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Chair: Mr. John Brassard



Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

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• (1550)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC)): I'm going to call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 131 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

When the meeting adjourned last Tuesday, we were debating an amendment that had been moved by Mr. Caputo to the motion moved by Mr. Barrett, as amended.

I'm just going to review for everybody where we are. The motion as amended is the following:

Given that:

The Prime Minister recently appointed Mark Carney as the chair of the Liberal Party's Task Force on Economic Growth;

Mark Carney is the chair of Brookfield Corporation, a multinational investment management company that owns Sagen, the second-largest mortgage insurer in Canada;

On the first day of Mark Carney's appointment, the Liberal government announced major changes to the regulation of mortgage insurance in Canada, allowing for bigger and longer loans;

This tremendously benefited Brookfield, evidenced by their stock price hitting a six-month high; and that Jenni Byrne, who is the well-known special adviser to Pierre Poilievre as well as a registered lobbyist for grocery multinational Loblaws at a time that the Poilievre Conservatives are voting against every Liberal government measure to make grocery prices more affordable for Canadians; Jenni Byrne, who regularly attends caucus meetings and daily morning strategy calls, is not listed as an employee in Pierre Poilievre's office to shield her from public disclosure and conflict of interest laws; Jenni Byrne established a second lobbying firm working from the same office as Jenni Byrne + Associates to circumvent federal lobbying laws;

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), the committee call upon Mark Carney and Jenni Byrne to testify before the committee in relation to this apparent conflict of interest for two hours each within 14 calendar days of the adoption....

Then, there was an amendment moved by Mr. Caputo.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Chair, on a point of order, I don't see "apparent conflict of interest" in that last paragraph. I have the clerk's track changes.

The Chair: I appreciate your bringing that up, Mrs. Shanahan.

This is actually what's on record as to what Mr. Barrett had said. What was sent out to the committee—if you recall, there was a bit of confusion there—was not actually what was said. This was actually said, and it is in the blues, so that's what I'm reflecting in this sentence here.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Can you give us that last sentence again?

The Chair: It's "That pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), the committee call upon Mark Carney and Jenni Byrne to testify before the committee in relation to this apparent conflict of interest for two hours each, within 14 calendar days of the adoption of the motion."

That's the motion as amended.

To continue, there was an amendment that was moved by Mr. Caputo that reads that the motion, as amended, be amended by deleting the words in.... Effectively, it gets rid of the entire preamble that was there. I'm not going to read through it again because I just read through it.

He also replaced the words, "That pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), the committee call upon Mark Carney and Jenni Byrne to testify before the committee for two hours each within 14 calendar days of the adoption of this motion" with the words, "That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), the committee call upon Mark Carney to appear for two hours, as well as Jenni Byrne and Gur-ratan Singh to testify before the committee, for one hour each, within 14 calendar days of the adoption".

That's the amendment by Mr. Caputo to the motion as amended that we're dealing with.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I'm sure there's probably some type of ability for the chair to pick up where we left off, but the meeting wasn't suspended. It was adjourned. Normally, in the eight and a half years or so that I've been here, the committee would need to vote to bring that back. If the meeting was suspended, it would continue. I would just seek some clarity on your part. I'm sure you probably have the ability to do it, but I know that there are....

The Chair: Mr. Fisher, I appreciate your bringing that up, and in anticipation that this question was coming, I did seek guidance from the clerk as it relates to the rules and procedures of committees. I'm going to refer to O'Brien and Bosc.

As there's no order paper in committee, there's no precedence with regard to motions. For the clarity of the committee, I'm going to read directly what it says:

The idea that committees are "masters of their proceedings" or "masters of their procedures" is frequently evoked in committee debates or the House. The concept refers to the freedom committees normally have to organize their work as they see fit and the option they have of defining, on their own, certain rules of procedure that facilitate their proceedings.

In the event that there is a situation where there is an adjournment and the debate still continues, in the rules and procedures it says what happens at the next committee meeting. The committee is under no obligation to resume the debate on this motion. If the debate is not resumed on the motion and a new motion is moved and also adjourned at the subsequent meeting, it will be up to committee to decide which motion will have precedence over the other and which debate should be resumed.

If the debate should be resumed, how should it be done? When debate is adjourned—which it was—at the ordinary hour of adjournment of the meeting, some committees will agree on a date on which the debate should be resumed, while others will leave that decision to the chair, who has the administrative responsibility to decide “on the agendas for the meeting”. That, again, is from O'Brien and Bosc, page 1031.

Unless there is an objection... from a member, there is implied consent from the committee to proceed this way. Should an objection be raised, the chair will either maintain his or her decision or leave the decision to the committee. Often, the difference between the committee resuming debate at its next meeting or not is simply a matter of possibilities. If a notice has already been published for the next meeting...and it has.

I'm not sure that this is in relation to this, but I'll continue.

If a notice has already been published for the next meeting and witnesses are already confirmed to appear, or if something is already scheduled, such as a consideration of a report or a bill, the chair may decide to proceed with what is already organized and scheduled. If—like in today's situation—we are without any witnesses, the chair may decide to put resuming debate on the notice so that we get to the end of the motion and vote.

This is precisely what I have done.

When no decision has been taken by the committee on the resumption of the debate, and the chair has not placed this item on the agenda, the member who wishes to resume debate must have a formal motion to that effect. The motion that the committee proceed to a specific order of business, i.e., resuming and adjourning debate on the motion moved on whatever date, does not require notice and must be put to a vote immediately, without debate or amendment. “If the motion is carried, the committee immediately proceeds to the 'order' referred to in the motion.” Again, that's O'Brien and Bosc.

Note, since the motion is still in the hands of the committee, it need not be on the agenda or on the notice of meeting. To that end, Speaker Fraser ruled that there is “no procedural impediment to a committee's dealing with any matter within its mandate at any meeting of that committee regardless of the stated purpose or purposes of a particular meeting”. That came from December 18, 1989, Mr. Fraser's decision, volume 2, page 593.

This is the part that I think is germane to the question of Mr. Fisher. It says that in both situations, when debate resumes, the member who was speaking at the time of adjournment will have the floor. When, as a consequence of the interruption, a business prescribed by the standing orders of a debate has been adjourned while a member was speaking, he is entitled on the next occasion to re-

sume adjourned debate and continue with his speech. That's from Erskine May, 24th edition, 2011, pages 433 and 434.

After reviewing the blues and determining where we were at... Members will recall that there was a lot of confusion at the end of the last meeting. I'll go back to the intervention by Mrs. Shanahan.

• (1555)

Mrs. Shanahan concluded her remarks at 18:25. Next on the list on the amendment was Mr. Caputo, at which point I said, “Go ahead, Mr. Caputo.” Mr. Fisher then raised a point of order. This is near the end of the meeting, again, from the blues. We addressed Mr. Fisher's point of order.

After that, we were dealing with the amendment, and I said to Mr. Caputo, “You have the floor”. I went back to Mr. Fisher, and asked, “Does that clarify that for you, Mr. Fisher?”

There was further discussion. Within that discussion, again, Mr. Simard rose on a point of order, to which I answered. Mr. Barrett also had a point of order to clarify things. It was at that point, after Mr. Barrett's point of order, that we adjourned the meeting.

Given the situation that Mr. Caputo did, in fact, have the floor, I stated that, when debate resumed, the member who was speaking at the time of the adjournment will have the floor.

It is my decision that Mr. Caputo had the floor when we adjourned the meeting. I will go to Mr. Caputo to start, followed by Ms. Khalid and Mrs. Shanahan.

Go ahead, Mr. Housefather.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I have a point of order.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): I have a point of order.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I appreciate that you've been very thorough going through it. I feel like that was seven and a half minutes I'll never get back in my life, but we relived—

The Chair: It's important to understand where we ended up and where we need to start.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: —the last chaotic minutes of that meeting.

