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Chair: Mr. George Chalal



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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 90 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Tuesday, October 17, 2023, and the adopted motion of Wednesday, December 13, 2023, the committee is resuming the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

Since today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of members and witnesses.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For interpretation for those on Zoom, you have the choice at the bottom of your screen of floor, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

Although this room is equipped with a powerful audio system, feedback events can occur. These can be extremely harmful to interpreters and cause serious injuries. The most common cause of feedback is an earpiece worn too close to a microphone. We therefore ask all participants to exercise a high degree of caution when handling the earpieces, especially when their microphone or their neighbour's microphone is turned on.

In order to prevent incidents and safeguard the hearing health of interpreters, I invite participants to ensure that they speak into the microphone into which their headset is plugged and to avoid manipulating the earbuds by placing them on the table away from the microphone when they are not in use.

This is a reminder that all comments should be addressed through the chair. Additionally, taking screenshots or photos of your screen is not permitted.

With us today to answer your questions, from the Department of Justice, we have Jean-Nicolas Bustros, counsel; and also Jean-François Roman, legal counsel. From the Department of Natural Resources, we have Abigail Lixfeld, senior director, renewable and

electrical energy division, energy systems sector; Annette Tobin, director, offshore management division, fuels sector; Lauren Knowles, deputy director; Cheryl McNeil, deputy director; Daniel Morin, senior legislative and policy adviser, renewable and electrical energy division.

As well, we have, as the legislative clerks from the House of Commons, Dancella Boyi and Émilie Thivierge.

We will proceed.

At the last meeting, the committee adopted clause 125. There are no amendments submitted to clauses 126 to 135.

Do we have unanimous consent to group them for a vote?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Clauses 126 to 135 inclusive agreed to: yeas 9; nays 1)

(On clause 136)

The Chair: We have new CPC-11.

Do we have a member who would like to move CPC-11?

Mr. Patzer, go ahead.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate it.

I would move that the bill, in clause 136, be amended by replacing lines 1 to 3 on page 94 with the following:

(2.1) An order made by the Regulator in a case referred to in paragraph (1)(a) with respect to a submerged land licence takes effect immediately but is subject to sections 38.1 to 38.3.

There is no specific requirement to consider the fish or their habitats or any applicable regional or strategic assessments by the minister or the regulator making decisions on a call for bids or submerged land licences. If the American experience is of any value, then you'll note that, once a call for bids or SLL is issued, the pressure for development is overwhelming, regardless of the environmental issues that are later identified.

At minimum, Canadians should expect to see such required consideration in the parent legislation that enables the call for bids or the granting of submerged land licences.

It seems like a pretty common-sense addition to the legislation, and I think we heard some compelling witness testimony that would make this a solid addition to the bill.

• (1540)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patzer.

I'll now go to Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Thank you.

Actually, I was just hoping that maybe I could ask some of our experts here for some information.

My understanding is that the regulator can already decide to issue orders to address safety issues and the like, but in here, there's a piece that seems to be dealing with ministerial decision-making too. Could you explain to me what the impact would be of the amendment that's proposed?

Ms. Abigail Lixfeld (Senior Director, Renewable and Electrical Energy Division, Energy Systems Sector, Department of Natural Resources): Thank you very much for the question.

This particular section of the bill deals with prohibitions, so it is orders that would be given to stop work or activities in the event of certain circumstances. In the event of a major health and safety issue, where life and limb is at issue, an order made by the regulator takes effect immediately because the regulator needs to respond to an emergency situation. All other decisions that are made by the regulator do need to go through a ministerial decision process, and that's what outlined in (1)(a).

The effect of this amendment would be that decisions of the regulator don't actually need to be considered by government and that the regulator would be able to take those decisions unilaterally. This particular amendment appears exclusively in the renewables section. The previous clause pertains to decisions taken under the petroleum side of the mandate, so there would be a discrepancy between a decision taken for petroleum and a decision taken with respect to renewables. Of course, that same clause does not appear in the Newfoundland portion of the bill as this particular amendment is only on the Nova Scotia side, and to the extent possible, we strive for symmetry between the Nova Scotia and the Newfoundland portions of the bill.

Thank you.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: That's very helpful because obviously we need to be making sure that the two mirror one another. I also am interested by the fact that it would be impacting renewables differently, and I find comfort in the fact that, when it's a health and safety issue, orders would take effect immediately.

Based on everything that I've heard, I'll be opposing this amendment.

The Chair: Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Thank you.

I had studied this. I was wondering and looked into it.

I thank our witnesses here for their testimony because I think it would send a very bad message if we were to put limits and obligations on renewables that petroleum is exempted from. That would send, I think, a very negative message. Perhaps it was brought forward with good intent, but it would definitely have negative consequences.

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs, go ahead.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Chair, thank you.

I can certainly see that the NDP is propping up their Liberal masters and will defeat this amendment, but to my colleague's comment, I would just remind him that if he truly is concerned about the difference in the treatment between offshore petroleum and renewable development in Bill C-49, then of course he should have agreed with our amendments that would have dealt with the fact that, in Bill C-49, the decision timing for a call to bid for licences under Bill C-49 will be triple the time for offshore renewables as it currently is for petroleum, which will also be maintained in its current timeline in Bill C-49. However, I can see that they've already decided what to do with this particular amendment.

Thanks, Chair.

The Chair: I don't see any further debate. We'll proceed to a vote on CPC-11.

(Amendment negatived: nays 7; yeas 4)

(Clause 136 agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

(On clause 137)

• (1545)

The Chair: We'll now proceed to amendment G-15 on clause 137.

Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: This should be a fairly straightforward one. It's correcting a typo by removing the word "the" that appears before the word "an". We need to remove the word "the". It doesn't fit in grammatically. I'm hoping everyone will agree to that.

The Chair: Thank you.

I don't see any further debate. We'll now go to the vote on G-15.

