be coming over to Canada and will be put into this plant to be assembled into batteries, which would then go, in most cases, into the U.S., where the cars will be assembled.

Contrary to assertions that the minister made today and that others have made, the Conservatives actually have not said whether we support or don't support these, because we haven't seen the contracts. It's hard to make a judgment on whether or not we have a good deal when you haven't seen the contracts, particularly contracts that require \$15 billion in taxpayer subsidies.

In essence, what we have is a secret contract that has some sort of job commitments in it, but clearly not job commitments that require Canadians to be hired, since the ambassador from Korea is saying that they're going to bring in 1,600 people from South Korea to assemble the batteries—primarily manufactured in China and assembled here—to go to the U.S. to be assembled in vehicles that will be put together in the U.S., with presumably most of them sold in the U.S.

In the absence of having the details of that contract, it's impossible for taxpayers to understand whether or not there is a contract that compels Stellantis and their subsidiary, now in Windsor, to actually hire Canadians. One would think that if you're going to give that level of subsidy, you would actually put into the contract that the job commitments are for Canadian jobs.

We are here now to discuss doing an urgent meeting, or several meetings, as I think we need, to get to the bottom of this issue of why a contract was signed that allows a Korean car company to bring in workers from South Korea, as the ambassador from South Korea has said publicly they will do, rather than hiring Canadians

• (1555)

With that, Mr. Chair, just to frame the discussion, I'd like to move a study motion, if I could. I believe the clerk has a copy of it, and I'll read the motion:

Given that the Government of Canada gave a multi-billion dollar subsidy for an EV battery manufacturing facility in Windsor, Ontario, and that in recent days it has been revealed that as many as 1600 jobs will be going to foreign workers instead of Canadian workers, the committee undertake a 6 meeting investigation to determine how the Government of Canada structured a deal that prioritizes foreign workers over Canadian jobs and paycheques, and that the committee hears testimony from: the Minister of Industry, for 2 hours, the Minister of Finance, for 2 hours,

—who has obviously been very vocal on this—

the Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada, the Mayor of Windsor, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Officials from the Department of Industry, the CEO of NextStar, Danis Lee, Unifor national president Lana Payne and all other witnesses deemed relevant by the committee, and the committee order the full unredacted contract with Stellantis—LG regarding NextStar EV battery manufacturing facility in Windsor, Ontario, all documents related to government funding and Canadian job creation at the proposed factory, the Labour Market Impact Assessment application from Stellantis and the government's response, and that these documents be produced within seven days of this motion being adopted.

For the purpose of framing the debate—and I'm sure there will be some discussion from various parties on elements of that—we are putting it on the table as a starting point, as we always do in this committee, as a collegial committee, to discuss how we can go about discussing this urgent thing. I don't think it can wait until the new year or after we are done Bill C-27, which won't be until the new year, because this issue is happening now.

There are 130 people, according to the public reports, now working on this project. The company itself and Minister Wilkinson, in fact, have said that 100 of the people who are already working on this project are from South Korea. Most of the employees to date are not South Koreans who are residents of Canada; they are South Koreans who have come here from South Korea as the starting point of this 1,600-person hiring that the ambassador of South Korea says that Stellantis is doing.

I know there's a speaking list. I'll leave it at that for now, Mr. Chair, and turn it over to others who want to make an intervention.

• (1600)

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

We have a motion on the floor.

I recognize MP Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I offer my apologies. I'm a few blocks away. I have a cold, so I don't want to come into the same room as everybody else.

I support this motion, with some amendments, and I'll get to my amendments later. Just to scope it a little bit better with regard to where we need to get to, one of the most important things to recognize here is that I do support the investment that's taking place just outside of my riding of Windsor West.

I came to this place back in the year of 2002, trying to get a green auto strategy done. Actually, in 2004, we tabled a plan with Dr. David Suzuki and—

The Chair: MP Masse, just one second. Your sound has faded. I don't think it's on your end, MP Masse.

Okay; now it seems to be working. You're back.

Mr. Brian Masse: I'm sure it was more pleasurable when you couldn't hear me, but at any rate I will resume with saying that basically I came to this place in 2002, and one of the reasons was for a green auto strategy. There were many jobs lost in Windsor, in Ontario, and Canada was number two in the world in automotive manufacturing. We've now slipped to eighth.

I support this project going forward, but there have been lots of concerns raised, not only with this one but also with the Volkswagen one. My concern resides on the transparency and accountability file of this.

This came about in the renegotiations. The most recent one was related to the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States. For me, this is critical in terms of having the opportunity to make sure that we're going to have most of the jobs here.

The story's changed even in the last number of hours. It was originally one position that was talked about. Now there are hundreds. There's a lack of supports in the community that are very important for the number of workers who are supposed to be brought in. That hasn't even really been discussed very much at this point.

What I would like to do is amend the motion by deleting... I don't believe we need to hear from, at this point in time, Unifor national president Lana Payne. I would rather have Canada's Buildings Trades Unions' Sean Strickland present instead.

We should invite the Minister of Immigration, the Minister of Trade, and the ambassador of Korea, because, as was noted by Mr. Perkins, he came down to Windsor. Either the ambassador had intentions or... We don't know what was taking place, but the Windsor police tweeted out that they expected potentially 1,600 people to be coming in. I don't think the ambassador of Korea actually comes to Windsor to vacation. He was here for a particular reason, and we'd like to have that testimony in front of us. We also believe that would be important.

As well, I don't believe we need the mayor of Windsor at this point in time. This is a very important federal contract. Perhaps in the future the province might be invited as well. That's a possibility.

I'll conclude my comments right now so we can move on with this.

I think that shedding light is very important for a national auto policy, a policy I've advocated for many years. I believe that Canadians do want to see us transition and be part of those things that are necessary for our future, and the best way to do that is to have transparency for people. That will build the public confidence that's necessary.

The plant has already had a little bit of an issue. There was a stalling to actually renegotiate. The government's had two negotiation points that have taken place, and I think it's reasonable to get the answers that are necessary right now and to ensure that every single possibility is covered.

It's important to note that when we have foreign labour come in for, say, the agricultural sector, the company pays for that foreign labour—it's not paid or subsidized by Canadian taxpayers. This is why I think people are a little bit concerned with what's taking place. More importantly, it was never talked about.

Whenever we have the announcements, the ribbon cuttings, a number of times there have been lots of political people who have taken credit, but it's really the workers who have actually saved our auto industry—by our quality, with Unifor, and our commitment—and the Unifor negotiations that have actually created the opportunities for investment. That's really where things are.

The fact is that the government's response to the Inflation Reduction Act of the United States has been merely to match that, but without the transparency that they provide in the United States. The United States has a much more transparent process for that, and so we need to keep that in mind, because it's important about this plant. It's not only the work that's being done to build it, but also the workers later on who will be in there, and to have the full confidence of the Canadian public.

I thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak. I hope we can actually improve this situation right now, because it is worthwhile.

• (1605)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Masse.

[English]

Before I yield the floor to other MPs, you have moved an amendment, Mr. Masse, to the motion.

Would you mind repeating, maybe with a little more clarity, the precise terms of your amendment? That's because now the committee will have to debate your specific amendment.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I apologize for just throwing that out there.

We would strike out “The Mayor of Windsor” from the motion. It's in the middle, about six lines down. We would take out “Unifor national president, Lana Payne”, and what we would substitute in for those two witnesses would be “Canada's Building Trades Unions' Sean Strickland”, because right now it's more about the building.

We'd invite the Minister of Immigration and the Minister of Trade, because they did a press conference and raised some of the issues that I think will be important to the committee, and also the ambassador of South Korea would be added as well.

That's one of the reasons we don't need the mayor, as the ambassador of South Korea would be added. Really that's the important thrust of what took place.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Masse.

Everyone has heard the amendment proposed by MP Masse, which we will now—

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Chair, could you just repeat or have repeated the first name that was mentioned among the people to be added?

[English]

The Chair: [Inaudible—Editor] just the first name?

Mr. Brian Masse: That was Sean. It's Sean Strickland. He is the director of Canada's Building Trades Unions.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Masse.

An amendment has been moved. Keep that in mind, colleagues, as we proceed.

On my list, I had MP Sorbara.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): I would like to defer and go to the main motion.

The Chair: We need to debate the amendment first. I'll keep your name for when we come back to the main motion.

Does anyone want to speak to the amendment proposed by MP Masse?

I see Mr. Vis and then Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): I'll just say that I think Mr. Masse's suggestions are pretty reasonable and in line with what our motion is seeking to achieve. Rick, I think, agrees, and we would generally be supportive of that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Things have moved quickly, like they always have on these things. From when I wrote the motion the other day, this is a good update to what we now know. I would support this as well.

The Chair: Seeing no more comments on the amendment, should I call a vote, or do we have consensus for the amendment?

I'm reading the room. I will put it to a vote, just to be sure.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: I apologize, colleagues. I didn't read the room, but we have consensus. That's good.

We're back to the main motion as amended by Mr. Masse.

I will now yield the floor to MP Sorbara.

• (1610)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: I would like to yield the floor to Parliamentary Secretary Kusmierczyk, if he's next on the list.

The Chair: In that case, I had Sébastien Lemire, and Irek was next.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: I have no trouble hearing what is being said.

[English]

The Chair: Irek, you have the floor.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I felt compelled to come here and provide a bit of important context to the discussion we're having today.

The Stellantis battery plant is located in my riding. It is located, in fact, steps away from my home. I get a chance every single day to see this incredible battery plant rising from the ground. It represents tremendous hope for our community.

Eight years ago, our community had 11.2% unemployment. This was under the Conservative government. This was when the leader of the current Conservative opposition was the minister of employment. We had 11.2% in my community. Unemployment for young people was in the high 20%. Young people were leaving our community because they had no hope. There were no jobs. We had families leaving for Alberta because there were no jobs. We had stores that were shuttered and businesses that were closed. Those were dark times, Mr. Chair.

This is the most important investment in the history of my community. This is a future for my community. This is hope for my community. It is important that when we speak about it, we speak in facts, not politics or games—facts. There is so much riding on this battery plant.