I appreciate where you're going with that. Although I don't have access to routine motions that we generally pass at the beginning of a committee, I get where you're going with Bosc and Gagnon. Maybe you should canvass the room to see if people want to continue with that, because that's the sense that I got from Bosc and Gagnon. Is it the will of the committee to continue with that debate?

You represent us. You're our voice in the committee, but I would like to know if everybody's on board with this.

• (1600)

The Chair: As I stated earlier, there is a provision in here where, if the meeting is adjourned and no witnesses are to appear, which it was, and I stated that in the last meeting, it is up to the chair to continue debate on this by putting on notice that we are continuing debate, which I have done, Mrs. Shanahan.

My expectation is that we are going to continue today debating this motion, based on the rules that I've interpreted, and that I've stated. I've sought guidance from the clerk on this as I've said to the committee already.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Am I out of line by suggesting you canvass the room on this?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I have a point of order.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: You know, how you do generally?

The Chair: Yes.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Are people generally...?

The Chair: Who has the point of order? Is it Mr. Housefather?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: It is.

The Chair: Let me deal with the clerk for a second, Mr. Housefather, and then I'll come back to you, sir. Thank you.

• (1600)

(Pause)

• (1600)

The Chair: I appreciate your patience on that. I'm glad I did seek the clerk's guidance. The notice that was published is to resume debate on this.

Mrs. Shanahan, you had a point of order asking me a question. Now, if you wanted to change and move a motion that is not the same as what is on notice, you have the right to do that when you have the floor.

My decision right now is that we are going to Mr. Caputo to resume this meeting. If we go through the list and members have the floor, then they can move another motion if they want to move to another area of discussion. You have to be very specific on that.

As it stands right now, we are going to start the debate with Mr. Caputo. If members feel the need to move a motion after that, they're certainly well within their rights to do that. That would go to a vote or be on consent.

• (1605)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Am I on the speaking list?

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I have Ms. Khalid after Mr. Caputo, but I have several points of order that I need to deal with right now.

I'm going to go to Mr. Housefather and then I have Mr. Barrett and Mr. Bains.

Go ahead, Mr. Housefather, on a point of order, please.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chair, thank you.

I've been a member for almost nine years now and I've never seen the agenda come back to a motion the way you did it today.

I acknowledge, of course, sir, that in the rules it's your discretion if you want to do that. However, I just want to establish that you're now saying that you will, in the same situation in the future, do exactly what you did today, which is that with any motion or amendment that we are debating when we adjourn, if there are no witnesses scheduled for the next meeting, you will put that on the agenda. You will treat it exactly the same way you treated this situation.

The Chair: Thank you for that, Mr. Housefather.

I believe I did clarify my position on this, which was that we did not have any witnesses, so I used my discretion within the Standing Orders and the rules of the House to put this motion back on the agenda to resume debate.

I think I made myself very clear on that, sir.

Thank you.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chair, I'm asking you to confirm that you will do the same thing in a future event when the same situation reproduces itself. That's what I asked.

The Chair: It's a hypothetical, Mr. Housefather, that I can't answer. I just dealt with the situation that was in front of us, and that is, as I mentioned on Tuesday, that we had no witnesses for today. There were no witnesses who were going to appear for today's meeting, so I made the decision to put this motion back on the agenda.

I'm not going to speak to a hypothetical, and I'm not going to answer a hypothetical question. I'm only dealing with what's in front of me today, sir.

Thank you.

Mr. Barrett, go ahead on your point of order, please.

Then I have Mr. Bains on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Just quickly, in response to your ruling in response to Mrs. Shanahan's question for a new motion to be put on the floor, the motion in front of the committee has to be disposed of. Is that correct?

The Chair: Hang on a second.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thank you. I appreciate it.

The Chair: I think I'm pretty clear on it. I just want to make sure other members are clear on it.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I need to get clear, so thank you.

The Chair: Let me try to clarify this right from the book.

If a member decides they want to move another motion, then that motion could be considered a dilatory motion. If I read from the book on dilatory motions:

...a motion designed to dispose of the original question before the committee, either for the time being or permanently. Dilatory motions do not require notice, nor can they be amended or debated. They are therefore put to a vote immediately.

If a dilatory motion is accompanied by a condition, it becomes a substantive motion. It is then subject to the rules on the admissibility of such motions. It also becomes debatable and amendable.

The main dilatory motions admissible in committee include:

“That the Committee do now adjourn”:

If the motion is carried, the committee adjourns immediately to the call of the Chair.

We've done that before. It continues:

If the motion is defeated, the committee meeting [resumes].

“That the debate be now adjourned”:

A member who moves “That the debate be now adjourned” wishes to temporarily suspend debate under way on a motion or study. If the motion is carried, debate on the motion or study ceases and the committee moves on to other business.

That the Committee proceed to [another order of business]”:

[The] motion results in the matter then under consideration by the committee being replaced by the order of business proposed in the motion. If the motion is carried, the committee immediately proceeds to the “order” referred to in the motion.

Motion for the Previous Question

The motion “That this question now be put” is known as the previous question. In committee, motions for the previous question are inadmissible.

Those are the type of motions that can be moved by a member when they have the floor.

Right now, as it stands, my decision is that we are continuing with the meeting that was on notice, including resuming debate on the motion as amended, and Mr. Caputo has the floor.

Does that clarify it for you, Mr. Barrett?

• (1610)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Okay.

The Chair: I have Mr. Bains on a point of order.

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Chair, in response to your stating that we didn't have a witness, my understanding is that we did have a witness. I just wanted some clarification from Madam Clerk if the witness was approached at all.

The Chair: Madam Clerk is shaking her head no, as I am, Mr. Bains. We did not—

Mr. Parm Bains: We have an email response from her stating that she received a witness that was submitted.

The Chair: Hang on.

Mr. Bains, am I to understand that you sent a witness name in yesterday to the clerk? Is that what you're referring to? We had no witnesses scheduled for today. Are you suggesting to me that yesterday you sent a witness name to the clerk to be a witness at this committee? Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Parm Bains: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

You understand the difficulty of getting a witness within 24 hours. You do understand that.

Mr. Parm Bains: Yes, but my understanding was that it was submitted earlier. I just wanted to clarify when the—

The Chair: We will do our best to get your witness on the list for next week. I can tell you that we do have witnesses for two meetings next week, for both scheduled meetings. When the meeting notice is published, you'll see who those witnesses are.

I sure hope members can appreciate the difficulty in sending in a name a day before a meeting is scheduled and trying to arrange having that witness appear. I sure hope people can appreciate that.

An hon. member: I thought he submitted it earlier.

An hon. member: Yes. He submitted it earlier.

The Chair: I'm telling you, there was nobody available so...

That ends the points of order. I have a list, and on it I have Mr. Caputo and then Ms. Khalid. Those are the two I have on the list so far.

Then I have Mrs. Shanahan—yes, you did put your hand up—and Mr. Barrett and Mr. Cooper.

I'm putting the book away. Nobody needs this book anymore, I hope. The book is going away.

We are resuming debate on the amendment as proposed by Mr. Caputo.

Mr. Caputo, you have the floor. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've aged a little bit, and maybe grown a bit of a beard, since we started this meeting.

You know, as common-sense Conservatives, we're always wanting to get at the truth. We're always prepared to have people come to committee, whether they be advisers within our own party or people who, like Mark Carney, are advising the Liberal government. At the end of the day, we have to remember that this is somebody who not only is advising the Prime Minister but wants to be the Prime Minister. It's a bit disingenuous for the Liberals to compare apples to oranges and say, well, we want this person, we want this person and they should all come here. That's not Conservative logic. Conservatives have no problem with bringing people who have something to say and something to offer to the debate.

At the end of the day, it's my view that people like Mr. Carney should be here. He wants to become Prime Minister someday. That's his prerogative. He wants to advise the Liberal government, to be the de facto finance minister. That's his prerogative, but at the end of the day, it's my view that he is in multiple conflicts of interest, not even apparent conflicts of interest. He's in multiple conflicts of interest. Let's bring him here to the committee. We have nothing to hide as Conservatives.