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

(Clause 137 as amended agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

The Chair: We will now proceed to the next clauses. There are no amendments submitted to clauses 138 to 146. Do we have unanimous consent to group them for the vote?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Clauses 138 to 146 inclusive agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

(On clause 147)

The Chair: We'll now proceed to clause 147.

On BQ-27, we have Monsieur Simard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Chair, I won't be moving amendments BQ-27, BQ-28 and BQ-29. Since my proposed amendments to the first part of the bill were voted down, I assume that, for the sake of consistency, the same logic will apply in this case.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Simard.

You're withdrawing BQ-27 to BQ-29, just to clarify. Thank you.

We will proceed to new NDP-2.

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'm trying to keep a similar position between the Newfoundland and Labrador accord and what we have in Nova Scotia. We have a belief that when we're making these commitments we need to see that the jobs are not just being taken offshore, particularly to competitors in the United States, Europe or elsewhere. We have job obligations and commitments that we're looking for. Therefore, I will move this motion.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I appreciate Mr. Angus's comments, but this is similar to NDP-1, which did not pass. To ensure consistency between the Newfoundland and Nova Scotia versions of this bill, I oppose the motion and suggest that we vote against it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you very much.

I echo the same argument we made with a similar motion done previously. It's that the intent behind them seems fine and all that, but when it comes down to practicality, you're going to have a bunch of people who will be trained for a job, and then they'll be out of a job not very long afterwards because there are only going to be so many machines set up. Then they, in fact, will be the ones who will be travelling internationally and abroad to do all that work.

While the intent is fine, in practicality, it just doesn't work, so I'm voting against it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patzer.

I don't see any further debate. Please call the roll.

(Amendment negatived: nays 9; yeas 2 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: We'll now proceed to CPC-12.

Do we have a member who would like to move CPC-12?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I'll move it.

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs, go ahead.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thanks very much, Chair.

Our CPC-12 amendment would be that Bill C-49, in clause 147, be amended by adding after line 27 on page 107 the following:

(c) importance shall be given to the development of measures to assist in the preservation of the fishing industry, including measures to assist in understanding and maintaining the environmental characteristics of the offshore area that support that industry.

This is, of course, because there are countless livelihoods and small businesses of generational families in Atlantic Canada in the fishery and lobster harvesting sectors where the habitat and marine ecology in the area may be impacted by developments. The CPC amendment has been proposed to ensure that this bill includes those considerations and these clear principles in favour of the natural environment and the balance for existing ocean users building their livelihoods and their businesses off of the ocean.

The balance in those principles could, we believe, be easily achieved by including this amendment in the bill.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Stubbs.

I will go to Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is similar to CPC-7. While agreeing with the intent of the motion, I'll be opposing it.

I think that it's worthwhile for us to look at the letters that have been sent to our committee by Minister Parsons, Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology from Newfoundland and Labrador, and Minister Rushton, Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables from Nova Scotia, which say that they actually oppose this amendment.

Specifically, I would go to the letter from Minister Parsons, which says:

We do, however, have several concerns with this amendment as drafted above. Ensuring the sustainability of the fishing industry involves a comprehensive understanding of the environmental fact of shaping it, extending beyond the purview of the Accord Acts and encompassing considerations beyond interactions with energy projects. This amendment also fails to recognize the evaluation of potential impacts from energy projects is already assessed through spatial planning, such as Regional Assessments, and regulatory review processes outlined in the existing Accord Acts and Bill C-49.

Most notably however, the acceptance of this amendment does not align with the principles of joint management.

It goes on, but I think that gives you an idea.

That opinion is reflected in the letter from the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables from Nova Scotia as well.

I will be opposing this CPC amendment, but I will be proposing a subamendment to ensure that fishers are given importance through the licence issuance process associated with this principal section, while keeping the language in the scope of the purpose and mandate of the accord acts and the responsibilities of ministers and regulators under the acts.

I believe there is a copy of the subamendment, which can be distributed to the members.

I move that motion CPC-12 proposing to amend clause 147 of Bill C-49 be amended by adding text after line 27 on page 107, and it be amended by (a) substituting, for the reference to “importance”, a reference to “during the submerged land licence issuance process, importance”; and (b) substituting, for the reference to “development of measures to assist in the preservation of the fishing industry, including measures to assist in understanding and maintaining the environmental characteristics of the offshore area that support that industry”, a reference to “consideration of effects on fishing activities”.

I'm going to ask the government officials if they can maybe provide to us some greater clarity on the issues with the language in CPC-12, the previous CPC-7, and what this subamendment does to capture the spirit of CPC-12 while respecting the joint management principles that were raised in the letter I just read, the scope of proposed division V and the acts more broadly.

• (1555)

Ms. Abigail Lixfeld: Thank you very much for the question.

We did share the concerns that were outlined by the provinces about the scope of this proposed amendment and it likely falling outside of, really, the purpose of the accord acts, which is, as you know, about the regulation of offshore energy projects.

The acts set out certain requirements with respect to safety and environmental protection and the consideration of interactions between potential offshore energy projects and other users of the sea. Management of the fishing industry and the environment does fall beyond the scope of the acts. In addition, this particular section of the bill in which this amendment appears pertains to the land tenure process specifically and the process for issuing submerged land licences.

The motion that was put forward includes reference to the development of measures related to environmental management. It's really not well placed in this section of the act. The motion as drafted could be challenging for the regulators to implement.

The consideration of environmental effects takes place at a number of points in the regulatory process—for example, through the regional assessments and marine spatial planning activities that happen before a call for bids is issued. Governments have several opportunities to engage with indigenous groups and stakeholders, including fishers, about potential wind energy areas, and of course through the impact assessment and regulatory authorization phases of work that happen in part III, when there's an actual project that needs to be considered.

We certainly did reflect on the testimony that was presented by the fisher sector throughout the hearings and through further engagement subsequent to the tabling of the bill. We agree that the bill can be further strengthened to reflect the government's intent to consider the impacts of offshore energy development on the fishing sector. We feel that the amendment that is proposed and that has the support of both provinces is in keeping with the scope of the accord acts. It fits well with this particular section with respect to land tenure and does acknowledge the importance of the fishing sector.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Perhaps I can get some further clarity. Am I correct that this entire clause is in respect of renewables only?