Let me provide you with some facts.

There are 900 workers building the battery plant as we speak, representing all the trades: LiUNA, millwrights, operators, sheet metal workers—you name it. They're all Canadian, and the vast majority are from Windsor. There will be two and a half thousand Canadian workers in total building that plant. When the plant is operational, there will be two and a half thousand workers building two million batteries every year. Those two and a half thousand workers will be local. They will be Canadian. That was confirmed when I spoke this morning with the president of Unifor Local 444, Dave Cassidy. He confirmed there will be two and a half thousand workers, and that they will be local and Canadian.

Yes, there will be Korean workers coming to Canada to help with the installation of the equipment. Anyone who has ever set foot in a factory or has been part of a manufacturing town like mine will realize very quickly that this is normal. When a Canadian company like CenterLine, for example, or Valiant from Windsor, sells a product or machine to Alabama, you have Canadian workers travelling there to help with the installation of the equipment, especially because some of that equipment is proprietary, and especially during the warranty period. It's just something that happens in manufacturing.

At the same time, we know some Korean workers will move to Windsor, because they will be working with Canadian and local workers building the batteries. Why? It's because this is a new in-

dustry. This is a brand new industry we are trying to build from scratch. This is the first battery plant in Canada. We don't have the full expertise. That's why we will rely on a partnership with our Korean partners, who have been building batteries for 30 years. LG is the world leader in batteries. They have 24,000 patents on the construction of batteries. We will need them because we will be competing with every other battery manufacturer in the world. We have to get this right, because everything is riding on it.

The two and a half thousand workers building batteries will be Canadian and local.

• (1615)

I understand that the EV sector is a threat to the Conservatives. I understand that. It's because they don't believe in climate change. It's also because the EV battery plant would demonstrate that having an environmental plan means being successful economically. More specifically, it means jobs for communities like mine.

The Chair: Mr. Kusmierczyk, wait one second. I have a point of order from Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Perkins, go ahead.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Has that member been substituted in to be at the committee? If not, he has no right to talk.

The Chair: I have just consulted with the clerk, and there is no need for a substitute. Any MP can come to the committee and speak to the issues addressed. He's been recognized by the chair. I've just confirmed with the clerk that this is the case.

I'll let MP Kusmierczyk proceed.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: I want to say again that I understand that the success of the EV battery plant is a direct threat to the Conservatives because it will demonstrate that when you have an environmental plan, you have an economic plan and you have jobs. It's not just the battery plant in Windsor in partnership with our Korean partners; in Quebec, there is Northvolt, which is a Swedish company that has committed \$7 billion to build a battery plant in Montreal, in Quebec, that will provide jobs for 3,000 Quebec residents.

I imagine there will be some—

Mr. Rick Perkins: On a point of order, would he speak to the motion? It has nothing to do with the Quebec plant. It's only about Stellantis.

The Chair: Mr. Perkins, I believe it is pertinent to the motion. I have always been very liberal in my interpretation. I've heard members speak on various motions. They have a certain liberty. To me it speaks to the motion at hand, so I will let Mr. Kusmierczyk proceed.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Thank you.

The LG battery plant that we will build with our Korean partners is the beginning. You have the Northvolt battery plant in Montreal, Quebec, a \$7-billion investment that will provide 3,000 jobs for Quebecers. That's fantastic. I guarantee you that there will be folks from Sweden who will come to Montreal and who will help Montreal and help Quebec be successful in building batteries.

With Volkswagen, there will be another \$10-billion investment in St. Thomas, and 5,000 workers. I am almost certain there will be some Germans who will come to St. Thomas. They will be welcomed by that wonderful community, that warm community. They will help St. Thomas revitalize its manufacturing and auto industry and help build batteries for the North American market.

Mr. Chair, investments worth \$30 billion have taken place in the last couple of years. Canada is the number three country in the world for foreign direct investment. We are partnering with the world to build electric vehicles and batteries in this country. Canada is leading the transition to zero-emission vehicles. It burns the Conservatives' butts to hear that.

Mr. Chair, I want us to speak in facts. I want us to put the politics aside and to put the games aside, because there is far too much on the line for manufacturing communities like mine that have suffered and struggled for far too long. This battery plant is our future. It is my community's future. It is our great hope. It will be the future that is built by Canadian workers, by Windsor workers.

Thank you.

• (1620)

The Chair: Thank you, MP Kusmierczyk.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lemire, you now have the floor.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to keep the debate flowing, but I saw that the other member from Windsor wanted to respond very spontaneously. I'm really curious to hear what he has to say, before I propose anything.

Is it possible to give him the floor?

The Chair: Unfortunately, Mr. Lemire, there's a long list of people who want to speak. So I can't simply yield the floor according to everyone's wishes.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: That's fine.

In that case, I'll ask you to move on to the next speaker. I'll take the floor again later.

The Chair: Do you want me to add your name to the end of the list?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Yes, please, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Vis, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We're going to have a conversation about facts.

It was in 2008 that Stephen Harper saved the auto industry in southern Ontario, Mr. Kusmierczyk. I hope you will stay and listen to what we want to say, or are you just going to make a political statement and walk out? I guess your butt is too burnt to sit here and listen. That's a fact. You're not willing to sit and listen after you just went off on that partisan speech.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): I have a point of order.

The Chair: I have a point of order from MP Lapointe.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: I believe that members need to address their comments through the Chair. I would also ask that we use parliamentary language.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Ms. Lapointe. I just used the exact same phrase as the member.

The Chair: Mr. Vis, please, a point of order was raised. I'm considering it. I've been flexible on how members address each other, but given the heated nature of this debate that we're having today, I'd rather have members address their comments through the Chair.

Go ahead, Mr. Vis.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I do respect you and I will put my comments through you.

As you have just witnessed, Mr. Chair, Mr. Kusmierczyk came in here to make a political statement about burning the butts of Conservatives and this plant being a direct threat. After he made his political statement, he walked out of the room, because I guess he really doesn't care about the—

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): I have a point of order.

The Chair: Go ahead, MP Van Bynen.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: It's not appropriate to identify who is in the room and who is not in the room. Is that not a parliamentary understanding?

The Chair: I don't believe it is in committee; however, I will ask Mr. Vis to try to stay above....

You know what my mother used to say? Weak people judge persons; strong people judge ideas. I would suggest, Mr. Vis, that you continue on the ideas, because I know you're bigger than that. Let's keep the personal out of it.

Mr. Brad Vis: We will speak to the facts, Mr. Chair. In 2008, it was Stephen Harper who built out the auto industry. It was the Business Development Bank of Canada that bought all leases from GMAC, the General Motors financing authority. I'm not going to take any lessons from the government-side members on the role of the auto industry and the threats perceived by the member who left the room regarding what is a significant contract.

You know, Mr. Chair, we all came together last spring, despite every attempt by the government to avoid transparency. On the Volkswagen contract, they eventually relented, and we were able to see the contract.

Now, unless Mr. Kusmierczyk has special access to government contracts that are deemed sensitive and secret in nature, I can't take his word for anything he said, because I have to assume, like any other member of Parliament who is not a member of cabinet, that they have not reviewed the contract, and the statements he made regarding employment and the nature of that employment, whether it's Canadian or Korean, cannot be verified. All we can go on is publicly made statements. That's what Mr. Kusmierczyk was stating: public statements. Right now, Mr. Chair, frankly, it's very hard to keep track of what all the public statements were.

I have lots of questions about this contract, just like I had about the Volkswagen contract. I would be remiss if I didn't mention that it was Stellantis that originally received a subsidy from the federal government, much smaller than the subsidy they have before it right now. Many people made the argument that if we went forward with the Volkswagen contract to align with the policies put forward by President Biden in the United States, we would see a slippery slope of all major investments in the auto industry and other sectors asking for the exact same terms and conditions. Well, lo and behold, a few weeks after we were here, Stellantis halted the construction of that plant. They said that unless the Government of Canada ponied up and gave them billions upon billions upon billions of dollars more, they were going to pull this investment from the good people of Windsor.

You know what, Mr. Chair? We didn't hear a peep out of Mr. Kusmierczyk when that was happening. It's really unfortunate that he wasn't standing up for his constituents when they needed him. Now we're in an untenable situation in which every big company that wants to build a battery plant in Canada using Chinese minerals wants billions upon billions of dollars from the federal government.

I want to know. I want to see the contract and understand what subsidies Stellantis is getting, because that's not a public fact right now.

• (1625)

[Translation]

What grants has Stellantis-LG already received? What grants will Stellantis-LG receive from the Government of Canada?

In the contract between Stellantis-LG and the minister, did the federal government agree on a provision that allowed Stellantis-LG to hire Korean workers instead of Canadian workers?

[English]

Yes, indeed, South Korea has a free trade agreement and the labour mobility clause with the Government of Canada, and that's a good thing.

I worked at the Department of Foreign Affairs when this contract between Canada and South Korea was signed. The intention was not for the Government of Canada to subsidize foreign workers through major auto investments or subsidies; it was to promote the exchange of people to build both of our economies up. What I'm fearful of, without seeing this contract, is that the clause in the free trade agreement with South Korea will allow for powerful paycheques for South Korean workers at the expense of Canadian taxpayers.

I don't want my taxpayer dollars going there, nor do the constituents in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, where we don't get big investments from the federal government—unless it's a prison, by the way. I can say confidently on behalf of the people I represent that we don't want our taxpayer dollars going to foreign workers, whatever the intention.

We need to figure this out and get to the bottom of this contract.

[Translation]

We need to know if the subsidy provided by the government is going to be used to pay foreign workers. If so, how much of our money would be given to each foreign worker?

[English]

We need to know if in fact the Canadian subsidy to Stellantis will fund foreign workers working on Canadian soil and are allowed by law to come into Canada under our free trade agreement. That's a fact. There are lots of things we need to get to the bottom of here.

Mr. Chair, for the member to come in and say that Conservatives need to be concerned because we don't have an environment policy, that we don't care about the people in southern Ontario or the auto industry, and that whatever the government is doing is a direct threat to my political party, I take issue with that. What is a direct threat to the people I represent is that the government not using taxpayer dollars wisely.