• (1615)

Mr. Darren Fisher: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Frank Caputo: I was almost done.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Mr. Caputo's amendment isn't about removing. It's about reducing the times for one and adding another person. The motion already speaks to having Mr. Carney.

The Chair: You know I give a lot of latitude on this committee. I say this every meeting.

Mr. Caputo, I don't know whether you were concluding your comments or not, but go ahead, please. You have the floor.

Mr. Frank Caputo: I had two more words to say, and those were "thank you".

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Caputo.

I'll go to Ms. Khalid now on the amendment as proposed by Mr. Caputo.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

For clarity, that amendment seeks to decrease the time for Jenni Byrne and add an additional name, Mr. Singh, who is Mr. Jagmeet Singh's brother, to add another one hour for that person.

I'm just going to say that I am opposed to this amendment. I think it doesn't really do much justice to the main motion at all and provides a lot of unfairness.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Khalid.

Mrs. Shanahan, you're on the list, followed by Mr. Barrett.

Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have to say that I'm also against Mr. Caputo's amendment.

It's unfair to ask one witness to come for two hours, while we ask the other two to come for one hour each. It really makes no sense.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Shanahan.

[*English*]

I have Mr. Barrett next, followed by Mr. Cooper.

Go ahead, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thanks, Chair.

Look, if this is strictly about the amount of time that witnesses are appearing for, I think we can resolve that.

It's important that we have Mark Carney come before this committee. We've seen all of the revelations over the last number of days about Mr. Carney's string of good luck after taking on this role. It could be the \$2 billion-plus to his friend who operates Telesat. It could be that he has now opened the door for Brookfield to have discussions on a scheme with \$50 billion on pensions, \$10 billion coming—

Mr. Darren Fisher: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

This is just on the amendment, not on the main motion.

The Chair: Okay, so....

Mr. Michael Barrett: If they want to get silly with points of order, what are we doing?

Mr. Darren Fisher: I don't want to be here until 7:30.

The Chair: Darren, we give a lot of latitude here. I give you guys as much latitude as I give them.

He's speaking to the amendment. The amendment says, "That pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a), the committee call upon Mark Carney to appear for two hours, as well as Jenni Byrne and Gurratan Singh to testify...for one hour...within 14 calendar days". He can speak about the amendment if he wants.

Go ahead, Mr. Barrett. You have the floor.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I understand that they don't want to talk about giving privileged people, Liberal insiders, positions where they have all of the power, access to all of Canadians' tax dollars and none of the accountability that comes along with being a designated public office holder. I understand that's why they want to obstruct this.

Look, if the question is that they want to include people who aren't Mr. Carney in the motion and who speak at the caucuses of parties that are represented in the House of Commons, then we need to add Don Guy. We need to subamend it to add Don Guy. We need to include in that subamendment Brian Topp. These are federal lobbyists who speak at the caucuses and advise the leaders of the Liberal Party and the NDP. That's very plain.

If we're having a panel with Mr. Singh, Mr. Topp, Mr. Guy and Ms. Byrne for two hours together to match the amount of time that Mr. Carney comes to appear at the committee, we support that so long as those witnesses testify only after Mr. Carney has appeared at the committee and we don't just end up with the also-rans instead of having carbon tax Carney come before the committee. If we want to talk about fairness, that would be fairness.

I would put a subamendment forward—

● (1620)

The Chair: Okay. I was going to ask if you were going to do that or not.

Mr. Michael Barrett: The motion needs to be subamended. The effect of the subamendment is going to be to include Don Guy, Brian Topp and Gurratan Singh with Jenni Byrne on a panel together and invite them to appear after Mark Carney has appeared.

We're going to have to take the most current copy of the motion and include this proposal in it, but since we're having a conversation about fairness, we have Topp and Guy, who run a lobbying shop. If we want Ms. Byrne, who's not a federal lobbyist, to come to the committee just because she's a Conservative, we're fine to invite Ms. Byrne.

The Chair: I need you to repeat, again, for the clerk what your subamendment is proposing, please, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: The subamendment proposes to have Ms. Jenni Byrne, Mr. Don Guy, Mr. Brian Topp and Mr. Gurratan Singh appear on a panel together and for them to be invited after Mr. Carney has appeared at the committee.

Look, if the only way that's going to be palatable to other members of the committee is if their appearance matches Mr. Carney's appearance in length, then two hours is fine.

The Chair: Before you comment any further, I want to make sure that I have the language properly distributed. I'm going to suspend for a couple of minutes because—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I am going to suspend to make sure that every member of the committee has a copy of what Mr. Barrett is proposing, because I want everyone to be clear on this.

I'm suspending.

• (1620) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1640)

The Chair: Thank you, everyone, for your patience.

I see your hand.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villemure, you are now on the speaking list.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): All right.

[*English*]

Mr. Parm Bains: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I don't see anybody.

Mr. Parm Bains: It's Mr. Bains.

The Chair: Go ahead on your point of order, Mr. Bains.

Mr. Parm Bains: I'm sorry. My camera was off.

The Chair: There you are.

Mr. Parm Bains: I want to quickly go back to something.

You strongly indicated that we should understand, if we're submitting names of witnesses.... We only received a response from Madam Clerk yesterday, but the witness I submitted—

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Bains. What was it in response to? I need to be clear on that.

Mr. Parm Bains: It's on the witness I recommended.

The Chair: You just said that you got a response from the clerk. What was the response from the clerk?

Mr. Parm Bains: She acknowledged that she received the witness yesterday, but it was submitted on September 24 at 5:17 p.m. That's 216 hours ago. In fact—

The Chair: It's not going to make a difference—

Mr. Parm Bains: I just want to clarify, because—

The Chair: It's not going to make a difference today. We are where we are.

Mr. Parm Bains: For the record, I wanted to clarify that, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I appreciate that, and I'll go back to the clerk after—

Mr. Parm Bains: You strongly indicated to me that 24 hours is not acceptable. I understand that. I appreciate that. I just want to ensure that you know, and that Madam Clerk knows, that 216 hours ago, I submitted—

The Chair: What I'll do is go back to the clerk. We'll have a discussion after the meeting is over. I'll get an answer for you, Mr. Bains.

Thank you.

Mr. Parm Bains: In fact, the witness was number one on the list. I want to point that out for the record.

Thank you.

The Chair: I appreciate that. Thank you.

Does every member have the subamendment to the amendment?

I have a list. I have Mr. Barrett and Mr. Cooper.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villemure will be next, then Mr. Berthold.

[*English*]

Mr. Barrett, go ahead on the subamendment to the amendment, please.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, it was said that it's a question about fairness.

This subamendment deals with the primary issue, which is to have carbon tax Carney come before the committee.

It also addresses the desire of Liberal members. They wanted to have Jenni Byrne come to committee. I suppose that's their purview. Ms. Byrne has a business under her name and it does zero federal lobbying. None. Ms. Byrne is also not a federal lobbyist, but they want her to come to committee.

Okay. We agree to invite Ms. Byrne to come to committee and talk about how she doesn't have any involvement in federal lobbying. If we're doing that—and it's a question about fairness that was raised by the Liberal members—then we need to have Don Guy come to committee. I want to tell you why.

The St. Albert Gazette published a Canadian Press article on September 10, 2024. The title is, "Carney interested in 'doing something, not being something,' he says of adviser role". That's the adviser role he has with the Liberal Party.

The Canadian Press story states, "The Liberals called in veteran strategist Don Guy to give his insights on how to mount a comeback and go up against Poilievre as they prepare for the election year."

Don Guy is a founding partner of a company called GT and Co, which, unlike Ms. Byrne's business, has a significant federal lobbying practice. Notable clients include Loblaws—perhaps that's how it got that fridge money from the Liberals, and Loblaws of course owns Shoppers Drug Mart—and the Canada Bread company, which, as we know, did plead guilty to price-fixing during a food price inflation and cost of living crisis.