Ms. Abigail Lixfeld: You're correct.

The Chair: Ms. Dabrusin, is there anything else?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: No.

The Chair: Okay.

I'll go to Mr. Angus, and then I have others on the speaking list.

Go ahead, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

It's very important that we get this right. I don't want to show my age. I've been involved in lots of legislation, but never one quite as complicated. We're dealing with accords that exist with Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia and existing accords. We're trying to untie this Gordian knot of very complex issues. At the heart of it for me, of course, is that we have to make sure we protect the environment and protect the fisheries, the people who are using the waters right now.

I very much thank my Conservative colleagues. I supported their motion in the first part of this. I was surprised when I saw the letters from Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. We had to look into that.

I have a question before I decide, Ms. Lixfeld. Does this amendment cover off concerns in terms of making sure the concerns of the fishers are being heard and that there are obligations that the board has to address? Would this help? If we support this amendment, would it cover that?

• (1600)

Ms. Abigail Lixfeld: Thank you for the question.

I don't feel equipped to speak on behalf of FFAW and what specifically would meet their request. I think their testimony was fairly clear.

One thing we needed to do was to stay within the scope of the purpose of the accord acts and also respect the role of government in deciding how its resources should best be developed. There is potentially some tension or some conflict there. Through the measures that have been proposed in these accord acts, there are opportunities for government to do work to better understand the potential impacts of a particular activity on the environment, on fishers and on other stakeholders, as well as balance its needs for the development of renewable energy technology.

We do feel that the amendment as proposed does further strengthen and acknowledge the importance that both levels of government place on the fishing sector and the importance of balancing environmental considerations while also being true to the spirit of the accord acts.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

I did not want to put you in a position where you're having to speak for the fishers. I certainly heard from Unifor and they're very clear. I'm very proud of their work.

I did want to clarify this, and you said it. It's that this amendment is not undermining the work, but actually recognizes it. Within the balance of the accord these issues have to be considered, and it strengthens it.

Is that what you're saying?

Ms. Abigail Lixfeld: Yes, that's what I'm saying. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Falk.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like a bit of clarity. The official, Ms. Lixfeld, referred to the amendment.

Are you referring to the amendment or the subamendment? I was a little confused, though, as to which one you were speaking to. Could you provide clarity on that?

Also, because we are actually talking about the subamendment, could I get a hard copy to look at? I don't have a copy of it.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I wouldn't mind seeing a hard copy as well.

Mr. Ted Falk: Mario would probably like it in his language as well.

The Chair: Colleagues, Mr. Falk has asked for...

An email was sent out, but you would like a hard copy. That is what you mentioned to me, Mr. Falk. I heard that from others as well, so we will suspend until we can get a hard copy over to everyone.

We'll suspend for a few minutes.

● (1600) _____ (Pause) _____

● (1610)

The Chair: We are back from our suspension.

We were on CPC-12. There was a subamendment moved by Ms. Dabrusin and Mr. Falk had asked for a hard copy of the subamendment, which has been provided. I believe everyone has been able to review it.

Mr. Falk, you had the floor prior to suspension and you do have your hard copy, so I want to give you an opportunity to continue.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that.

I appreciate the hard copy, because now we can see exactly what the subamendment is proposing to change in the original amendment that the Conservatives are providing to this Liberal bill.

I think I'm satisfied with what it says. Am I to understand that the comments made by Ms. Lixfeld were in reference to the subamendment?

Ms. Abigail Lixfeld: Yes. The concerns I outlined were with respect to the amendment that had been proposed, and my comments were in terms of how to address them in the language that was sup-

ported by the provinces. This is what appears in the subamendment. I apologize for...

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you for clarifying that. I'm good.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Falk.

Mr. Patzer, I also had you on the list.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you.

I have one point of concern with the subamendment. Just to be clear, after we're done with the subamendment, Mr. Chair, are we still dealing with the speaking list on the actual amendment?

The Chair: I had you on the speaking order of the amendment as well. Once you're done, we will proceed by voting on the subamendment. If there's no further debate, then we will go back to the amendment, conclude debate and have a vote. Then we will proceed to the clause.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Okay. I have comments for both parts here. I'll save some of them for the amendment, and I'll just deal with the parts in the subamendment here.

Part of what's being removed from the amendment by the subamendment in particular is the wording "the environmental characteristics of the offshore area that support that industry." I think that's a very important phrase to possibly keep in there. The reason is that we heard witnesses talk extensively about characteristics of the seabed that are impacted by having multiple wind turbines anchored to the ocean floor. Also, with all the interconnecting cabling and things like that, that does alter the characteristics of the ocean floor, which changes the habitat for the various species that live on or close to the bottom of the ocean.

I think it's important to recognize that this is a very important factor in this discussion. Simply saying, "consideration of effects on fishing activities" is only about fishing in and of itself. It's not actually about the environment that the fish or other species of the ocean live in.

I think that's why having that specific language around "environmental characteristics" was included by my colleague from Lakeland. I think it's important to make sure that it's a fulsome point in there, particularly because where the original amendment is located is in regard to the principles of this portion of the bill, which is also the general rules of the offshore renewable portion.

I'll have more comments later on that little bit, which I'll do under the amendment when we get back to the original amendment. However, as far as the subamendment goes and making sure we talk about "the environmental characteristics", I do think we need to make sure there is some language in and around there just to make sure that we're not forgetting about the fact that there's so much more than just the fishing activity to consider when we're talking about the development of offshore renewable energy.

As I say, I have more comments that I'll use for the amendment. I'll stop right now.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patzer.

I'll go to Mr. Dreeshen.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question is the wording or lettering we see in front of us with the subamendment. Of course, it says that after line 27, we are then putting another (a) and (b) into it. That is the way it is written here.

I'm curious as to whether that is intended to be a replacement for the line item (c) that we have in CPC-12, or whether that goes back and attempts to make changes in the (a) and the (b), which, of course, it is saying takes place after that.