I will reiterate time and time again that the industry committee has a unique role in ensuring that these large subsidies do what they're intended to do and cost what the government says they're going to cost. If our recent work in this committee shows anything, it's that the government has underestimated the true cost of its subsidies to these major global auto giants.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Vis.

We'll go to MP Williams.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all colleagues for the discussion right now.

The member from Windsor had a really great line at the end. He said there was far too much on the line. I don't think that could be further from the truth right now. We have the largest investment ever for a Canadian manufacturing plant. It's \$15 billion. We have, at the same time, reports coming out that say that of all the things promised for this plant—and let's talk about what the economic output of this plant was—we're not producing the stuff that goes into the batteries.

We are not producing cars in Canada. We're assembling batteries in Canada, so the output is assembled batteries, which will be subsidized by taxpayers. Jobs are being affected. When the minister pushed this initiative and its benefit to the Canadian car manufacturing industry in Windsor, the output was supposed to be jobs. We've heard certain quotes like thousands upon thousands of jobs, but the member from Windsor verified the facts today. He said 2,500 permanent jobs. Some 2,500 jobs would be temporary, because the plant is being built; there are 900 now, but he said 2,500 jobs. The reports from Windsor police and from the ambassador of South Korea said that 1,600 of those 2,500 would be from South Korea.

When we look at \$15 billion being invested in this plant, we see that it's the first time in history we have spent this much money on a plant that already exists. Volkswagen and other plants will be coming, so we have to get this right. There is too much on the line.

Looking at this right now, I know we have an economic update, and I really imagine that we're going to still have a deficit. Does anyone say differently? Did the government balance the books?

A voice: No, I don't think so.

Mr. Ryan Williams: We're running a deficit, so that is why we say there's too much on the line. Canadians right now are struggling with heat costs, struggling to pay their rent and mortgages and struggling to pay for groceries. The first number, based on this \$15 billion, is \$1,000 per family at home. It's \$1,000 from your taxes that's going into a plant. If we want to see this replicated in Quebec, B.C., and other areas across this country... We can't afford to see what's happening with SDTC right now, which amounts to hundreds of thousands of dollars, or millions of dollars, being wasted and misused. We need to make sure this money is well used, meaning that it's going towards Canadian workers.

The member from Windsor talked about looking at what we've taken this model from, which is the IRA, the Inflation Reduction Act in the U.S. It's subsidizing production of batteries and other things for a green economy. I can tell you right now, and I know for certain, that in the IRA, when it comes to jobs and when it comes to sourcing material for batteries or otherwise, the Americans do one thing that we don't do in Canada: They put America first. They put it on everything in the U.S.

When we look at our investment in Canada, the biggest question that comes to mind is whether Canada is coming first. Is Canada making sure it gets the output? If the only thing we're getting from this deal is jobs, why aren't they all Canadian jobs?

I'll give you an example for the committee, because this was noted today. The federal employment department has already granted permission for a temporary foreign worker to fill an administrative role. This is a job that was put out. The question for the committee is, are you telling me that we couldn't find, in the whole city of Windsor, someone who was qualified to fill an administrative role? This has already been filled by a foreign worker.

Are you saying to the committee right now that we shouldn't be studying this with \$15 billion on the line, with 2,500 jobs that were promised, and with reports from the South Korean ambassador that 1,600 of those will be filled not by Windsorites or by Canadians, but by South Koreans?

If the argument that the member from Windsor gave was that every plant brings in workers to install equipment, sure. I'm in a food processing manufacturing cluster in the Bay of Quinte, and all the time... This is a problem of the government too. We bring in foreign workers, and they can't get permits for six months, but they have to come in. They come in for three weeks to install equipment. If we're looking for accommodations for housing, how long are these 1,600 workers going to stay? We don't have an answer to that.

• (1630)

I know that in the House today there's been talk about disinformation. Great; let's get the information on the table. Let's see the contract. One thing we want to see that's in here is the labour market assessment. We want to see where the labour gaps were, because when it comes to labour, when it comes to unions, when it comes to Windsor itself, we want to see manufacturing in Windsor.

If this is going to go forward in the future, we want to see it be successful in Canada. Everyone wants Canada to win. We talk about team Canada, and Canada has to win, but more importantly, if this is going to be replicated with Volkswagen outside of Windsor for other parts of this country, we need this one to be successful. I can tell you right now that if this is not successful, if we don't see the jobs that were promised, if this is a waste of taxpayer dollars, then how can we justify going forward with any of this? It will be a failure to this government. If this committee doesn't study it, it will be a failure. Certainly we want to see this go forward as a success, and we need the answers for that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1635)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Chair, I have a quick point of order, please.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Masse.

Mr. Brian Masse: I didn't want to interrupt Mr. Williams. I just want to be clear here, though, that I'm the member for Windsor West and I represent three-fifths of the city of Windsor. The other member is Windsor—Tecumseh. I just want to be clear, because I don't want to be confused with the other member.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Chair, I will clarify that all of my comments were to the member for Windsor—Tecumseh. I know the member from Windsor West represents his region very well.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you for this clarification, Mr. Masse.

We will now turn to MP Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): I have quite a few things to say, but I appreciate the debate.

We're in a situation here on the day of the fall economic statement, which is fine. Members have chosen to call a meeting under Standing Order 106(4), which is normally meant to apply to an emergency meeting. Obviously there are enough members who feel that this an urgent debate that should take precedence over government legislation, which is Bill C-27, which I think we've all agreed is a really high priority for this committee.

I have quite a few concerns with some of the assertions that members opposite have made, which I don't feel are factual, and I will say why.

This feels to me like another delay tactic on Bill C-27, which I think again we have all....

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

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Perkins, thank you for asserting something else that's untrue, but listen: The key here is that you are using Standing Order 106(4)—

Mr. Rick Perkins: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Turnbull, I'm sorry to interrupt, but I have a point of order from Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: If I could ask, what assertion did I make that wasn't true?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I don't know. You didn't have the floor. You were speaking out of turn. Do you want me to repeat what you were saying?

Mr. Rick Perkins: You made a comment. You said it in the record—

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I know you want me to repeat what you were saying that wasn't supposed to be said because you weren't supposed to be speaking because you didn't have the floor—

Mr. Rick Perkins: I had the floor. It was a point of order.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Turnbull.

Mr. Perkins, this was not a point of order. It's a point of debate. As I've said many times before, this is not a place where we heckle and we shout across the floor. If you want to speak, I will recognize you and you will have your time to speak.

Go ahead, MP Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Just to get back to what I was saying, we know there are some facts here that the Conservatives have conveniently left out, one of which is that only one temporary foreign worker has been approved so far. I think everybody knows that a labour market impact assessment is required for every single temporary foreign worker. There's no way to get approval without having a labour market impact assessment.

I know that Conservatives on other committees—in particular the agriculture and agri-food committee, which I sat on for over a year—regularly advocated waiving LMIA's or their extension for temporary foreign workers within the agricultural industry, which is interesting, because it's in direct conflict with what they're saying today, which is that they want to preserve local jobs. They have no problem waiving LMIA's when it comes to the agricultural industry and regularly advocate admitting more temporary foreign workers.

Mr. Brad Vis: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thanks, Mr. Vis. I know you don't have the floor either, but I appreciate your response. Maybe when you get the floor, you can respond.

I was on that committee, and it's my experience that Conservatives are being inconsistent with the arguments they have made on other committees.

We also know that this particular conversation isn't really about temporary foreign workers at all, because only one has been ap-

proved so far. What's interesting, though, is that one of the facts you've conveniently left out of your arguments is that an article today on the CBC has basically elucidated a fact about the trade agreement under Stephen Harper. When your current leader was in power as the employment minister—or I think it was just before that—there was a trade agreement negotiated with South Korea that included labour mobility provisions, which essentially opened the door for South Koreans to work in Canada under those labour mobility provisions. The free trade agreement that the Conservatives set up actually allows individuals to do that.

Now, I'm not saying that this is a bad thing, because I think what you need to understand, as my colleague PS Kusmierczyk said very eloquently, is that a battery manufacturing facility in Canada, the first of its kind, is going to require some specialized skill sets to get it up and running.

I think that's common sense. Conservatives talk about common sense. Where's their common sense today? Do you not understand—

That's through you, Chair. I mean to be respectful.

I think common sense says that when you haven't run one of these facilities, you're going to probably have some intercompany transfers at the beginning to help to install equipment and train local workers to run that facility. I think that's what we're seeing here.

The key here is that the job numbers that have been quoted are solid. There are 2,300 local jobs during the construction phase and 2,500 local jobs in the operational phase of the facility. Those are significant numbers of local jobs. We've heard Mr. Kusmierczyk speak to how important that is to his community, how much that represents a truly substantial growth in the local economy and gives people hope.

I think we have been saying all along during our mandate as the governing party that really building the economy of the future.... I get it that Conservatives don't agree on this. They don't see the economy of the future as fighting climate change and drawing in local jobs and investment. In fact, I keep hearing that they don't want direct foreign investment.

We heard today—we heard the finance minister repeat this, and the minister for innovation repeated it as well—that Canada is number one in the world in foreign direct investment when you adjust per capita. It's number three when you don't make that adjustment, but we're number one when you adjust it per capita.

● (1640)

I don't understand why the Conservatives want to kick up dirt on this and try to create the misperception that somehow this is bad for Canada or local jobs. This is not bad for local jobs. I think we know that it's good for local jobs.

The other point that I'll make is that a tweet is not a report. I find it strange that this Standing Order 106(4) emergency debate is the result of a tweet from the Windsor police department. My dad was a detective and inspector for Peel Regional Police, so I don't have anything against police. I would just say that it doesn't make sense to me that you would consider that as factual, versus the very clear job numbers that our government has provided.

I guess the only other thing I want to say is that it feels that Conservatives are opposed to everything. They're opposed to the off-shore wind industry in Atlantic Canada. They're blocking the sustainable jobs act, which puts workers at the centre of the energy transition. They're opposed to legislation banning replacement workers, and we saw today in the House that they're opposed to a free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine.