With CN Rail, we know the concerns there caused a fracture in the confidence and supply agreement, which was the coalition with the NDP. The government seemed to have received a real nudge to get to binding arbitration. One might wonder if that came from Mr. Guy, who is a federal lobbyist for CN Rail and also Airbnb, which the Liberals and the NDP have both accused of making the housing crisis worse.

These are the clients of the individual, Mr. Guy, who is a federal lobbyist and who was speaking at the taxpayer-funded Liberal caucus retreat. Let's get real here. Let's talk about fairness. Let's have Mr. Guy come before committee. He can sit next to Ms. Byrne, who the Liberals want to have come to committee.

Mr. Guy employs the former director of caucus services and operations for the Liberal research bureau—Ms. DeWolfe had a five-year tenure—as well as other well-connected Liberals. Mr. Guy, as the owner of Pollara, employs Dan Arnold, who is also a fixture at taxpayer-funded Liberal caucus retreats.

This is Don Guy, the federal lobbyist, who sits in the room with the Prime Minister, his cabinet, his caucus and these Liberal members, behind closed doors, advising them and representing his clients simultaneously. His clients are Airbnb, which the Liberals have said made the housing crisis worse; CN Rail; the Canada Bread company, which pleaded guilty to price-fixing; and Loblaws. If we're getting fair, let's get fair, and let's have him come before the committee.

● (1645)

Now, along with Mr. Guy, we should include Brian Topp. He is the co-founding partner of GT and Co. Let's talk again about all of those examples that I gave, about federal lobbying that's done by that company—companies that have pleaded guilty of price-fixing, companies the Liberals have accused of exacerbating the housing crisis in our country and companies they've accused of gouging consumers.

Who is Mr. Topp? Mr. Topp is a noted New Democrat, the former chief of staff to Rachel Notley. He has these connections. He is the employer of that same former Liberal research bureau director responsible for caucus services and operations.

Topp and Guy should be sitting in seats 15 and 16, and we can save seat 17 for Ms. Byrne. Then, in seat 18, we should have Guratan Singh, because we know that the NDP leader has said that he has him on his arm for media scrums and for advice, and that he's a lobbyist for Metro. Metro barely gets a mention from the NDP leader when he's talking about grocery giants. It's funny. I wonder why we don't hear much mention of Metro. It's highly suspicious indeed, some might say.

We want to see Topp, Guy, Singh and Ms. Byrne.

The difference, of course, with Ms. Byrne, is that she's the only one who's not a federal lobbyist. However, they want to have her, and they want it to be fair, so let's be fair. Let's have them come here, and they can all appear on a panel together.

There are a couple of important points in this motion. These individuals don't come before the committee, the invitations are not to be furnished to them, until we've had Mr. Carney appear, because Mr. Carney's ducked committees before. It's not acceptable that we don't have him come first.

If we're going to have the conversation about federal lobbying, we can deal with the many issues and the many conflicts of interest with carbon tax Carney—questionable practices with respect to lobbying. How did Brookfield get in the mix for what's going to be a very lucrative time? How is it that their stock price hit six-month highs, when one of their subsidiaries, the largest private mortgage insurer in Canada, is going to benefit from a Liberal government announcement.

All of these things happen. His buddy at Telesat is getting a \$2-billion loan for satellite Internet service that doesn't have any satellites and isn't providing any Internet service. How did all of that good fortune land on all of these people who just happen to be connected to Mr. Carney in the hours that the ink's just drying on his agreement to become the de facto finance minister after Justin Trudeau's PMO said they didn't have confidence in Chrystia Freeland, the Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister? How did that all come to happen?

What did Mr. Carney have to give up for that? Well, we've seen that he's now sending out fundraising letters for the Liberals.

We hope to have support from other members. We wanted to talk about fairness. This is fair. We're saying that the Conservative who has been suggested ought to appear, alongside the federal Liberal lobbyists who've been in the halls of power, who've been in the rooms behind closed doors when decisions are getting made, when strategy's being charted for the government and for their coalition partner. That's incredibly important.

● (1650)

When we have someone like the chair of Brookfield Global, this trillion-dollar, arch-capitalist everything company, we hope that we can do whatever it takes. We hope we can count on the NDP to do what it takes to bring Mr. Carney here to answer questions and answer for how he's enriching his friends in exchange for raising money for the Liberals. We hope the issue of fairness that was raised by the Liberal members has been addressed here.

Let's see Topp, Guy and Singh, and we can have Ms. Byrne alongside them, although she's not a federal lobbyist and they do federal lobbying. Is that okay? I think there was a concern that they were going to appear for less time than Mr. Carney, and I think that's been addressed as well. We'll have that panel for two hours. Those invitations will be sent out after Mr. Carney comes.

The most important thing isn't protecting people who share the party affiliation. It's accountability and transparency. It's about restoring Canadians' confidence.

Let's put it plainly. We want carbon tax Carney here. The poison pill the Liberals think they've put forward in having Ms. Byrne come.... We'll make sure that the invitation is hand delivered. Will they do the same with their strategists? Will the NDP do the same with their strategists? Let's see.

Let's see who's interested in fairness and accountability for Canadians and who's actually looking to circle the wagons and protect their insiders, who have had that privileged access behind closed doors while lobbying for their federal clients.

Let's see. The opportunity's here for everyone. They just need to reach out and take it.

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Cooper now has the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper, go ahead, please.

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

Picking up where Mr. Barrett left off with respect to the subamendment, it is important that we hear from Don Guy and Brian Topp for the reasons mentioned by Mr. Barrett.

However, I think it's important to reflect on how we got here in the first place and why the need to bring forward this subamendment came about. It came about because every single day there seems to be more corruption, more conflict and more scandal from arguably the most rotten and corrupt government in modern Canadian history, if not Canadian history.

We have a prime minister who, unlike any prime minister in Canadian history, has been found guilty not once but twice of breaking Canada's ethics laws. He was found guilty of being in conflicts of interest. Given that leadership starts at the top and the culture of a government starts at the top, it's no wonder that we have seen the kind of rot and corruption that has permeated this entire Liberal government.

We now know that carbon tax Carney became “conflict Carney” when the Prime Minister shamelessly appointed his rich pal, Carney, to serve as the so-called chair of the Liberal Party's task force on economic growth. It was very convenient for the Prime Minister to appoint Mr. Carney chair of the Liberal Party's task force when in fact he is essentially advising the Prime Minister on matters of economic policy, and that was to avoid Mr. Carney being subject to the Conflict of Interest Act and to avoid having to make disclosures pursuant to that act with respect to his many conflicts.

What are some of those conflicts? Every day we seem to learn of new conflicts.

By the way, about the title as chair of the Liberal Party's task force, guess what? We found out that it is a one-person task force, namely carbon tax Carney, also known as conflict Carney.

Speaking of those conflicts, almost immediately following his appointment as the Prime Minister's adviser—evidently the Prime Minister has lost confidence in his utterly incompetent finance minister, Chrystia Freeland—we find out that the government raises the threshold for insured mortgages from \$1 million to \$1.5 million.

What is the significance of that? It just so happens that carbon tax Carney, also known as conflict of interest Carney, is the chair of none other than Brookfield. Now, what is Brookfield? It is a multi-national investment management company that owns Sagen, the second-largest mortgage insurer.

Think about that. You have an adviser to the Prime Minister on economic policy, and then upon his appointment the government, just out of coincidence, raises the threshold for insured mortgages. That adviser just happens to be the chair of Brookfield, the owner of the second-largest mortgage insurer, and, of course, it resulted in Brookfield benefiting richly from that decision. In fact, their stock hit a six-month high. How convenient.

However, that's just scratching the surface of the conflicts, because shortly after that, carbon tax Carney and conflict of interest Carney's close friend, who serves as CEO of Telesat, received \$2.14 billion in taxpayer-funded loans. That's interesting.