I'd like some clarification. After line 27 is where we had talked about entering (c) for CPC-12. With the rest of this, it's unclear as to whether the intent is to take what we see in (c) and amend it in the subamendment.

I'm questioning the way the lettering is done here.

• (1615)

The Chair: Is there somebody who would like to address that?

Mr. Ted Falk: I think Julie would know.

It's your subamendment.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I think it states where it fits, so it doesn't... It's not.... You would have the (a) and the (b) added, and we're substituting the wording.

I can pull it out. That's exactly what I was just pulling out in the legislation, if you want me to I can actually do the cross-reference for you, but the line pieces are quite clear.

If the officials have it right in front of them.... I am turning to the right one right here.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Could I respond so that everyone knows what I'd like to see them looking for?

The Chair: Yes, of course.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: When the legislation comes out—and all of these things have to be cross-referenced—I just want to make sure. In proposed section 98.7 under “Principles”, are we talking about (a), (b) and then this is (c) with adjustments to it, or are we taking the (a) and (b) that is done in the subamendment addressing the (a) and (b) that come under “Principles”.

Is this entirely just a subamendment on CPC-12, which is the one that is labelled as paragraph (c)?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dreeshen.

Ms. Dabrusin has something to add.

I can also go to the legislative clerk, but I'll go to you, Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I'll just point out that the way the subamendment is listed, the (a) and (b) are not part of the substitution wording.

If that helps to clarify it.... I'm sure the officials have something else to add, but the (a) and (b) are the wording of the subamendment. It's that we're saying, (a) we're proposing this substitution, and (b) we're proposing this substitution, but the (a)....

The Chair: Ms. Dabrusin, would you like me to go to the legislative clerk?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Our point, MP Dabrusin, is of course that it's Conservatives who are trying to insert this principle. We were attempting to do that with my amendment (c).

Thank goodness my colleagues have asked for the hard copy of (a) and (b), which you propose.

What they're asking is whether it will look like your (a) and (b), which we agree, as indicated by MP Falk, are a good expansion and detailed follow-up on the proposal that of course Conservatives have made to implement this principle into the bill.

Their question, I think, is whether the (a) and (b) proposed in your subamendment replace the (c) that is the principle that Conservatives are trying to implement into this, which is the importance of the environmental characteristics in the marine ecology and the ocean floor, as well as the principle to protect the livelihoods and small businesses of fishers and lobstermen and women.

What my colleagues are asking about is clarity on the subamendment you've proposed, and whether the legislation will look like (a), (b) and (c), or whether it will just be (a) and (b) replacing (c).

I'd like to thank the NDP-Liberals and, clearly, the officials who worked on the subamendment before we got the hard copy, for accepting the insertion of this important principle to protect the environment and the marine ecology of the ocean floor, as well as the livelihoods of fishermen and lobstermen.

I think we're prepared to support the subamendment if it just does better with the whole principle of this Conservative amendment specifically related to, as you said, the issuance of the sub-merged land licences.

We'd just like to thank you for your acceptance and improvement on the Conservative attempt to insert these principles into the bill.

The Chair: Ms. Dabrusin, it's back to you.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I'll ask the legislative clerk to explain it, but it's a subamendment to the Conservative amendment. That's the way it is when you look through the wording.

I'll let the legislative clerk make sure that I'm using the correct terms when I'm saying that, but I also want to be clear that there was an emailed copy of this subamendment. I'm glad everyone has a hard copy now, but it wasn't that this was a surprise subamendment.

Maybe the legislative clerk can better explain what I've just said in proper legal terms.

• (1620)

The Chair: I'm going to go to the legislative clerk first, and I think that might address some of the concerns that have been raised.

Ms. Émilie Thivierge (Legislative Clerk): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As was mentioned, the subamendment is on the amendment, so it's not touching proposed paragraphs 98.7(a) or (b). It's just touching proposed paragraph (c). If it were to be adopted, the new (c) would read as, "during the submerged land licence issuance process, importance shall be given to the consideration of effects on fishing activities."

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to go back to Mr. Falk.

Mr. Ted Falk: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the legislative clerk. I think that clarifies our confusion here on this side a little bit.

The way the subamendment has been presented here, it looks as though there will be two additional sections added or replacing...but you're just itemizing the changes. The (a) and the (b) have no significance in the actual subamendment. It's just that there will be two changes to the amendment.

That's all. I think that helps us clarify where things are at.

The Chair: I think that is clarified. I think everybody understands.

Thank you for the subamendment, Ms. Dabrusin, and all your answers to provide clarification for everybody.

To be clear, we are now voting. CPC-12 was moved. We had a subamendment moved by Ms. Dabrusin. We are voting on the subamendment.

(Subamendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: We will now go to amendment CPC-12, as amended.

Mr. Patzer, you are on the speaking list, so I want to go to you to provide your commentary.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate that we now have this hammered out.

I would also like to point out that I got the email at 3:55 p.m. with the subamendment, so it's not like we would have had time to review it and try to propose any other amendments to the subamendment.

I'm wondering if I could have the indulgence of the committee here to possibly try to make a.... As I alluded to in my remarks earlier around environmental characteristics, I'm just wondering....

We've agreed on a good subamendment here. I'm wondering if there's any way now to propose an amendment to that subamendment. Maybe I have to come back with a written copy later, but I'd like to have a quick discussion about it right now, because I do think it's important to have "environmental characteristics" included in this new, amended version of the amendment.

I'm trying to envision it in my head because I don't have the actual text of what the new amendment looks like. I think that after "consideration of effects on fishing activities", we could add in "and the environmental characteristics of the offshore area".

I'm wondering if the committee would consider that. I just want to get thoughts from the committee about that to see if there would be an appetite to do something to that effect. If that's the case, I'd be happy to work on a hard copy to distribute to the committee.

I want the committee's input first, before I go through all that work, to see what the appetite around the table would be for language like that.