I don't understand they can oppose all of these things so frequently, things that are good for workers and good for our country, things that bring in investment and are part of that vision of building a stronger, sustainable economy that is prosperous and creates all kinds of good-paying jobs.

I wish we could get to a point here, based on facts, and understand that the work of Bill C-27 that this committee has before it is imperative to getting the legislation through. I just hope we can come to our senses here.

Thanks, Chair.

• (1645)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Masse, you have the floor.

[English]

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

Listen, I don't want to be here. I don't want to have to deal with this issue. I wish it wasn't happening. The reality is that the importance of this is not just for the Windsor area. It's also for the Volkswagen plant. It's also for Quebec, later on, and British Columbia. This is about getting it right. We're doing a massive subsidization for the right reason: to keep up with our challenges from the United States and the challenges of an industry that's transitioning. I'd rather have Canadians trained through this process, so they can be used as specialists in the future.

Like the member from Windsor—Tecumseh, I worked on the shop floor at the Windsor assembly plant. I worked in the tool and die industry and as a job developer for persons with disabilities, placing people in these shops. I know the jobs and how important they are.

There's a serious issue here with regard to the investment we're making and the lack of training opportunities in place. We've had 18 months to get this right. Now we have to get it right. It's falling on the surface here because we haven't put in the time and work necessary. I'd like to know whether anybody knows about the specifics of the jobs we can't actually fill and accommodate. I think it was Mr. Williams who referred to one position that was there, a clerical position. I'd even challenge some of the technical positions.

Lee in Windsor has been building automotive components and vehicles for over 100 years. Facts be told, quite frankly, originally Jim Flaherty was opposed to an intervention on the GM and Chrysler issues of the day. He said he didn't want to "pick winners and losers". However, the evidence was put in front of him, and he changed. He deserves a lot of credit.

In fact, we made money in the past by doing auto investment for Chrysler in 1985. We invested to save Chrysler at that point in time, and it paid dividends back to taxpayers. I'm not afraid of bringing out some of the highlights in terms of why the investment makes sense and why we have to be in the game, for so many different reasons. If we're going to be in the game and put taxpayers' money on the line, there's every expectation it should be based on transparency and measurables. We've had the Parliamentary Budget Officer in front of us talking about some of those things.

I don't see this as a Conservative witch hunt with regard to a particular issue. I see this as a factual thing we have to bring forward, because it's going to have a pattern that will come after that. Again, would I like to be doing Bill C-27? Absolutely. Do I want to have to deal with this? No, I don't, but the reality is that we don't have a national auto policy that is transparent. We go from Hail Mary pass to Hail Mary pass at the last minute on these deals every single time. That's why people have concerns. I have every confidence that when we shed light on the importance of these jobs and on the importance of the workers who will get these jobs—if they're Canadians—the value will be there for the rest of Canada.

Yes, it's going to be a very difficult thing to go through in some respects, because company officials and others will have to come forward and talk about different things. At the same time, it's responsible of us. We don't need to make other communities go through what we're going through right now. It's not fun for me, as the member for Windsor West—who represents three-fifths of the city of Windsor and comes from an auto tradition—to go through this. However, I still believe in the industry. I believe in the people. I believe in what we're doing. If we can make it better for the other developments and economic investments we're doing, we're all better off at the end of the day, and we're doing our jobs as parliamentarians. Sometimes doing your job is not comfortable. It's not something you want to do, but you have to fight for it.

I'll finish with this: We had to do the same thing with the Gordie Howe bridge. We were building a new bridge in my riding. For years, we were told we couldn't do it and shouldn't do it. It was often put into politics. We faced off against an American billionaire. We faced off against the OMERS company pension fund. We defeated bad proposals to get the right thing done after a lot of work and effort. Do you know what? I'd rather put in some work and effort here, for a few meetings, to make this better for everybody. I'm not afraid to speak about the value of investing in the people of Windsor—Tecumseh and Essex county at any point in time.

We need the support, because it's not our fault that the United States is poaching manufacturing jobs. That's what they've been going after. At the same time, I can't turn my back on my responsibility as a parliamentarian to make sure taxpayers' dollars are being spent in the best way possible.

• (1650)

That's the balance, and that's the balance that I see in the motion that we're looking at and in what we're trying to do. Again, would I rather be doing something else? I would, 100%. Why am I here? It's because we have poor planning and a poor commitment to making sure that taxpayers understand what their dollars are going for.

That's why the NDP has always consistently called for a national auto policy that's also been crafted by the workers. When we get to that point and that day, maybe we won't have meetings like this.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Masse.

Mr. Sorbara, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to my colleagues for their interventions.

I do want to say to the member for Windsor West—I think that is Mr. Masse's riding—that you mentioned that you were in the tool and die industry. I think my respect for you has risen even higher. As we know, all over Ontario, a lot of the shops that tool and die makers work in are mom-and-pop shops. It's a field that not many young people know about and not many people are going into. It's actually a great field to go into. You work in tiers of suppliers—tier one, two and three—and you can make a heck of a lot of money. It's very scaled.

Brian, hats off to you if you were in the tool and die business, because there are a lot of shops in Windsor, in the area you are from, and I have some family down there who are in that industry. It's something I applaud, and some of our firms' auto parts suppliers—whether it's Magna or Linamar—were founded on that basis, so kudos to you.

Chair, I want to speak to the main motion for a couple of reasons.

First off, as was noted previously, the Canadian auto industry has gone through many iterations and a very bumpy ride since the early 2000s. I do remember vividly the 2008-2009 period, which was the great financial crisis at that time, and what happened. I remember the intervention by the Obama administration, the removal of health care costs from the Detroit big three at the time, as they were called in the United States, and how full circle we've come today, with the intervention and, I would say, the collaboration between industry, labour and government to land the investments by Stellantis in Windsor, to land the investment by Volkswagen in St. Thomas, and to land a number of subsequent investments along the battery supply chain across Canada, from British Columbia to Ontario to Quebec to Nova Scotia and to many other places that will benefit.

With regard to foreign direct investment, I really hope we can focus this conversation on the foreign direct investment aspect, whether it's Toyota investing here—I just saw them outside—or folks from Ferrero Rocher, who have a plant in Brantford, Ontario, that employs 1,500 people in that community. That's because it's important to continue to attract foreign direct investment here in Canada. They're great jobs and they tend to be higher-paying jobs and to have higher benefits.

Many times when those plants are initially set up, there's obviously what I would call a transfer of knowledge, a transfer of technology, in which representatives from those firms will come to Canada. I see it in my riding in Vaughan. We have a huge manufacturing cluster, and folks will come in to install machines and train the local workforce on how to operate the machines and so forth.

I really fundamentally believe that on this frontier we are going along the same path. Canada does not have a footprint in the battery space currently. We are building that footprint with, frankly, foreign know-how. There's a thing called intellectual property that we're very well aware of, and we know that intellectual property transfers happen here in Canada via Stellantis and Volkswagen and Northvolt and others, and we're going to let that happen naturally. At the same time, I obviously share every member's concern that taxpayers' dollars will be utilized to encourage investment that is used almost completely for the benefit of Canadians. Whether it's members of the CBTU—the Canadian Building Trades Union—working to build the facility, whether it's the outside skeleton steel or the outside finishing, or whether it's the workforce that will be deemed to be the permanent workforce at the facility, which will as much as possible be made up of Canadian individuals, I think we all share that desire and that goal.

• (1655)

At the same time, I don't think it's healthy to get into a debate of any sort about whether or not we have foreigners from foreign companies coming here and taking jobs. I think that's a very unhealthy debate to get into. I don't think it's a debate that is healthy in any way. In terms of the number of companies operating for a year in Canada, whether they're from the U.S. or other domiciled areas that invest in Canadians, I think it's a big net benefit to our economy.

I will say with regard to the number that was revealed of 1,600 jobs, I personally don't know whether that number is correct. My understanding is that it is not a correct number.

We all know the way trade agreements work. For example, under CUSMA, I had the privilege of working in the United States, in New York city, for a number of years. I worked under an H-1B, and then I went under the temporary national visa, which you can easily get and easily work under if you're in a certain designated profession, and vice versa for U.S. professionals coming to Canada. We have programs that bring in foreigners to work in Canada, a global tech-high stream program. In less than two weeks, folks can be here.

Obviously there is a huge benefit from foreign expertise. There's a huge benefit from folks coming here with very specialized skills, whether it's a specialist coming in to work in a certain hospital, in AI or in other segments.

I don't mean to digress and I'm trying to get back to relevance.

I do share the concern from the opposition, from the folks across the aisle, with regard to making sure that taxpayer dollars being invested in a facility are invested wisely, because the reason we are here at this moment in time is not only the headlines. We all know that we obviously need to verify whether headlines are accurate. The number of jobs listed, from what we understand, from what we gather, is not accurate.

We also need to understand that in response to the Inflation Reduction Act, we had to put subsidies in place as a government, supported by virtually everyone in industry, to maintain our manufacturing footprint specifically within the auto sector. To build that electric vehicle supply chain, we needed to respond to the Inflation Reduction Act, and we did so through a number of subsidies that were put in place. We responded with agreements with a number of operators, and we will have a production footprint.

With regard to the motion itself, even the language of “structured a deal that prioritizes foreign workers over Canadian jobs”.... Anybody coming to work here in Canada has a Canadian job. Yes, we need to ensure that a majority of these jobs, if not all, are filled by Canadians. At the same time, be very cognizant of the fact that when the official opposition uses that type of language....

When Toyota set up its two plants in Cambridge and when Honda set up its plant in Alliston or companies that are foreign-domiciled invest in British Columbia, they create Canadian jobs. They will bring their workers over for a period of time and continually, because their head office is located overseas, to help make sure that the plant runs efficiently.

Perhaps I can give another example, Mr. Chair. On our break week, I visited downtown Toronto. I went to a foreign investment vehicle with a partnership here in Canada. It's called Eataly, an Italian food operator with stores throughout the world. They employ 500 workers, Canadians for the most part, at their location at Yonge and Bloor in downtown Toronto.