• (1700)

We find out that carbon tax Carney, also known as conflict of interest Carney, is negotiating with the very government he is supposedly advising. Well, according to the Prime Minister, he is not advising the government. He is not advising the Prime Minister. He is somehow just advising the Liberal Party.

Everyone knows he is advising the government. He is advising the Prime Minister, and he is the de facto finance minister.

We find out that he is negotiating with the very same government—to do what? To shake down taxpayers, asking for \$10 billion in funds for Brookfield. There is conflict after conflict after conflict.

What is as bad as how arrogant this Prime Minister—along with carbon tax Carney and conflict of interest Carney—has been, trying to masquerade him as an adviser to the Liberal Party, thinking that Canadians would be fooled by that. Of course, Canadians aren't fooled by that. It is very plain for the eye to see. It is brazen, blatant corruption and conflict. Conflict and corruption are out in the open.

After nine years of this rotten and corrupt Prime Minister, the government doesn't even try to hide the conflicts and corruption. It can't; they're in plain sight. On that basis, we moved a motion to hear from carbon tax Carney and conflict of interest Carney before this committee. It's an appropriate committee; it's the ethics committee. It is a committee that deals with matters of conflicts of interest to provide oversight and to see that the Conflict of Interest Act is being enforced. It is to hold to account those public office holders, ministers or other officials in this government who have breached the act or have engaged in otherwise unethical activities. I tell you, this committee is very busy because of all the work that this government has given it.

I would like to hear—and it's important for this committee to scrutinize Mr. Carney—how it is that the threshold for insured mortgages was raised almost immediately after he was appointed adviser to the Liberal Party. It was not when he was chair of Brookfield. He could answer to the fact that his close friend just happened to get \$2 billion from the same government, again just after he was appointed as economic adviser. He could explain how on the one hand he is advising the Prime Minister, while on the other hand he is negotiating \$10 billion in taxpayers' funds for none other than Brookfield. It is about as rotten as it gets. It's out in the open and totally shameless.

What do the Liberals do when we bring forward a motion? It's what they always do: They scramble. They huddle. They wait for their talking points from the Prime Minister's Office. They come in and they do everything they can to shield the Prime Minister and his friends, including Mr. Carney, from accountability and scrutiny.

They bring forward an amendment that they thought was rather clever to try to divert attention. They said, "Let's bring in Jenni Byrne." Well, why bring in Jenni Byrne? She's not a federal lobbyist. Her firm doesn't do any federal lobbying, but they want to hear from Ms. Byrne.

I don't have a problem. Mr. Barrett and Mr. Caputo don't have a problem. I don't think Ms. Byrne has a problem. I think the Liberals will run out of questions very quickly, but maybe not. We'll hear from her if that's what they want to do.

• (1705)

If Ms. Byrne is going to be called to appear, it is appropriate that we hear from Gurratan Singh, given the fact that he is the brother of the NDP leader, an adviser to the NDP leader, a former MPP and a lobbyist for none other than Metro. The Liberals like to talk about Loblaws. Well, that's fine, but we can also hear from a lobbyist for Metro who just happens to be the adviser and brother of the leader of the NDP.

Then there is Don Guy. Don Guy, just weeks ago, was meeting behind closed doors at the Liberals' Nanaimo caucus retreat, standing in the same room with the captain of the *Titanic* himself, the Prime Minister. He was, as The Canadian Press reported, called in "to give his insights on how to mount a comeback".

Boy, do they have a lot of work to do. I can't imagine what the advice would be, other than to tell the Prime Minister to take a hike.

In any event, Don Guy is someone who happens to be an adviser to the Liberals and the Prime Minister. He was there behind closed doors. He also happens to be the founding partner of GT, which, unlike Ms. Byrne's firm, does extensive federal lobbying. It doesn't do extensive federal lobbying for just anything: It lobbies for Loblaws and the Canada Bread Company, which, as Mr. Barrett noted, has pleaded guilty to price-fixing.

That's Don Guy. That's the Liberal Party adviser who employs Julie DeWolfe, the former director of caucus services and operations at the Liberal research bureau. It's the same Don Guy who is the owner of and chief strategist at Pollara, which employs Dan Arnold, the Liberals' pollster. I think that's another interesting connection.

Don Guy was also there advising the Prime Minister's ski buddy and fake rapporteur David Johnston in his sham investigation into foreign interference and the Prime Minister's efforts to cover up Beijing's attack on our democracy in the 2019 and 2021 elections, which benefited the Liberal Party.

It's not just me saying this: Madam Justice Hogue concluded that Beijing's interference may have materially impacted the results in certain ridings, including Steveston—Richmond East, where my colleague Kenny Chiu was defeated as a consequence of disinformation spread by Beijing and amplified by the Liberal Party and Justin Trudeau.

In short, Mr. Chair, this is a very reasonable amendment. We're happy to hear from Ms. Byrne, but if Ms. Byrne is going to be invited, there are far stronger and more compelling grounds to invite other witnesses, such as Mr. Singh, Mr. Guy and Mr. Guy's business partner, former NDP chief of staff Brian Topp. Let's hear from all of them. Let's have them for two hours. There was an objection about having one hour for Mr. Singh and one hour for Ms. Byrne, so let's have them here for two hours.

However, really, the most important person we need to hear from is Mr. Carney. He needs to come to committee to answer for all of his conflicts. He needs to answer questions about exactly what his role is within this government and why he is seeking to shield himself from scrutiny and from having to disclose his many conflicts.

I may have more to say, but I will leave it at that for now, Mr. Chair.

• (1710)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Villemure, you have the floor.

Mr. René Villemure: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, but I'll pass.

[*English*]

The Chair: I had Monsieur Berthold.

[*Translation*]

He was supposed to speak next, but he's not here right now.

[English]

I'm going to Mr. Caputo, and then Mr. Cooper has his hand up again.

Mr. Caputo, you have the floor.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's always a pleasure to speak, both in the House of Commons and at committee. Before I came to Parliament, I didn't realize how important these committee meetings can be, so it is appreciated.

I want to pick up on what Mr. Cooper had to say.

So much of this is intertwined relationships. There are Liberals who have relationships with other Liberals. There's one common denominator. Do you know what that is? It's people getting rich off the government. It's true.

Mr. Chair, when we think about this, you have somebody who is already insanely wealthy. I'm not sure if anybody here knows Mark Carney's net worth. I certainly don't, but I can guarantee it's probably a lot higher than mine and probably higher than that of every single person in this room combined.

Here he is, advising the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party, which is a party entitled to its entitlements and really defining the hubris that goes along with that.

People just don't have enough. People are lining up at food banks in my riding. They're having trouble paying their bills, yet we have Liberals getting richer and richer. I know it's not in the motion, so I won't speak to it for long, but I will be heading to the House of Commons shortly today on the green slush fund. What is that about? It's about Liberals helping Liberals get richer.

We need to get to the bottom of the conflicts of interest. It's bad enough that it's got this far.

Frankly, I would love to hear from Mr. Carney about what he's thinking, just from an interest point of view. This is somebody who wants to be the Prime Minister—he's made no secret of that—yet here he is, advising the government. He not only has a material interest....

Typically, the appearance of an interest is enough. I think most people would know that. Especially as lawyers, we have it drilled into us. I think every parliamentarian is taught, or should be taught, that where there is an appearance of a conflict, you have a de facto conflict. By that, I mean you proceed as though there's a conflict even if there isn't one, but there could be one. Just the appearance is enough to say, "Okay. That's too much. That's enough."

As Mr. Barrett and Mr. Cooper so eloquently laid out, you have not only the appearance of a conflict but also what appears to be fairly tangible evidence of a conflict, in that somebody is advising the government at the same time they're negotiating contracts that would personally benefit them. That is the very definition of a conflict of interest. It's somebody who could benefit based on their relationships. That in itself is inherently problematic.

This is Canada. Our leader, Pierre Poilievre, often talks about the have-nots versus the have-yachts. I know where the have-yachts

are. They seem to be at the Liberal convention. They seem to be at the green slush fund, where they're talking about, "How do we get more? Who's going to get more? Do you want more? How much more? A million? Two million? Five million?"