Then I'd like to get back to my other point, but I want to deal with this first, if that's okay.

• (1625)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patzer, for inviting committee members for input.

We would need something in writing if you are prepared to move forward, but we will go to other members to comment.

Go ahead, Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Maybe I will go back to where I started in this conversation. It was that we actually have letters from two provincial ministers that specifically address the amendment that had been proposed by the Conservatives, including.... The language is a little bit easier for me to quote in the context of the one from the minister from Newfoundland and Labrador. It specifically deals with the environmental piece. We all have a copy of this letter.

The minister says that "This amendment...fails to recognize the evaluation of potential impact from energy projects is already assessed through spatial planning, such as Regional Assessments, and regulatory review processes outlined in the existing Accord Acts and Bill C-49."

It goes on in a lot more detail; there are a couple of pages here. The main point is that the bill is negotiated with the provinces, respecting the provinces and their input into how this is done. I would like us to take into account the correspondence that we've received from the ministers from Nova Scotia and from Newfoundland and Labrador and respect their *champs de compétence*.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin.

I'll go back to you, Mr. Patzer.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you.

Now, I guess this would go into my comments that I was going to save for later, but I think the reason this is important is that the existing accord deals with offshore petroleum development. We're talking about one platform that's confined to a smaller area. When you're talking about offshore renewables, you're talking about multiple points across a vast area and a vast landscape. That's why the concerns around the environmental characteristics of the ocean floor all of a sudden become a much bigger factor. Now you're dealing with tens if not hundreds of square kilometres that will be taken out of fishing activities. Also, now we'll be at risk of significantly altering the environmental characteristics of that ocean floor.

That's why I'm talking about the environmental characteristics of that offshore area. As I said, with petroleum, it's one platform. It may have multiple points down. It will have the cables, the guy wires, to help support it, yes, but when you factor in a wind farm and what that entails, it's so much more than what one petroleum platform would be. You can't compare the two. They're not the same. There are some principles that do apply, but when you apply it, broadly speaking, to several individual turbines....

It does depend on whether it's a floating wind farm. I'm not sure how widely deployed those are at this point, but there still is an anchoring system that goes in there. There will be multiple aspects to that floating wind farm. It's not just one floating apparatus. There will be several of them, which means several points of tie-down to the ocean floor. We are still talking about multiple interactions with the ocean floor. Again, having significant alteration to the environmental characteristics of the floor has a direct impact on the various species that live on or near the bottom of the ocean floor. That's why I think this is an important piece to consider.

Again, we did hear that from witness testimony. If the committee wants to have a hard-copy proposal, I'd be happy to get the text of the intervention that we had from a witness. Being that we had only a couple of minutes to do all this, I don't have that immediately in front of me. I do know that it was mentioned in the committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patzer.

Before I move to Mrs. Stubbs, I just want to let you know that, if you do want to propose another subamendment, you'll need to prepare something in writing for the clerk so that we can get it out. If you do decide you want to do that, that's something that you may want to prepare.

In the interim, I will go to Mrs. Stubbs.

● (1630)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thanks, Chair.

I want to thank MP Patzer for the points he has made regarding our Conservative intention to insert the consideration of environmental characteristics through the process of issuing submerged land licences.

Of course, the whole point of Bill C-49, I would remind all colleagues and Canadians, is precisely to expand the scope, the deliverables and the mandate of the regulators through the bill. The regulators, of course, have decades of history and expertise and a skill set dealing with offshore petroleum development. The entire point of Bill C-49 is to add the regulatory scope, mandate and enforcement powers around offshore renewable development.

For the life of me, I certainly would not understand why a Liberal or Bloc or NDP MP would vote against including the principle of the regulator in addition to the other improvements that have been made through the subamendments, or why an MP of any party would vote against inserting the importance of the regulator, under the new scope of its mandate for offshore renewables, considering the protection of environmental characteristics, in particular, as MP Patzer and other Conservative MPs have said here, and as we heard in the witness testimony during the albeit rushed and shortened timeline that the Liberals and NDP forced on the bill.

The amendment, of course, just reflects those principles, which witnesses have also said. It seems to me that we can achieve all of the things that we appear to agree on, or that I think we appear to agree on, by keeping in, as Conservatives already just did, the support of the subamendments dealing with points (a) and (b). Certainly, I would urge colleagues to accept this subamendment, if MP Patzer is able to provide it to us, which would maintain the Conservative inclusion that the regulator maintain the environmental characteristics in consideration of issuing submerged land licences for offshore renewable development.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Stubbs.

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'm just trying to follow the bouncing ball here. The Conservatives had an amendment, and then they supported a subamendment that they said improved their amendment, but now they're not happy with the amendment and they're going back to their amendment.

Are they actually giving us a subamendment, or are we talking in circles? Until we see a subamendment, I don't know what we're talking about.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I know I'm repeating this several times, but I do think I should keep pointing out that the ministers from the provincial governments—including a Conservative minister—with whom this has all been negotiated, have specifically stated that they do not want to see the changes the Conservatives are proposing. They have talked about how they place great importance on their fishing industries and that they also want to make sure that they will be working to minimize any impacts on our fisheries. That is the wording that's coming from Minister Rushton.

Just to help move this along, I will ask the officials.

We've heard now the concerns that are being raised by the Conservatives. What, within this bill, do we have that would be responding to some of the concerns that they're raising within this whole regime?

Ms. Abigail Lixfeld: Thank you for the question.

To reiterate, governments have an important role to play in undertaking research in advance of a "call for bids" process to help identify where suitable areas for offshore renewable energy development can be located, taking into consideration such factors as existing uses of the sea.

Throughout the land tenure process, there are numerous opportunities to engage with stakeholders, including the fisheries sector, on those site assessment decisions. Then when we are at the point of a specific project, through the impact assessment and other regulatory steps, the impacts—including the environmental impacts of those projects—will be assessed and the regulator can impose terms and conditions through its authorization process.