Yes, there are a number of individuals with Italian citizenship who work there from the parent company. Again, the investment that was made in partnership with Canadian investors—a significant one—has opened up 500 jobs in downtown Toronto. They opened up a new location in Sherway Gardens, again creating another 200 or 300 jobs for Canadians. This, to me, is about jobs, jobs, jobs. This is ensuring that Canadians get those jobs and work towards that.

When federal dollars are involved in an investment to attract investment here to Canada, I do share MP Masse's concerns and MP Perkins' concerns and those of any Canadian citizen that those jobs go to Canadians, but we must recognize that foreign multinationals or foreign companies will need to bring their expertise over to help get the facility up and running, especially and particularly when completely new technology is being put to use.

• (1700)

With that, Chair, I'm going to stop there. If I need to continue making a statement with regard to....

To go back, for those of you who may or may not know, I've covered this sector for over 20 years. I was one of the lead analysts at a rating agency covering the auto parts sector. I initiated coverage in all of the auto parts sector, folks. I was an analyst covering the OEMs for three years. I covered it on the bond desk for Scotia and all of the Canadian dollar debt issuers on the auto sector.

I've been to the Detroit auto show many times. I've travelled both in Europe and Asia to meet with the executives of BMW, Mercedes, Peugeot, and at the time Fiat in Torino. I do know the sector extremely well.

As a result, today I'm quite proud and I applaud what the government has done to create an entire sector. In it you see a continuum of everything in the supply chain from the auto parts suppliers to how we need to get the mines and those critical minerals away from China and delivered to our battery manufacturers and assembly plants here in Canada. I dislike using the cliché words of “transformation”, “transitional” and all of that stuff, but it's a really big development of an industry here in Canada for many generations. Let's hope it's for as long as possible. There are always these Schumpeterian creative destruction forces alive in the economy, which I love, but for many years and decades to come, it will provide great jobs.

Mr. Généreux, I think you're from the province of Quebec. Quebec is benefiting from this. I remember when we had the Sainte-Thérèse auto plant in Quebec. Hyundai was there for a while, and GM was there. Now we're seeing investment return to the province of Quebec within the auto sector, which I think is just phenomenal and fabulous news.

I think when we speak about that sentence of “prioritizes foreign workers over Canadian jobs”, I get a little dicey about that. I think these are Canadian jobs. They're for Canadians and we need to make sure that they have the opportunity to fill them, but when we need to bring in the foreign expertise to these plants, we all understand that this is the way the business world works. That's the way labour works. Canadians can be trained up to understand how this technology works so they can do the job that these individuals have been doing for literally many years back home. That intellectual property exists within the human capital of these individuals, and they can continue on that march.

Chair, I want to turn it over. Others may want to chime in on the notice of the motion. I do have much more to say, but at the same time we'll stop right there.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sorbara.

Mr. Lemire, you have the floor.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As you know, we're missing the economic statement. I'm dying to hear if we're finally going to invest near the mines. If that had been done, we could have avoided a whole debate.

In the context of the contracts awarded to Stellantis-LG and Volkswagen, if public money had been used close to the mines to develop the entire value chain, we could have avoided major debates today. However, legitimate questions are being asked, particularly where workers are concerned. A study must therefore be carried out.

As a result, I move an amendment to the effect that the proposed study should last six hours, maximum, instead of six meetings and that, at the end, documents should be produced in both official languages. This is fundamental. I think this amendment is a good complement to the motion modified by Mr. Masse's amendment and that we will find a consensus.

The presence of ministers will be particularly important. Very legitimate questions may be asked about the structure of the agreement and the investments that will be made, as well as their spinoffs for the Canadian and Quebec economies.

I support efforts to keep Canada and Quebec attractive to foreign investors. I'm afraid of the impact of this kind of motion that calls things into question. However, there are legitimate questions worth asking. It is for this reason that I will support the motion and propose that it be amended, firstly, so that the study lasts six hours and, secondly, so that the documents are translated into both official languages.

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

An amendment has been moved. I just want to make sure everyone understands the amendment. It proposes that the study last a maximum of six hours rather than six meetings, and that at the very end it be specified that the documents requested be produced in both official languages.

Mr. Lemire, do you want to keep the words "within seven days of this motion being adopted?" I'm asking because I'm familiar with the demand for translation and I know that it can sometimes take a little time.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Yes, this does raise the question of resources. I'm not an expert on translation resources and I don't know how long it will take to translate these documents, but we need to make sure we receive them in both languages as soon as they've been translated.

The Chair: How would the sentence be worded?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: I would say "as soon as possible following the adoption of this motion."

You're right, Mr. Chair. It might not be realistic to allow seven days for translation, without knowing how many documents we'll receive.

The Chair: This would then read "that these documents be produced in both official languages as soon as possible following the adoption of this motion."

Did everyone hear the amendment being proposed?

There are still people who want to talk about the main motion, but, as you know, we have to discuss the amendment first.

Are there any comments on the amendment proposed by Mr. Lemire?

Mr. Turnbull, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I would like to ask for clarification about whether it's a realistic time frame for seven days.

The Chair: We just had this discussion, Mr. Turnbull, which might have been lost in translation.

I'll repeat the sentence. I'll say it in French, because I have my notes in French, and I'll speak slowly for the translators:

[*Translation*]

"that these documents be produced in both official languages as soon as possible following the adoption of this motion."

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Okay, maybe it was lost in translation after all.

I agree to that. It makes sense.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Are there any comments? I see there are none.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: So we move on to the amended motion.

Do Mr. Perkins, Mr. Généreux, Mr. Sorbara and Mr. Van Bynen still wish to speak to the motion, now that there has been an amendment?

[*English*]

I'll get back to my list that I had.

Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

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

I'm not going to repeat everything that everyone else has said. I want to add to it, since there seems to be some concern about whether this issue is actually real.

Beside the numbers that the Korean ambassador quoted, I'll just go through a few of the jobs that are posted. NextStar Energy has posted a number of jobs. This one, for a general affairs specialist, says fluency in Korean is required. Another one says that fluency in Korean is required. Another one for material handler says asset languages are Korean.

A summary of the list of some of the jobs includes general affairs specialist, fluency in Korean; electrode quality engineer, bilingual English-Korean; module production planner, English and Korean proficiency; cell/electrode quality engineer, bilingual in English and Korean; and process quality engineer, bilingual and Korean.

Just so you don't think this is made up from NextStar, this is the Canadian job bank, the Government of Canada, where there are a number of NextStar jobs listed, and it says Korean language is an asset.

To eliminate confusion around LMIA's on the Government of Canada website and the Korean free trade agreement, it actually says on the Government of Canada's website for this job, "Other candidates with or without a valid Canadian work permit." That is the term that allows you to come in and work at the plant without an LMIA. You just need a process through the Canada-Korea thing.

There are more than 22 permanent jobs already listed this way by NextStar. This is not made up. This is real. This is not some tweet by somebody. These are job postings that are included on the Government of Canada website.

Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Généreux, you have the floor.

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

If the Government of Canada is satisfied with the agreement it has signed with the various companies that are setting up in Canada, and is respectful of that agreement, I see no problem with the fact that the contracts that have been signed include provisions on jobs created, on the proportion of jobs held by Canadians. However, all the information contained in these contracts must be revealed in a very transparent way to the committee and to the Canadian public as a whole, so that everyone can verify whether these jobs are indeed jobs for Canadians. As my colleague just asked, are these jobs for Canadians or jobs subsidized by Canadians but going to North Koreans or other foreigners?

I'm in business. My riding, like Mr. Sorbara's, has several manufacturing companies. When we buy equipment, it's perfectly normal for foreign workers to come and install it or provide training. However, we're talking about a company that will employ 2,500 people, and it seems possible that 1,600 people will come from abroad to install equipment and provide training in this plant. If this is the case, we need to hear from the minister, the company's management and representatives of all the stakeholders as to how long these employees will be based in Windsor. What we understood from the beginning was that the government's goal was to create jobs for Canadians in Canada.

[English]

A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

[Translation]

The situation will eventually be the same in Quebec. As the saying goes, "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

Mr. Sorbara, you're right. Since Northvolt is a Swedish company, there are bound to be Swedes coming to work in Canada for a while. Will they require employees to speak French, English and even Swedish when they open positions? Will these positions be permanent or temporary? Will these people coming to install equipment be on the job for six months or some other period?

The company has 30 years' experience in battery manufacturing plants in South Korea. I imagine it won't take 30 years to get this equipment up and running in Canada, and for production and productivity to be optimal. I imagine it will take some time for this equipment to be installed and operational, and for staff to be trained. If that's the case, let's hear it. That's what transparency is all about.

In 2015, the Prime Minister said very clearly that he was going to form the most transparent government in Canadian history. I'm sorry to say that the complete opposite is happening.

The parliamentary secretary comes here and says that the Conservatives don't have a plan for the environment and that they're afraid of these investments. It's completely stupid to say things like that. In the history of Canada, the Conservative government has created the most free trade agreements. It has developed the Canada we live in today. What we've had for the past eight years is debt. I'm reading what's happening in the House of Commons. They've just said that this Liberal government has no objective for balancing the budget over the next ten years. There's something that isn't working and never will.

To get back to the motion and the contracts we're looking at, we need to make sure we get the information the government has relied on. We need to have access to it in a transparent way. If it's true that 1,600 South Korean workers will be coming to work in Canada, we need to make sure that these are temporary jobs to avoid subsidizing permanent jobs for foreign workers in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1715)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Généreux.

Go ahead, Mr. Van Bynen.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be very brief.

When I look at this situation where we're trying to encourage foreign investment into the Canadian economy, I reflect back on a situation that I was directly involved in, the global enterprise at Celestica. There was an opportunity there for us to compete with a number of other municipalities and jurisdictions.

We were successful. We created hundreds of jobs in our small community, and we were able to do that on the basis of collaboration. We engaged the federal, the provincial, the regional and the municipal authorities to work together to let Celestica know that it was important for us to have the jobs that their investment would create for our community.

Those jobs were important in terms of creating additional employment for our community, but one of the things that I keep hearing now is that these jobs are going to foreign workers. Well, the foreign workers pay rent and they buy groceries. They support retail industries, and that money is being spent locally. I think we sometimes find it all too easy to overlook those things.