People are lined up at food banks. People can't afford their rent and there aren't enough houses for people to buy, yet we have Liberals lining up to line their own pockets. If there is one place where we are to address it, it should be here at the ethics committee.

That is why I am puzzled about why the Liberals here do not want Mr. Carney in that chair. What are they so afraid of? The conflict of interest is so clear. I'm sure he's very bright. I'm sure he will tell us all about it, if the Liberals agree to have him come, or perhaps if this committee overrules them and decides that it is the right thing.

If I were the Liberals, I would be saying, "I want this. Why do I want it? Because I want to show that there might be smoke, but there's no fire," even though we know there is, because there are, at the very least, the optics of a conflict.

• (1715)

When we have friends of rich Liberals who are now advising the Prime Minister while negotiating and getting \$2.5-billion contracts, this is so obviously a conflict of interest. I don't know what could be more the case. What do we need? We need Mr. Carney there sitting in that seat.

It sure is lonely right now. It's an empty seat. Let's have him there for a couple of hours, and he can tell us about this.

These are the other people that Mr. Barrett mentioned: Mr. Topp, Mr. Guy and Ms. Byrne. None of them wants to be prime minister. None of them are negotiating contracts with the Liberal government. None of their friends, as far as we know, stand to get rich from the government or are in the process of getting rich from the government.

This is a government that promised to be open by default, which is kind of ironic, because right now it is fighting a Speaker's ruling about openness in Parliament. Why would we assume that it is doing anything but that here? This isn't transparency; it's opacity. This government is opaque. Let's shed some light on it. Let's bring Mr. Carney here.

We've agreed that Ms. Byrne should attend. I'm not sure that they're going to hear very much. After all, she doesn't want to be prime minister. She's not advising us as a special adviser to skirt conflict of interest rules with the Liberal Party.

The Liberals could probably avoid this whole thing at the ethics committee just by having Mr. Carney made subject to conflict of interest rules or telling us—because they would not tell us during question period, and this was asked multiple times—if his involvement with the Liberal Party was cleared with the Commissioner of Lobbying. That's pretty simple.

Again, this is the open-by-default government, transparent by default: “Everything you want, we will get for you.” They won’t even answer a question about lobbying, a yes-or-no question. “No, we dropped the ball, but we’re doing it.” That’s what they should say if they haven’t cleared it, and if they have, then tell us. If they had, they would say yes, it was cleared by the Commissioner of Lobbying. Sometimes they don’t like the answer, so they don’t answer the question.

The government certainly didn’t like the Speaker’s ruling on the SDTC. I don’t think that they’re going to like the answer that they would get from the Commissioner of Lobbying, but who knows? I’m sure they’d be more than willing to give up all of the information, but there are so many questions to be answered and so many things to be dealt with at this committee, yet here we are struggling to get the transparency that we need by getting Mr. Carney right there in seat 17.

I would welcome him, shake his hand and pour him a glass of water, and then I and my Conservative colleagues would be happy to ask a number of tough questions on behalf of Canadians, not for political gain but because people have the right to know.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Caputo.

I have Mr. Cooper next on the list, and then Mr. Barrett.

• (1720)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Let me just say that I find it very interesting that every time the question has been posed in the House—I believe Mr. Barrett posed it more than once—as to whether the Prime Minister ran his appointment of Mr. Carney, supposedly as an adviser to the Liberal party, past the Lobbying Commissioner...

The refusal of the Prime Minister and ministers in his government to answer such a straightforward question provides the answer to that question, which is that the Prime Minister didn’t run Mr. Carney by the Commissioner of Lobbying, presumably because he would not have liked the answer from the lobbying commissioner. It is almost a certainty that the appointment would not have been given the green light. It wouldn’t have been given the green light because what the Prime Minister and Mark Carney—carbon tax Carney, conflict of interest Carney—have done is set up an arrangement that, at the end of the day, is the antithesis of open and accountable government, which is what the Prime Minister touted himself as championing upon being elected Prime Minister. It is the antithesis of, I think, the standard that Canadians would expect.

It’s not just anyone. We’re talking about the former governor of the Bank of Canada. We’re talking about the former governor of the Bank of England. Someone advising the Prime Minister on economic policy and other matters ought to be subject to the Conflict of Interest Act and ought to have their conflicts disclosed. The fact that the Prime Minister has very conveniently shielded carbon tax Carney, conflict of interest Carney, from that is problematic. That’s why we do need to hear from him.

I guess I understand why the Liberals are blocking our efforts and why they want to change the channel. It’s because they want to

talk about anything other than the conflicts of interest and corruption that surround Mr. Carney. However, as Mr. Caputo noted, the entire agenda of the House of Commons has been sidelined because of all of the corruption and scandals involving this government, not only in relation to Mr. Carney but also in relation to their obstruction of a clear and unambiguous order of the House to turn over all documents relating to the billion-dollar green slush fund, a scandal that occurred under the watch of the Minister of Industry, a scandal that the assistant deputy minister described in a secret audio recording as the largest scandal since the sponsorship scandal.

Now there’s another scandal, another finding of a prima facie question of privilege involving the shady business partner, the Minister of Employment, Randy Boissonnault, and his business partner coming to committee and telling the committee that the Randy in the text messages implicated in a half-million-dollar shakedown was some other Randy, but very conveniently, when he was ordered by this committee to identify that Randy, he refused to do so because everyone knows the Randy in the text messages, the Randy involved in the half-million-dollar shakedown, the Randy involved—

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I have a point of order, Chair.

I feel like I’ve seen this movie before. I don’t think it’s on the subamendment.

The Chair: We’re going to move back to the subamendment if we can, Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Michael Cooper: My point, Mr. Chair, is that it provides some context to the fact that it’s not just Mr. Carney, as serious as that is. We’re dealing with a government that, as I said in my earlier submissions, is arguably the most corrupt government in modern Canadian history, if not in all Canadian history. I will leave it at that.

• (1725)

The Chair: Okay, thank you, Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Barrett, you are next, on your subamendment.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I’ll yield my time.

The Chair: Okay.

I don’t have anybody else on the list, so we’re going to go to the vote on the—

Ms. Iqra Khalid: I’m sorry, Chair, I just stepped out.

The Chair: Okay. I’m calling the vote.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Okay. I—

The Chair: No, I called the vote, Mrs. Shanahan. I’m sorry.

We’re going to call the roll. Go ahead, Madam Clerk.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Nancy Vohl): The vote is on the subamendment moved by Mr. Barrett to the amendment moved by Mr. Caputo.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Chair, I have a point of order.

Can we just read out the subamendment, please?

Some hon. members: No.

The Chair: We're on a vote, Mrs. Shanahan. I'm sorry.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: If you could do so, that would be much appreciated.

The Chair: I called the vote. The vote is ongoing.

Go ahead, Clerk.

(Subamendment negatived: nays 5; yeas 4)

The Chair: We're now on the amendment by Mr. Caputo.

Do we have anybody on the amendment?

Monsieur Berthold, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

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

I'm here today because I think it's extremely important to get to the bottom of the relationship between Mr. Mark Carney and the Liberal Party of Canada, particularly the relationship between Mr. Carney, the Prime Minister, and several ministers in the Liberal government.

At the moment, the House of Commons is completely paralyzed. In fact, two questions of privilege have been referred to the House, because the government refuses to submit to the orders of the House. One of the questions of privilege relates to the tabling of documents, again—it seems to me we've been through this before.

If I talk about the famous National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, it will remind my colleagues of a few things. At the time, the government refused to comply with an order of the House. The president of the agency was summoned to the House, and they refused to hand over the documents to the House. All this led to an election.

The Liberal government was so afraid to reveal what might have been in the documents we could have had in our hands that it preferred to call an election and spend tens of millions of Canadian dollars rather than comply with a House order and turn these documents over to the House, which would have been simple.