In addition to and outside of the accord acts, governments still have an important role to play in research, data collection and cumulative effects assessment to understand the impacts of energy development in the offshore. There certainly is a growing body of evidence from international jurisdictions that have had offshore renewable energy in their offshore for decades that is helping to inform government decisions and the environmental assessment process in terms of the impacts of renewables on the fishing sector and the ecosystem at large.

Those are the types of things we're drawing on and the provinces are drawing on to support the fishing sector in particular.

• (1635)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: That was very helpful. Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you.

I will go to Mr. Dreeshen.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you.

To pick up on what Ms. Lixfeld just mentioned, I'm curious to know...because this would then become a no-trawler zone. You have to make sure that's not part of what you're dealing with if your electrical transmission lines are going to be on the ocean floor.

That, then, would have to be, I assume, one of those conditions that is put on the industry. You would probably have, in the discussions, information from Europe and other places that would indicate what types of restrictions they've had to put in those zones where you see hundreds of hectares of ocean that have these structures.

We know that, if it is an oil derrick or whatever, there are restrictions around that particular...but that isn't this massive zone where you might see many dozens or hundreds of structures. Is that what you are referencing?

That's why, when we talk about "environmental characteristics", we're trying to say, it has to fit in with the way the fishers fish and the way things are done. Is that being taken into consideration with the wording that you see in...? Let's start with CPC-12 and then tie in the subamendment, if we need to.

Is that not being shown and looked at when we talk about environmental characteristics?

I believe that's what we're trying to do with the subamendment, which hopefully we will have the time to be able to expand and let everybody look at.

Can you tell me what you have seen, what other jurisdictions have done and whether they speak to the environmental characteristics of the region where these renewable energy projects are located?

Ms. Abigail Lixfeld: In general, terms and conditions speak to the mitigation of the effects of a specific project. They are not necessarily oriented towards preserving an ecosystem, for example.

One thing that is challenging is that the decision to move forward with a renewable energy project is a decision that is taken by government on the recommendation of the regulator. It is up to government to decide the balance of effects and to ensure that the regula-

tor has the ability to impose terms and conditions that mitigate and manage any potential effects to the extent possible and to ensure that projects are developed and implemented safely and with environmental safety and protection in mind. Ultimately, that is what we feel the subamendment reinforces, and it is consistent with the role of the regulator in carrying out its activities and carrying out the instructions of government with respect to where and how development of these resources should occur.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: May I just respond?

The Chair: Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: It seems like we're caught up on this term of "environmental characteristics" as though we have to take that out of it because that wasn't a term that was used when we were talking with the various provinces and so on. However, is that not exactly what you're saying—that we look at environmental characteristics and have to make decisions, and that the regulators are going to make decisions based on the environmental characteristics?

I'm just having trouble trying to figure out why we don't just include that. Again, if we know we're on the right track and it really is "environmental characteristics" and that's what regulators have to deal with, why can't we take the time to include that and find the wording that Mr. Patzer is attempting to put together? Is it not the "environmental characteristics" that each of those regulators have to pay attention to?

• (1640)

Ms. Abigail Lixfeld: Certainly, assessing environmental considerations and environmental characteristics is a way of describing the regulatory process. I think there was some concern with the original amendment as proposed and the language around developing "measures to assist in the preservation of the fishing industry, including measures to assist in understanding and maintaining the environmental characteristics". It's hard to parse out just the word "characteristics".

When we looked at the original amendment that was proposed, it was read in a particular context, which is hard to place in the context of the accord acts and the regulatory decisions that need to be taken. A different characterization or a different wording of the subamendment might lead us to a different perspective. However, again, we do feel that the subamendment that was proposed by the provinces does address—in a way that is consistent with the purpose and the mandate of the regulators and with the purpose of the accord acts—and acknowledge the importance of the fishing sector and the importance of mitigating and managing potential impacts of development on the offshore environment and the broader ecosystem.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you.

Perhaps that would make it easier, then, with those parameters set for us, to come up with the proper wording of a subamendment.

I appreciate that. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. I think we've asked and answered a lot of questions on this.

Mr. Patzer, I'm going to go back to you. Do you have a sub-amendment that you would like to present, or would you like to continue and vote on the amendment as amended?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Yes, obviously, we want to propose something like that. I had a quick chat with the clerk about some wording here.

Also, I still haven't seen the new wording of the amendment after we voted on the sub-amendment. Once I get the actual new wording of the amendment, it will be easier to try to insert something in at that point.

I want to go back to the point on how we heard repeatedly throughout the process with witnesses that this was rushed. That's why we are focused on trying to have a piece of legislation—with the addition of this new piece—that is going to actually take into consideration the environmental characteristics of the offshore area. The reason is that, when we put in a new piece of legislation or add a substantive chunk to an existing one, as we're doing with the Atlantic accords here, it's important that we take this opportunity to make sure that we do it right.

If you set the standard now in legislation for what they need to do, rather than just wait to do this process when the SLL application happens.... I mean, it kind of comes down to a lot of other government bills that we have seen where there's a change to the Criminal Code or whatever, but it's so vague that there is actually no certainty and it's left to the courts to decide and determine what's actually going to happen and go on. This causes more uncertainty and delay, and then we get some crazy court rulings that end up happening that nobody agrees with.

Therefore, I think it's important that we legislate to make sure that we set the parameters that we want as legislators, because we're the ones who are responsible for doing that work. That's our job. I'm not saying that the provinces haven't considered these things. However, when we hear from all these other witnesses about how rushed the process was or about the fact that they were only given a couple of days to prepare their witness testimony because they weren't consulted, that's where it becomes problematic. Because they weren't given the time to adequately prepare what they would like to see in the consultation phase, it becomes problematic. That's why we are going to bat for some of these key issues that came up during limited witness testimony on another rushed piece of Liberal government legislation.

I think it's important that we take the time to make sure that we get it right and that we raise up these specific points that, again, we heard throughout witness testimony. That's why this has become a bit of a sticking point here.