What's disappointing for me is the tone in which all of this happens. How does this portray Canada? Does it portray Canada as a country that welcomes investment, wants to collaborate and work with people, as opposed to kicking around every project like a football and vilifying the investments? If I were an investor, I certainly wouldn't be interested in dealing with those kinds of circumstances.

I think we should overlook this oppositional method and start putting before us the importance that this has to our country, to the jobs that it creates for Windsor and to the secondary jobs that it supports in that area.

I would hope that we would develop an attitude of welcoming, an attitude of collaboration, an attitude of working together, so that Canada not only becomes that but strengthens its profile as a place to invest.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Van Bynen.

Mr. Turnbull, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thanks, Chair.

I appreciate Mr. Van Bynen's comments. I appreciate the comment about tone and how we want to be welcoming of investment.

Also, it strikes me that there could be a chord of xenophobia through this a little bit too. It's in there in terms of—

Mr. Rick Perkins: Oh, come on. [*Inaudible—Editor*] of the desperate.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you, Mr. Perkins, for interrupting me once again and speaking out of turn, which is...

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

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: You shouldn't, actually, because it's against the rules of committee.

Mr. Rick Perkins: You're misleading people.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Well, I'm not misleading anybody.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Order, please. I want this type of reciprocal exchange to stop in committee. I will no longer tolerate it.

[*English*]

Please keep your comments to yourself. When you have the floor, you have the floor. Otherwise, one member is speaking.

Go ahead, Mr. Turnbull.

• (1720)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thanks, Chair. I appreciate that.

It's interesting that we've heard quite a lot. I've heard a lot of numbers about how much the global clean economy and clean energy investments are increasing dramatically. In fact, recently I heard an expert in this area talk about how clean energy investments globally have actually surpassed the fossil fuel-related investments by 1.8; that's almost double. The tides are shifting, and we want to make sure Canada gets its fair share of that global economic growth.

What we're seeing to date is that we are well positioned to get that, and we're competing through our investment tax credits and the Canada growth fund. Our government is securing those essential investments for building that future economy. The key for us is to acknowledge at the outset that those investments are good for the Canadian economy and good for workers.

We've seen investments right across the electric vehicle supply chain. I'm referring now to the fall economic statement. I know we missed it, in some sense, because members felt they needed to have this debate today, but that's fine. Here we are.

In mining and refining, there have been significant investments. There have been significant investments in processing and components, and in battery manufacturing, which we're discussing today. Those are sizable and really important investments. Parts and assembly, and even recycling, are in development. It really is the whole value chain, which is great to see. We can all agree that it's good news for this country.

I would like to propose an amendment. I'm uncomfortable with the preamble to the motion. I don't have the amended motion in front of me, Chair, because members have been amending on the fly, so please excuse me if there's anything out of order, and maybe we can rectify it. It would probably be good to have the amended motion sent around, but I'll make my best effort to amend it one more time, and we'll see what happens. Hopefully members will agree.

I would like to strike a lot of the wording.

I move, “That the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology undertake a six-hour study on the use of foreign workers at the EV battery manufacturing facility in Windsor, Ontario, to support the implementation of a new EV battery industry in Canada and the training of Canadian workers, and that the committee invite the following witnesses.”

That's the amendment I'd like to propose. It eliminates the very biased preamble that I think would inhibit us from getting to consensus on doing some work on this topic. It's less biased. Hopefully all members could agree to it. It's an honest attempt to try to amend this motion and maybe get to some consensus today, if members are serious about doing this work. I'll leave it at that.

The Chair: Basically, what you're proposing would come right before two dots, and then we have the witnesses listed, the minister.... That's the part that would....

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: That's correct.

The Chair: Okay. Have all members heard the terms of the amendment proposed by Mr. Turnbull?

Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I know we're all doing it on the fly. Is there some way to get that preamble emailed around to us? I think it goes to where it starts with witnesses. Is that basically where it ends?

The Chair: Can you read it again? My understanding is that instead of “Given that the Government of Canada”, it would start with what you just read out. Mr. Turnbull, can you read it again?

• (1725)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Just so I understand, what part is taken out? Is it from the beginning to...?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: We're basically replacing a lot of the language. The whole preamble is basically taken out and replaced with language. I will read it out.

The Chair: It would be starting at “Given” and go to the two dots where the witnesses are taken out, other than the hours.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: The hours are going to be six hours.

It would say, “That the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology undertake a six-hour study on the use of foreign workers at the EV battery manufacturing facility in Windsor, Ontario, to support the implementation of a new EV battery industry in Canada, and the training of Canadian workers; and that the committee invite the following witnesses”.

The witness list is consistent with what was already there.

The Chair: The witnesses list remains as amended by Mr. Masse.

I recognize Mr. Masse.

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

Briefly on the amendment, I do support it in terms of our committee trying to be constructive. What we all want are good jobs at the end of the day for this. If we can find some consensus on this, it's something that is important for me in the sense that we go forward, because this is a difficult thing to deal with.

I think we're being responsible here. It was responsible to have the debate here and the discussion. I appreciate Mr. Perkins' motion and I appreciate Mr. Lemire's amendment and also Mr. Turnbull's. I think we can do some good work. The history of this committee has really been centred around consensus, and I think this is appropriate.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Masse, for your comments.

The clerk has just received the text of the amendment, and we'll circulate it to the members.

Has everyone heard the terms of the amendment, and are you all in agreement with it? I just want to make sure we're all on the same page.

An hon. member: I think so. I just want to read it.

The Chair: That will take a couple of minutes.

Mr. Turnbull, if you want to, read it again.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Otherwise we could suspend until then.

The Chair: We can suspend. Just for members to know, we have a hard stop at 5:52.

Mr. Rick Perkins: We can stay here until 7:30.

The Chair: That's not what the clerk has told me, but I appreciate that I have a second clerk in the person of Mr. Perkins.

We'll suspend for two minutes for the email to reach your inboxes, and then we'll come back.

• (1725)

(Pause)

• (1730)

The Chair: Okay, colleagues, the amendment proposed by Mr. Turnbull is out, so you can have a look at it in your inboxes.

An hon. member: I think it's missing a word. It should be “undertake a six-hour”.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Yes, it's supposed to be “undertake a six-hour study”. Sorry about that.

I said it, but it was wasn't in the text, so I apologize.

The Chair: I noticed this as well.

I know that Mr. Masse—

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: We should ensure that the interpreters receive the motion so that it can be interpreted.

The Chair: Wait a moment, Mr. Lemire.

I notice that it says “2 hours” in French. However, we're talking about 6 hours?

• (1735)

[*English*]

A voice: The witness changes aren't there...that were made by....

A voice: The witnesses are still the same. Brian Masse changed the [*Inaudible—Editor*].

The Chair: I understand that we are doing this on the fly, as was mentioned before, but the witnesses would be the ones listed by Mr. Masse, not the ones of the original motion.

You've all heard Mr. Turnbull's amendment. I'm looking around the table to see if there is consensus on this proposed amendment.

(Amendment agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

Are there any other amendments or comments on the main motion?

Go ahead, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I have another amendment to propose here, and I hope we can get to a consensus on it.

We have spoken about contracts in the past, and members have wanted them to be made public, in a sense, or for the committee be allowed to view those contracts. I want to propose something that is a good compromise that is building off a precedent that was implemented for the VW contracts prior.

Maybe I'll propose the wording, Mr. Chair. Just to be clear, this is not a part of the witness list that was proposed by Mr. Masse. It's really the part that's dealing with all documents related to government funding, Canada job creation, etc.

This would be my proposal for the amended wording: “and the committee request the contract with Stellantis-LG regarding NextStar EV battery manufacturing facility in Windsor, Ontario, with job numbers unredacted, in both official languages upon adoption of the motion; that the contract be available at the clerk's office for viewing by committee members for a minimum of 48 hours before the meeting, under the supervision of the clerk, and that no personal mobile, electronic or recording devices of any kind be permitted in the room that week, and that no notes be taken out of the room, and that the committee meet with ISED officials in camera following the viewing of the contract.”

In essence, as permanent members on this committee, we'd all have access to the contract for no less than 48 hours prior to meeting with the ISED officials, and we'd also see the unredacted job numbers. Obviously, there are still some redactions that are necessary, but the job numbers would be unredacted, and it would be in both official languages, of course.

I'm just reviewing that. I can send along an email with the proposed language if you'd like.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

Go ahead, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Thank you.

I appreciate, Mr. Turnbull, the purpose of the amendment.

For those who may not know, when we had a similar motion and viewed the Volkswagen contracts, the jobs weren't redacted. It was other things that were redacted—the construction schedule and the production numbers—so that's not a fear.

It's a little challenging and difficult for us to question witnesses in a study on this if we actually don't get access to any form of this contract publicly. The rules of seeing them in confidence is that you can't talk about the contract.

I will oppose this amendment simply because I'm not going have my hands tied about what I can and cannot ask the witnesses.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: All right.

[*English*]

It's clear for all what the terms of the amendment are.

Mr. Turnbull, I see that you want to....

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I just wanted to say that I think if we had a meeting with ISED officials in camera, we could speak to them and question them about the contract. It just wouldn't be able to be in public, obviously. I think that removes the challenges with having seen something that would normally not be given public access. We could maybe deal with it that way. That way members could be assured they would be able to ask the questions that they want to ask the ISED officials. That, to me, seems like a good compromise.

I know we've said six hours of meetings. I'm thinking three meetings. The committee might choose to break it up in different ways. It might be an extra hour per meeting. I'd rather see us do it in three two-hour meetings. That way we would get the ministers in one meeting. I think the ambassador and any other witnesses would be in another meeting, and then probably there would be a third meeting, which would be to review the contract, unredacted job numbers... Mr. Perkins said that those numbers were unredacted in the previous Volkswagen contract. That's great. Members would get the answers to their questions. Then they could ask questions of the ISED officials. That might be a way we could move forward on this.

I would be interested to know what members of the various parties think.

I'll be sending along the wording of the proposed amendment right now.