What's going on right now in the House of Commons is very reminiscent of the same thing. We're trying to shed light on the Liberal Green Fund, the Liberals' green slush fund.

Let me remind you that, in this green slush fund affair, tens or hundreds of millions of Canadian dollars were paid to Liberal insiders. These people profited from this money because they were well-connected with the managers of the green fund, who were appointed by the Prime Minister and his government.

We're talking about 186 green fund conflicts of interest and \$330 million paid to people who knew the right people. It turns out that these good people knew other good people, appointed by the Liberals. An amount of \$330 million was paid although there was a conflict of interest, and \$50 million, or a little more, was paid to companies that did not meet the basic criteria of the Green Fund program. That's a lot of money. We're talking about nearly \$400 million, which is eight times more than the sponsorship scandal. It's easy to see why, when it comes to ethics and conflicts of interest, the official opposition is not only cautious, but must also do its job and hold the corrupt Liberal government to account.

If we're here, it's because we want Mr. Mark Carney to testify before the committee. He's not a household name in Quebec, although he's a household name elsewhere. Mr. Carney is a man who is very involved in international finance and has held very important positions. However, when I talk about Mr. Carney with the average citizen, I don't usually get a big reaction, to be honest. And that's what's most dangerous, not being interested in someone who holds such an important position in a company. Mr. Carney is the president of a company that manages billions of dollars—I don't mean millions of dollars, I mean billions of dollars—and has investments in just about everything. Basically, he's the president of a multitasking company with ramifications all over the place.

• (1730)

The Prime Minister has therefore appointed this person as chair of his personal task force on the country's economic growth.

If he's managing billions of dollars, maybe he's been successful in business. I have no idea. However, what I do know is that he has a personal interest in billions of dollars.

Let me report what the Prime Minister said about Mark Carney. He said that, as chair of the Leader's Task Force on Economic Growth, "Mark's"—please note that he only used his first name—unique ideas and perspectives would play a vital role in defining the next steps in the Liberal Party's plan to continue growing our economy and strengthening the middle class, as well as urgently seizing new opportunities for Canadian jobs and prosperity in a rapidly changing world.

That's quite a task. We know that the Liberal government has hired 100,000 more public servants since 2015. Of those 100,000 public servants, it would appear that no one had the skills to advise the Prime Minister on a plan to continue growing our economy. This seems a little implausible to me. I can't believe that there was no one, among all the senior civil servants and mandarins of the state, capable of playing this role.

Prime Minister Trudeau chose instead to go external. He called his good friend Mark Carney to come and tell him what to do with Canadians' money, because he was out of ideas. He didn't know what to do. After nine years, he was drained. He had no capacity to go any further. Above all, he wanted help from someone who wasn't tied to the state.

Why? Why take on someone who has to submit to all the rules of the state when you can choose someone who is completely free to do what he wants? Mark Carney, the man who will be advising the Prime Minister and, it seems, the entire Liberal government on the future of the country, doesn't have to answer to anyone. He doesn't have to abide by the rules on conflict of interest or lobbying.

This means he can continue to do business. What's more, if he happens to give the Prime Minister advice that might benefit one of his companies, why not? It could pay off.

Rules had been put in place after the government of former Prime Minister Trudeau had been through this to avoid, precisely, such conflicts of interest and people taking advantage of their office and their special relationship with elected officials or ministers. However, Mr. Carney will not have to abide by the rules of the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada. He can therefore continue to make a host of good suggestions to Mr. Trudeau without being accountable to anyone and, above all, without anyone being able to know whether his advice will benefit him personally.

We're talking about a person who holds several offices and has interests amounting to billions of dollars. I can guarantee you that if this person continues to have both hands in the private and public sectors, it will be extremely difficult to get to the bottom of what he has done. That's why we put rules in place. That's why the lobbying commissioner exists.

They'll tell us he's not a lobbyist. However, when you have direct access to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Industry, my goodness, why spend a dime on a lobbyist? The advice goes straight to the ears of the person who's going to make the decision, based on the advice that person is going to give.

Can't you see the magnitude of the situation?

• (1735)

I don't understand why anyone wouldn't want that. I don't understand why members of Parliament would vote against asking Mr. Carney these kinds of questions. I'm not talking through my hat, because, as luck would have it, on the very day Mr. Trudeau decided to appoint Mr. Carney to head his personal task force on economic prosperity, what did we learn? We learned that Mr. Carney's company was working to secure not \$50,000, not \$50 million, but \$50 billion in public money for one of his companies. That's \$50 billion. The very day he was appointed, we learned that his company was lobbying to be able to manage \$50 billion of Canadians' savings. Wow!

Was anyone looking for proof? Was anyone looking to find out why we should be asking questions? We have an obvious answer. It all happened on the same day.

It seems that the share value of Mr. Carney's company, since his appointment as Mr. Trudeau's personal adviser, has grown by leaps and bounds. I don't have the figures, but my colleagues talked about it today.

This is huge. It makes no sense. It's so big it's overflowing. I'm sure our Bloc colleagues will understand how huge it is and will support us so we can hear what Mr. Carney has to say. I'm sure they will.

I'm a little surprised by the NDP's position on this. I wish we could have had a clear vote from the NDP. Okay, they want to broaden the debate, they want a lot of people to appear, when the target, the objective we need to have is Mr. Carney, who is the front-runner to succeed the Prime Minister right now.

Imagine what that means. He's the first in line. He's just waiting for this corrupt Liberal government to fall so he can take the Prime Minister's place. Are we going to replace a prime minister who has twice been convicted of ethical breaches, who has contravened the rules of ethics, who refuses to respond positively to the orders of Parliament, with someone who, for the moment, has not broken any rules of ethics, but who, at first glance and on the very day of his appointment, seems to have taken exactly the same path? That's what his company's investments and demands have shown us.

How come this isn't in the media more? Could someone please explain to me why we're not all rending our garments, right now?

This is so big. In fact, maybe it's too big. When your nose is glued to the window, you can only see a small corner. I think I'll invite everyone to take a step back and look at what's happening right now on Mark Carney's side. I'm not going to stop at Mr. Carney's positions on political issues, like the carbon tax. I won't dwell on it, but I'll say a few words anyway.

There are vested interests. Mark Carney has an interest in seeing the government's carbon tax policy continue and expand. Mr. Carney is in favour of making it more expensive for all Canadians. He has both hands in the pot. He doesn't have to answer to anyone. It's unbelievable.

Today my colleague Mr. Barrett wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Lobbying. Indeed, we have many questions to ask. Since we have so many, we can ask them in several places. We don't have to wait as we move from one stage to another, and so on.

The Commissioner of Lobbying must quickly look into Mark Carney's activities to see if there have been any breaches of the Lobbying Act, any breaches of the Conflict of Interest Act.

We have some questions. To what extent is Brookfield, Mr. Carney's company, and all its subsidiaries aware of these possible breaches of the Lobbying Act? This is a question we need to ask the Commissioner of Lobbying. In fact, she's probably asking herself the same questions right now.

● (1740)

Mr. Chair, Mark Carney speaks regularly to the Prime Minister. He's the godfather of someone in the immediate family of another Liberal minister. He's very close to cabinet right now. I'm not making this up. He can talk to the Prime Minister and all those people any time he wants. He doesn't have to account for his meetings with ministers or the Prime Minister.

When we meet lobbyists, each of us has to declare that they met us, why and in what context it was done. But that's not the case with Mark Carney. Why isn't it? I can't understand why the head of such a large company, a company with so many tentacles, isn't held to account.