We definitely agreed to what the government proposed as a sub-amendment. I do think it did help provide a little bit more.... It kind of tightened it up a little bit, which is good, which is fine. The reason I wanted to let that pass was that I thought, okay, maybe we could tweak a few things here rather than try to do a whole massive thing at once. I thought we could agree on a basis point, and if there was a way to tweak that, to get the certainty around the environmental characteristics.... I just think it was important to do one, and then we can do the other.

That kind of answers Charlie's point about what the heck we're doing here.

My initial ask was whether there was a will from the committee to include “environmental characteristic” in this. That way I would be able to come back to this committee with a hard proposal for the wording around that. If we can do that on the fly here, that's great, but I was just trying to gauge the feeling in the room to see if there was a willingness to do something on this. I think we've outlined the reason and the case for why we should do that with regard to the characteristics of the offshore area.

If “characteristics” is too broad and vague of a term.... Well, I think “characteristics” is actually a good descriptive word because we know that the ocean floor is active and changing. It doesn't just stay exactly the same. It shifts. It changes. It moves. There are ocean currents and different things like that. There are different species there. They all play a role in the environmental characteristics of the ocean floor. It's a moving thing. It's a constant. It's not ever just completely stationary and idle like, say, a mountainside. However, even that changes. We know that.

Therefore, it's important that we have wording in here that is going to properly reflect what will provide the most certainty for investors and proponents and for the courts. There's a reason that the Department of Justice is here. We're trying to make sure that we have things that are legally going to work.

As legislators, it is our job to make sure that we have everything in the bill that needs to be there. Again, I'm not saying that the provinces are wrong. I'm just saying that I think that, while we have this bill in front of us, it is important to take the time to make inclusions that possibly were missed or were skipped over.

• (1645)

Again, we get back to the point that the bill was rushed, and here we are. We look at the long, extensive list of amendments that have been proposed here. I mean, I've only ever had one or two bills before me in committee over my four years as an elected MP, and I think this has the most amendments that I've ever seen proposed to a piece of legislation.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: What about the 20,000?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Well....

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Yes, we did, but beyond that.... My point is that when you're working with the provinces on something like this.... Again, we want to make sure that we get this bill right.

We have stakeholders' testimony that is very specific to this. Part of why marine protected areas became a thing.... I mean, there are a few aspects that go into it, but a lot of it is about preserving the condition of the area that we are protecting, whether it's an MPA or protected land. It's about preserving the condition of the environment. We talked to the fisher groups that were here. They want to see as much of the environment in and around any offshore renewable development be as closely preserved and maintained as it possibly can be. If there are substantive alterations to the environmental characteristics of the area, that's where problems occur.

We've seen and heard the alarm bells go off from witnesses at our committee but also when we browse through the news. We have seen and heard from around the world what has happened when they didn't take these considerations seriously when they were legislating the frameworks around it. It's important that we take the warnings from other places around the world and apply them here. We had witness testimony in this very committee that pointed to this very issue, which is why we have this part of the amendment.

I think it's important that we take the time to do this properly and do this right. I will come back to the committee with some hard language here. Like I said, I'll pull up the witness testimony, and I'll definitely be proposing something in writing when I get a chance to actually see the new amendment in writing. Then I can work with it and make sure that I get it done properly. However, part of this whole point was also to see if the committee agrees that we should have a little bit more language around it, because I don't want to waste my time and your time by bringing back an amendment that nobody is going to want to see anyway.

I'm just wondering if there is a broad consensus to try to see something around that. Then I can bring something, and we can work. If it needs to be massaged a little bit to make it fit, that's great. However, I just want to make sure that I'm not going to be wasting my time and yours by doing that.

Thank you.

● (1650)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patzer.

I will now proceed to Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

In all my years, when we vote on an amendment, we accept the amendment and understand what's in the amendment. Once we've accepted the amendment, then we vote on the main motion unless there is a subamendment, but there hasn't been a subamendment. We don't get a time out then to go study and think and come up with some ideas. We're in the middle of clause-by-clause. Either they have a subamendment ready to go, or they don't. I would call the question. We have to move on.

I'm concerned about trying to bring forward amendments and subamendments that are undermining the provincial jurisdiction here. We hear the Conservatives. If Danielle Smith wants to burn the planet, it's all about provincial jurisdiction. If Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia have accords that have been in place

and that need the federal government to sign off on, then I say let's do it.

There is no subamendment. Without a subamendment, I'm not going to be willing to suspend and give time for people to think one up. Either it's there or it's not. I say we vote on the amendment as is and move on.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

We have Mrs. Stubbs.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I suspect that MP Patzer will want to respond after, but I'll just take this moment to say this: Let's spare the sanctimony around here with the crowing about listening to provincial premiers, if we will, since the NDP and Liberals actually have zero problem ignoring the Liberal Newfoundland premier who has asked over and over that they spike the carbon tax hike on April 1.

We have already demonstrated our willingness to work in good favour by accepting the two subamendments. MP Patzer has summarized exactly why we are engaging the will of the elected members of this committee to consider including the Conservatives' specific language on protecting and maintaining the environmental characteristics in the case of offshore renewable development and explicitly include this in Bill C-49.

Here is why. It is because it is not enough at this point, after nine years, for the Liberals, propped up by the NDP, to say, "Just trust us."

I will give this example. It has been five months since the Supreme Court of Canada said that the law based on Bill C-69, which has been in place for half a decade, is largely unconstitutional. The Supreme Court said that less than 6% of the law based on Bill C-69 stands up, including, as we've discussed multiple times in the debate on this rushed bill, the dozens of references that are here in Bill C-49 to Bill C-69. This will automatically cause this bill, if it's passed as written, to be vulnerable to litigation and challenges, causing even more uncertainty for offshore petroleum developers, obviously, but also for any private sector proponents who want to launch into offshore renewable development too.

This is why—so Canadians understand—Conservative MPs on this committee are trying to compel the NDP, Liberal and Bloc members of this committee to be explicit about our elected representatives' priority to protect and maintain the environmental characteristics according to the expanded new scope and scale of the mandate that Bill C-49 will provide for regulators. Also, in addition to my colleague's tough but fair and accurate comment on the Conservatives' 20,000 amendments to Bill C-50, the just transition bill, let me just say for the record—because I heard him quip it—that those were not generated by AI.