• (1740)

The Chair: Okay.

I have Mr. Masse.

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

I would just prefer to keep what we have in place at the moment. I thought we were working towards consensus. I'm kind of surprised that this wasn't part of what we previously had. I'm hoping that we can actually....

Procedurally, I'm a little bit confused about whether this is another subamendment or a separate motion outside of what took place. We kind of took a break from dealing with the last one and then having this thrust upon us is kind of unusual. We just dealt with the Liberal amendment during the break.

I'll be quick, as I see Mr. Turnbull has his hand up. I'll let him explain that.

I also want this to be purposeful with regard to the meetings. I don't understand how, if we did what was suggested, it would make our meetings purposeful.

This is about more than just the Windsor jobs; this is about setting a precedent and also setting an expectation that we can get jobs for Canadians in Quebec, in other parts of Ontario and also in British Columbia. I just want to keep that in focus.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: I think Mr. Turnbull wants to respond to Mr. Masse's comments.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I understand completely that it's a bit confusing to have two amendments on the fly like this. I'm reacting to different pieces of what's been—

Mr. Brian Masse: I'm sorry. Mr. Turnbull is not coming across. We've lost the audio.

The Chair: Can you hear me, Mr. Masse?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes, I can hear you, Mr. Chair. It's just Mr. Turnbull, but I know that his mike was on.

The Chair: That's strange.

Maybe he could use Madam Lapointe's microphone.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Can you hear me? Is my mike working?

The Chair: Perhaps, Mr. Turnbull, you can use Viviane's microphone.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Okay.

Oh wow, that's much clearer. It really works now.

Some hon members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I was just going to say to Mr. Masse that I totally appreciate the challenges with working on the fly like this. I think we're all amending on the fly, and I appreciate your patience with that. I'm putting things forward that relate to different pieces and my reactions to a motion.

I think it's important, though, that we all agree that there is commercially sensitive information in these contracts. I think we can all agree that we wouldn't want to inhibit future contracts or inhibit the companies in terms of that sensitive information. I think it has to be kept confidential.

We're offering a solution here so that we, as members of Parliament, as permanent members of this committee, can view those contracts. It's consistent with the way we dealt with the VW contract at the committee, and I think it makes sense. I think members had that opportunity before.

I would just say that we need to both make sure that the sensitive commercial information is protected and also that Canada as a whole is not undermined in terms of its ability to negotiate. I think this is a pretty fair compromise so that members can get to the bottom of it and have questions asked and answered based on viewing those documents.

Thanks.

● (1745)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Vis, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Go ahead, please.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm no expert. However, I did read the Volkswagen contract signed between Volkswagen and the Government of Canada. As I understood it, there is a requirement under other laws in Canada that the commercial sensitivity of a contract be considered.

In the case of Volkswagen, the commercial sensitivities aren't determined by the government but by the other signatory, and I think the same precedent should apply when reviewing the Stellantis contract. It is not for the government to determine the commercial sensitivity of the contract, but for Stellantis to do so.

Thank you.

The Chair: I have Mr. Williams.

Mr. Ryan Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We were all part of this committee when we looked at the Volkswagen contract. I understand what Mr. Turnbull is trying to do, but when we got in there, there were only two pieces that were redacted and they were really minor. Those documents could have been provided publicly, because we didn't see anything that the public couldn't see. Everything was spoken about. I think we even asked several times afterwards to get those documents in public, because what we saw was nothing that wasn't already out there.

At the same time, for this one, the government could provide these documents and provide those same redactions on production and on workers, but it's not going to stop it publicly, according to officials that we have had in this committee.... Also, we have asked the witnesses to come here publicly to give those same numbers. I think this allows this committee and the public to see exactly what's in there. If there are redactions that we have questions on, there can be other motions made to look at those documents, in the same instance, I think, that Mr. Turnbull has asked for.

We have to have all these instances become public, because this is all public knowledge at this point. This is on the front page of The Globe and Mail today. When we're looking at what we need to have for this committee to go forward, I think, as Mr. Masse has stated from Windsor West, we need to ensure that we get the information publicly. We need a public meeting so that all the Canadians who are reading this today—I don't know how many people read The Globe and Mail right now, but I'm sure it's over a couple of million still—get the answers they are looking for, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I think if millions were reading The Globe and Mail, they wouldn't need a subsidy from the federal government, but I'll leave that.

Mr. Chair, thank you.

Mr. Turnbull, on the process issue that we went through last time, what happened in this process is that there was a construction contract with Stellantis before the IRA. After the IRA, a deal was signed for a construction contract, and there was a separate contract for Volkswagen. The second contract dealt with the IRA response and the first contract dealt with the similar construction thing on that. There were two contracts, Mr. Chair, that we wanted to see, and we saw both of them.

There was very little redacted, and the clause that struck me in the contract—and I don't think this is sharing any confidences—said that the government, before releasing the contract—which meant that the government could release the contract—had to ask the partner which clauses they felt were confidentially sensitive. It was not what the government felt was confidentially sensitive.

I'm presuming that those are the same clauses that might be in the Stellantis contract. I'm sure the government can comment on that.

As my colleague Mr. Williams said, most of the things, such as the amount of the subsidy every year that's stated in the contract, are actually lifted straight from the IRA. That part of it is public, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer has spoken to it.

Although I've read them in the Volkswagen contract, what we haven't seen are the conditions around job creation and how many jobs there will be. The terms of those jobs and what the exemptions were for not meeting those commitments were in the Volkswagen contract.

It's hard to question the officials from the company or the minister or other officials as to whether or not they're complying with a contract that we can't talk about publicly, and that's why we believe that the contract, which I would expect would have a couple of redactions from the partner—not from the government, but from the Stellantis partner—would be fine to be released so that we can deal with it.

Volkswagen did not redact the issues around job conditions in the contract that we saw.

I'll leave it there, Mr. Chair.

• (1750)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Perkins.

I have MP Sorbara.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Chair, through you, I just have a point of clarification to my honourable colleagues on the other side of this table.

Can you just answer this for me? When we sit on committees we can either be public, as we are now, or we can go in camera to discuss certain things and make decisions to a certain extent and see things, and then there's a point of redacted and unredacted documents in general.

When you go in camera, you may see redacted or unredacted documents, depending on the nature of the situation. I wasn't here when you folks looked at the Volkswagen documents. I'm assuming it was done in camera.

Mr. Rick Perkins: It wasn't done in committee.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: It wasn't done in the committee, but there were redactions on the documents that you saw.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Correct.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Are you saying that you would now want to have that same process where you were...?

The Chair: Mr. Perkins, you can respond.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I wouldn't ask the government to break the terms of the contract on the role of the partner, in this case Stellantis, on the commercial sensitivity elements that they could choose or not choose to release publicly.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: I know Mr. Williams made an intervention and I was just following along on that. I wasn't sure if I understood what the ask was in terms of redacted documents in camera, or not in camera.... I just wanted to clarify what the ask was on your side.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Van Bynen, you have the floor. Then it will be Mr. Turnbull's turn.

[*English*]

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was part of the group that had an opportunity to look at the other contract, the earlier contract.

I guess it's not what we think is important; it's what the other party thinks is important and confidential. My concern is on how we determine what that is. Are we going to approach the other party, and they would redact it? I think we need to respect that.

This also comes back to this notion I had raised earlier around tone. We really don't want to be a hostile environment and we really don't want people who are interested in investing in us not to see this as a favourable economic environment where we work together to find solutions. It's important that we respect those commercial confidential factors, and how we go about doing that, I think, is quite critical.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Van Bynen.

Mr. Turnbull, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I wanted to clarify as well.

Your original motion called for the committee to order the full unredacted contract. I think my colleague Mr. Sorbara made a good point: He clarified that unredacted copies that you can see in camera, or in a room, are very different from redacted copies that you'd see in public. I'm just wondering whether your original motion is calling for something that, to me, can't happen, which is full unredacted contracts in committee.

What I'm asking is... If they're viewed in public, they will have to be redacted. We were trying to offer you the opportunity to see the least redactions possible in camera, so that you could get answers to your questions. That's a good-faith effort. There would still be some redactions, of course, but there would be fewer than what you'd get if you had a redacted copy in public.

I'm just clarifying. I think we've had a good conversation about this, but we were trying to offer more. If you want these contracts in public, they're going to have to be more heavily redacted. We know there are some limitations to what can be out there that's commercially sensitive, so we have to be responsible about this with the tone that Mr. Van Bynen talked about.

I just want to clarify what you're actually looking for here. Would you accept a public version that's redacted?

The Chair: I'll go to Mr. Perkins for a response.

• (1755)

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

That's a good question, Mr. Turnbull.

What we're trying to do is get the most unredacted copy, I guess. In a perfect world, there would be no redacted copy. I'm assuming, since the minister said these contracts are similar, that it's up to the company, not the government, to contractually choose what is redacted or not. I think it's a little presumptuous to say that you think the company would choose to redact more than what we said.

It may be that the company is willing to let all of it go out. We don't know that. That's the choice of the partner. We would like the public document as per the terms, probably, of the contract, so it's up to Stellantis to choose what's public or not, and not the government.

The Chair: I understand that maybe we're making progress, but in any event, there's an amendment that is already on the floor presented by Mr. Turnbull. I understand it has been circulated to all

members by the clerk, so I would like us to rein in the discussion on this.

Go ahead, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I'm not discounting the fact that there are some unknowns in terms of how much a company will want redacted. I totally agree that it may be a factor we don't have control over, but there are some obligations, I would think, for us to have some redactions in those contracts as well.

Either way, what are we really looking for here? I would be interested to hear from other colleagues around the table on where they stand on this. I think it's important to ensure that we're not committing to revealing more information than a company would want. I think we can all acknowledge that we don't want to commit to an unredacted version, which is what the Conservatives had in their original motion. I think we can all agree that it's not appropriate, given the fact that you've already admitted that the companies themselves will want redactions. Even if we don't know exactly how much they'll want redacted, we know that they'll want some redactions. That's pretty consistent with past discussions and agreements at this committee, as I understand it.