What role does Mr. Carney currently play? He's literally taking on the role of political adviser, but not just any political adviser; it's more like the role of a senior political adviser. I say this because Justin Trudeau himself has said that Mr. Carney's ideas and views will play an essential role in defining the next steps. You don't give such a role to a political attaché or an inexperienced political adviser. It's the role of a senior adviser to the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr. Chair, I'm sure that if you look in the Prime Minister's Office staff directory, you won't find Mark Carney's name there. You could even extend your search by looking into the personnel of the Minister of Finance. You can look anywhere, Mr. Chair, and I'm sure you'll never find Mark Carney's name, because he simply doesn't want to be accountable to Canadians. He doesn't want to hurt his companies, and he wants to take advantage of the special relationship he currently has with the Prime Minister. It could end there. But it doesn't. Not only does Mr. Carney advise the Prime Minister, he also raises money for him. It's true. Mark Carney is a fundraiser for the Liberal Party of Canada. Surely he's not saying this Liberal government is corrupt when he speaks at these events.

He has sent a letter to Canadians, more specifically to Liberal Party supporters, I hope. Because if he doesn't, he won't have much success. In the letter, he said that this work is not possible without a strong team and the support of Canadians, and that Justin Trudeau and the team hope that, if they can, Canadians will help the Liberal Party of Canada reach its \$350,000 goal by midnight on September 29. Mr. Carney is a business leader, special adviser to the Prime Minister and senior adviser to the Prime Minister. He does political work. An ethicist could work for three years on this file alone to try to untangle all this and try to understand it. So you can understand why we're skeptical when it comes to Liberals and ethics.

I spoke earlier about the many scandals. Now I'll tell you about one. This committee may have a unique opportunity to defuse a scandal before it's too late and too costly for Canadians. But how? First, we must hope that the Commissioner of Lobbying will listen to the recommendations of my colleague Mr. Barrett, open an inquiry and ask Mr. Carney some questions. We also have a role to play, and we must play it. We need to ask Mr. Carney these questions. The Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy

and Ethics has a very important role to play. Since the arrival of this Liberal government, the members of the committee have been working very hard, for many hours.

● (1745)

Mr. Chair, I don't think you'll be able to study and bring to light all the Liberal government scandals before the end of the session.

It's part of the committee's role to welcome Mr. Carney, and we should focus our efforts on that.

Like us, the NDP has a vested interest in shedding light on the links between Justin Trudeau and Mr. Carney, who acts as a volunteer, financier, business leader and senior adviser to Justin Trudeau.

Mr. Chair, I wanted to make this point today, because, as I said, if we don't pay attention to Mr. Carney, he's going to rake it in. What's more, he's going to do it unsupervised, unaccountable to anyone, including commissioners, lobbyists and Parliament.

This committee has a unique opportunity to hold Mr. Carney to account. For this reason, I implore all parties, even the Liberal Party, to do so. Don't you want to get to know your next leader better?

I think that's the best way to go. Invite him to appear before this committee for two hours. Ask him all the questions you want. Then you'll be able to determine whether or not the Liberals will continue on.

As Mr. Trudeau says so often these days, they're going to keep acting the same way, unless we want something else. This is your chance to ask Mr. Carney some questions. Use them wisely to get to know your next leader.

The same thing goes for the NDP and the Bloc Québécois. You have to ask this person questions. God knows where he'll be tomorrow, and God knows we have to stop this apparent conflict of interest before it costs Canadians too much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Berthold.

I cancelled my French lesson this morning, and it's good for me to listen to French.

Mr. Luc Berthold: I can continue, if you like.

The Chair: No, that's fine. Thank you.

[*English*]

Mr. Barrett, you have the floor.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, I mentioned earlier today that I had taken to writing to the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada because of the state of the government with the new de facto finance minister. What we're seeing unfold is a cause for concern for us as His Majesty's loyal opposition with what we believe is an avoidance of oversight through the Prime Minister's decision to exempt Mr. Carney from the obligations of a designated public office holder, but also for the many examples that we've raised, and I'm going to get into them. For instance, there's the blatant advantage that the company of which he is the chair of suddenly received in the hours after Mr. Carney was appointed.

The subamendment that I moved to have Mr. Guy, Mr. Topp and Mr. Singh appear as witnesses as well was born out of the question of fairness that was raised by the Liberals, so—

• (1750)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: I have a point of order, Chair. Are we still on the subamendment or have we moved to the amendment? Just to clarify.

Mr. Michael Barrett: If you follow along, I can help. If you listen, I can help you if you follow along.

The Chair: I think Mr. Barrett will probably get to where he needs to go on the amendment.

Go ahead, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I think I was just saying how the Liberals can't help but fall all over themselves when they whined about wanting fairness, but then when the opportunity was given, they scurried right back into the hole. It's not surprising. It's not surprising because this is what we've seen after nine years of the most corrupt government that this country's ever seen.

I think Mr. Cooper was right when he put it that we've seen that with Justin Trudeau being found guilty of breaking the law twice. This is while serving as Prime Minister.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Obstructing RCMP investigations....

Mr. Michael Barrett: That's right; it was obstructing investigations and hiding behind cabinet confidence. Here we have the same occurring.

I would have hoped that we'd see that this was a genuine ask by the Liberals for fairness, but it's never about fairness. It's always about enriching their friends. That's what they're doing. That's what they're looking to do today.

You would hope that, as I said before, when you have a subject like Mr. Carney as the example, and you have people who are repping companies that have pleaded guilty to price-fixing on food during a cost of living crisis, you could have expected that the NDP would have supported that in fairness—talking about fairness for people, fairness for people who need help—but the “yes” votes didn't come from those who were seeking fairness. That's not what the Liberals are about.

The letter I wrote to the lobbying commissioner lays out the real and apparent conflicts, because it can be seen, reasonably, that there's a sense of obligation towards a lobbyist. It details all of that.

First, though, I want to pick up on one thing Mr. Cooper said about Mr. Carney—that he's the head of a task force of one. I'm sure he's a difficult man to manage, but they found the right man for the job.

It's not about leading a task force. It's not about leading a group of people. It's about introducing a successor to a Prime Minister who is just.... As it was rightly put, it's about replacing the captain of the *Titanic*. Why Mr. Carney wants to take that on as the *SS Liberal* sails into the iceberg, I'm not sure. We heard that he's a real expert, as the Liberals say. Well, why won't you take expert advice? For anyone who joins that team at this point, all of their judgment has just been called into question. That's a question for Mr. Carney as well that would have to be asked.

Look, the Liberals have shown themselves for who they are. When we look at the options put in front of the committee today to have people come before committee to see what we could learn from the registered federal lobbyists—the lobbying shop owners who are inside behind the closed doors of the Liberal caucus room—it's interesting that the decision they took was to not support the motion. They voted it down.

What does that tell Canadians? It tells them that while Justin Trudeau promised to have the most open government by default, he's done anything but that. We've seen that over my time at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. Not only did they intentionally break the access to information system; they used things like cabinet confidence to shield the Prime Minister from criminal investigations into him and his conduct. Under the Criminal Code we talk about, we've cited the Conflict of Interest Act. He's been found to have broken that law twice. When he was faced with an RCMP investigation for his conduct, he invoked cabinet confidence.

Now the wheels have ground to a halt in the House, because a majority of democratically elected members of Parliament voted that the government must turn over documents related to their green slush fund scandal. That's hundreds of millions of dollars going to Liberal insiders, overseen by a Liberal-appointed board chair who was found guilty of breaking the same laws as the Prime Minister. They're not doing it. They're refusing the will of the majority of democratically elected members of the House. That's their legacy. The Liberal members of the committee have taken that lesson from their government and put it on display here.

The amendment that we have to deal with is to deal with Mark Carney. It's to deal with this gentleman who is not registered to lobby federally but who somehow fell into great fortune.

• (1755)

Through his role as chair of Brookfield, this trillion-dollar mega-company's stock prices hit a six-month high because of decisions that the Prime Minister he is advising took immediately after he was hired as the Prime Minister's adviser.

The Chair: Mr. Barrett, I'm sorry to interrupt. As much as I have enjoyed today, unfortunately, we have run out of resources.

Before I adjourn, I will let everybody know that we will be having witnesses as we continue with our disinformation and misinformation study.

Mr. Bains, we will make every attempt to have that witness appear next week.

This meeting is adjourned.

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