Second of all—

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: No, and I answered the media about that, so I'm not sure why you're claiming it.

Second of all, thank goodness the Conservatives actually tried to propose amendments to Bill C-50, given that the government's own internal briefing shows that Bill C-50, the just transition bill, will kill 170 oil and gas jobs immediately and disrupt the livelihoods of 2.7 million Canadians in construction, manufacturing, agriculture, transportation and energy. Of course, the truth is that, because of the actions of the NDP, Liberal and Bloc MPs on this committee, there will be no debate on Bill C-50 and not a single Canadian will be able to be heard from on that bill.

This is why it's not sufficient. This is why—

• (1655)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: —MP Patzer is arguing to make it explicit in the legislation. This isn't on the officials.

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs, we have a point of order. If I could just ask you to pause.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: No, I'm going to finish my comments. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: You're talking into the mic, so what you want me to do right now is to do as you say but not as you do.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Colleagues, I will ask everybody to halt. We have a point of order.

An hon. member: The rules apply to everybody.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Don't tell me what to do, John. Go run in the provincial legislature like you said you wanted to.

The Chair: Mrs. Stubbs, I would ask you to hold, please, for a moment. We have a point of order.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Mr Chair, Mr. Aldag just mouthed the words “eff off” to my colleague right here. I demand an apology from Mr. Aldag.

I saw that, John.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: That's not sunny ways for a feminist. I guess because it's 2024, we're not feminists anymore.

The Chair: We will suspend.

• (1655)

(Pause)

• (1705)

The Chair: We are back from our suspension.

Mrs. Stubbs, I'm going to go back to you, as you had the floor.

• (1710)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Chair, thank you for allowing me to conclude my remarks.

My main point was that this is the reason the Conservatives have proposed to insert, explicitly, the language around protecting and maintaining environmental characteristics. It is because we can't just cross our fingers and hope that things happen. Our job as legislators is to make sure it is embedded with clarity in principles on which I think we would all agree.

That is why Conservatives proposed that amendment in the first place, have worked in good faith to accept the subamendment and hope that we will be able to work in further good faith to improve the bill even more on this topic.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Stubbs.

I'm going to now go to Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It looks like there is still a whole bunch of conversation happening around clause 147, so what I would propose is that, if we could get unanimous consent to stand down clause 147 and hold it until the end and, at the same time, get UC to reopen and stand down clause 38, which is its mirror-image clause in the Newfoundland portion, we can then have a conversation more fully on each of those clauses.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin.

Is it clear to everybody? It's to stand down clause 147 and also to reopen clause 38 in the previous portion of the bill and stand that down for later on as well, because they are mirroring clauses. This is so that you can think a bit more about the changes you may want to make and what you may want to do with them.

Do we have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Clauses 38 and 147 allowed to stand)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: I have a point of order, Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Patzer, go ahead.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Thank you, Chair.

Right before we suspended, my colleague Mrs. Stubbs was giving her intervention. We hear a lot from the Liberals about “respect, respect, respect”, but I just want to give Mr. Aldag this opportunity to apologize for telling my colleague Mrs. Stubbs to eff off. He mouthed the words. I saw him do it, and so did my colleague Mrs. Stubbs. I know he did it.

I would like to afford him the opportunity to unreservedly apologize, because if this is truly about respect and integrity, I would like to afford him the opportunity to show that those are principles he upholds.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Aldag.

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Thank you for that opportunity.

I absolutely apologize if I said anything. I do get a bit frustrated when there are personal attacks and things being said, but I shouldn't have expressed my frustration in the way that I did. I apologize to everyone.

We need to show respect and uphold the dignity of this place. I will do my best to do that as we continue working forward on this legislation.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: That's right.

To be clear, the only personal attack was on my colleague, Mrs. Stubbs, who was merely outlining what the government had done for a period of time, which is not a personal attack, but—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Thank you. I'm going to go to you on a point of order, Mr. Angus.

Thank you for your intervention. Thank you for providing that clarity and apology, Mr. Aldag.

Colleagues, I just want to remind everyone that we work on committee together, that we use appropriate language and that we conduct ourselves in that manner. I'm glad we've been able to come to a thoughtful resolution on that. Thank you to all parties.

I'm going to the point of order from Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

I'd like to thank Mr. Aldag for withdrawing. That is what I think is expected. It's also a tradition in Parliament that when someone apologizes that we accept the apology.

What I witnessed when that was happening was, I thought, a disgraceful gong show that embarrassed our committee, and there were multiple participants on the Conservative side. I'm not going to name them, but I thank Mr. Aldag for apologizing.

I think we need to move on, get the job done that Canadians sent us here to do and show that we're going to do this properly and with professionalism.

The Chair: Thank you for your point of order on that.

Colleagues, I don't want to get into a point of order on a point of order, but I have a point of order from Mr. Dreeshen.

• (1715)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Thank you.

What Mr. Angus just indicated was that there was much more disorder, and of course he named our side for this, which he does on a regular basis. The point was, I believe, that perhaps Mr. Aldag had a bit more of a conditional apology. There was a lot of exchange going back and forth that was negative—

The Chair: Colleagues—and I don't want to cut you off, Mr. Dreeshen—I just noticed that we have bells.

We'll leave it at that, but I will at this point ask colleagues for unanimous consent to continue.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Chair, I asked for the floor before the bells rang.

I had asked to speak before the bells. I actually just wanted—

The Chair: I know, Mrs. Stubbs. Unless we have unanimous consent, we cannot, because we do have bells.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: No, but I had asked to speak before. He was still speaking when the bells started, so we can't have rules for thee and not for me.

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent to continue?

An hon. member: Yes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: No.

The Chair: We do not have unanimous consent. I'm sorry.

Thank you, everyone—a great day's work.

The meeting is adjourned.

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