I would be interested to know what my other colleagues from the NDP and the Bloc think about the proposal I've put forward, in order to see where they stand.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Turnbull.

Before I yield the floor to MP Masse online, I will just note for the benefit of members that I have been informed by the clerk that we have resources until 7:52 p.m. That doesn't mean we need to use them, but they are there.

Mr. Masse, the floor is yours.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be quick.

I do appreciate what I think is Mr. Turnbull's sincere approach in terms of dealing with sensitive information, but I think what Mr. Perkins played out was about right in terms of where we're at. I've been consistently on the record for a national auto policy that's transparent, believing that the workers and the investment are worthwhile.

I understand where this is coming from, but I can't support it for those reasons.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Masse.

Are there any further comments on Mr. Turnbull's proposed amendment? If there are none, I'll have to—

Mr. Turnbull, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I just want to ask this: What will we do if the company wants to redact the contract heavily? Will the Conservatives be satisfied with that? Will other members be satisfied with that?

It seems to me, or I anticipate, that if you're admitting that we don't have control over the level of redactions that will be included, the members opposite will be disappointed if they don't have information that they're looking for. To me there's an advantage to reviewing contracts that are lightly redacted in camera if you're really interested in getting the answers you want. To me that seems quite reasonable, and I've offered that as the amendment.

Maybe we just want to vote on the amendment and then debate the motion further, but I'm hoping that we can get to some consensus on this amendment.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Perkins, you have the floor.

[English]

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

MP Turnbull, I guess the answer to my question is that I will leave it in the capable hands of Stellantis and the government to abide by the agreement that's probably there about Stellantis's ability to choose what is commercially sensitive and not. I know that in the case of Volkswagen, they redacted only three parts of it. I suspect that Volkswagen didn't trust that any politician would keep it secret no matter what they showed us. I'm willing to live with it at this stage and see what the contract produces publicly and what Stellantis is willing to put out in public. We'll look at it from there.

I appreciate the offer, MP Turnbull. I really do appreciate the offer to allow us access in private the way we had it through the Volkswagen contract, but at this stage I'd be much more comfortable saying that these contracts.... I think both of them should be public, but in this case we're dealing specifically with the motion about the plant in Windsor and the contract around that. I'm talking about the two contracts. Remember, there are two contracts, the SIF contract and the production subsidy contract.

I'm willing to see what Stellantis is willing to let go public.

I hope that answers your question.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Van Bynen, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Mr. Chair, there has been a considerable amount of discussion around the impact of the amendments. I would just like to get some clarification.

I wonder if we could suspend for a few moments to have a look at the text and look at this amendment in the context of the total motion.

The Chair: I'll suspend, but very, very briefly. It's been in your inboxes for a while now, while this has been discussed.

Mr. Rick Perkins: It's a government amendment.

The Chair: That's a fair point too, Mr. Perkins. It's an amendment from the Liberal side.

I'm tempted not to suspend, actually, Mr. Van Bynen. I'm looking around the room to see if there's a need for it. I don't sense it.

[Translation]

Mr. Lemire, do you need us to suspend for—

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Chair, I would never dare challenge your decision and authority. I stand by your rigour.

[English]

The Chair: It's on the record.

[Translation]

Mr. Turnbull, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I'm really concerned that we'll be disclosing to the public things that could be commercially sensitive. I think that could have a negative impact on further deals. It could have a negative impact on the Government of Canada's ability to negotiate.

I think these deals come with some pretty substantive agreements that are worked out and negotiated over time. I think companies would feel they are quite sensitive.

I'm a little confused as to what the objective really is here, if members aren't willing to get more information and clarity in camera. Is this really about revealing unredacted copies to the public, having that information out there and undermining the ability of some of these companies to attract further investment?

It seems like a pretty counterproductive thing. That's what's in the original motion. If members intended to get to the bottom of this, you'd think they would actually vote for more information, and access to more information would be better.

I'm still a bit confused as to what the intent is here. I'm sure it's not to undermine future investments or negotiations between Canada and other countries. I'm hopeful it's not to reveal things that are within those contracts that shouldn't be held in anything but the strictest confidentiality. Maybe members want to comment on that. It still strikes me as a bit of a sticking point here. I'm trying to understand the motivations of my colleagues.

● (1805)

The Chair: I have Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Thank you.

The motivation's simple: It's transparency. It's \$15 billion of taxpayer money going to subsidize one of the largest foreign auto companies in the world. There should be transparency on where it's going.

I understand that there may be something that's really commercially sensitive in this, but I didn't see it when I read the Volkswagen contract. With most of the issues, either the minister's talked about them or they're in the IRA, so I don't know why the Liberals are afraid of them.

Apparently Marc Miller, your colleague and a minister of the Crown, just tweeted, “South Koreans are eligible to work at NextStar EV factory”. What is it? Are they not allowed to, or are they allowed to? Perhaps we should listen to a minister of the Crown.

Going forward, that's why we need transparency. We need to hear from witnesses on the public contract and what the company is willing to put out about what's going on here.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have Mr. Turnbull and then Mr. Gaheer.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I appreciate the comments, but respectfully, I don't think the intention of the original motion was about the \$15 billion. It was really about local jobs. Is that right? I think that's what the 106(4) meeting was about.

Mr. Perkins, you already know those numbers, based on what's been clearly identified by the minister. Isn't it really just a verification that those numbers are in this contract?

To me, we're saying, “No problem; we can provide a lightly redacted version of it in camera for you to verify.” That's contrary to what you've claimed, which is that somehow the minister is not being forthright and transparent about this. If it's really about transparency, isn't it about seeing whether those numbers we've been saying publicly are actually reflected in the contract?

As per the minister's comments, I have the article in which the minister said very clearly that under Prime Minister Harper, a free trade agreement was negotiated with South Korea. It has reciprocity as well. It allows for South Korean workers to come to Canada. The Conservatives set it up, and now you're concerned about local jobs.

Mr. Rick Perkins: I'm concerned about the contract.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: You're concerned about the local jobs of workers, yet you're the party that allowed South Koreans to come here without a visa in previous—

Mr. Ryan Williams: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Turnbull, there's a point of order by Mr. Williams.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Okay. I hope it's a point of order.

Mr. Ryan Williams: I'm sure Mr. Turnbull's not trying to say that you would be responsible, Mr. Chair. If the member would kindly go through you when making his outlandish accusations, that would be fantastic.

Thank you.

The Chair: That's duly noted.

If it's possible, given the context of this discussion, speak through the chair.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Sure, yes, absolutely....

To me, there's a very clear indication in Minister Miller's remarks that were quoted in the CBC article very clearly that the free trade agreement allows South Korean workers to come to Canada. Those are called intercompany transfers, individuals who are helping train people and get facilities started at the first-ever battery manufacturing facility in Canada. One would expect some of those South Ko-

rean workers, who are highly trained and skilled, to come to Canada to ensure that Canadian workers can learn the skills they need. I understand that some of those skills and some of those jobs require a specific skill set. That's not to mention that companies have very specific ways in which they want to train their workers, and part of that is a part of their brand.

If members want to debate this further, we can continue, or maybe we are prepared to move to a vote on the amendment.

• (1810)

The Chair: I understand that on the Liberal side, there's a willingness to proceed with the vote, but I still have some speakers. I have Mr. Masse and Mr. Vis.

Go ahead, Brian.

Mr. Brian Masse: I call for the vote, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I can't until the speakers list is exhausted, so if you have no comments, Mr. Masse, I'll move to Mr. Vis.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll just clarify a few points, and then I believe it is in order to go to a vote as well.

First off, I'm going to put this on the record.

Mr. Turnbull stated earlier that we were making comments that were xenophobic in nature. Those weren't his exact words, but he did use the word “xenophobia”. I'm going to put on the record that if he... We all take partisan angles at this committee, but if he is going to go down that path, here is my word: I vow to make his job as hard as possible as a parliamentary secretary, and I'm putting that on the public record.

You have no reason to do that. I said in the very beginning of this meeting that the Conservatives did, in fact, sign a free trade agreement with labour mobility provisions in the contract. You obviously weren't listening to the debate earlier on. That was never in question. It's very insulting that you did that. You turned around and tried to make it better in the end, so thank you, but don't personalize the debate here.

Mr. Chair, we cannot personalize the debate in the way that the parliamentary secretary did today. We work very well on this committee, but I am stating as a fact, on behalf of my constituents, that if he starts doing that, it's not going to be easy for him to get the things done that he wants to get done. It was so inappropriate.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: On a point of order, Chair, I feel that the member threatened me, and that cannot happen at committee. No matter what I say, I have the freedom of expression in this committee as a member of Parliament, and if I want to say you're xenophobic, I can say you're xenophobic.

I didn't say that. I said there's a xenophobic tone. That's exactly what I said. I didn't call you xenophobic, but it doesn't matter. I'm allowed to say what I want to say, and you're not allowed to threaten members of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Order, please.

Mr. Turnbull, first of all, it's not true that you have the right to say whatever you want in committee, any more than any other MP. There is a level of decorum to be observed here, and I will not tolerate personal attacks from either side.

Secondly, Mr. Vis, I would encourage you to be very careful about what you say. It's true that it was almost a threat. I won't tolerate that kind of threat in committee either. We're all capable of doing a lot better than what I'm hearing right now. I'd like us to take a deep breath and return to more civil discourse and appropriate decorum on both sides.

Now, if there are no further interventions, I think we're finally ready to proceed to the vote on the amendment proposed by Mr. Turnbull.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas, 6; nays, 5 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

• (1815)

The Chair: We now turn to the main motion, which has been amended several times.

Are there any other comments or amendments? If not, we'll proceed to the vote on the amended motion

[*English*]

I'm looking around the room. I'm seeing none. That's the best moment of the meeting.

If there are no more comments, we can vote on the motion as amended. It's clear to everyone where we stand right now on this motion, given all the amendments that we have.

Do we need a vote at this point, or is there consensus to adopt the motion as amended?

We have consensus.

(Motion as amended agreed to: [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: I thank you all. I hope we have a more peaceful meeting at the next meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.

[*Translation*]

I thank the interpreters, clerks and support staff.

Have a good day, everyone.

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