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Chair: Robert Morrissey



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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.)): Good afternoon, committee members.

[Translation]

I call this meeting to order.

[English]

Welcome to meeting number 16 of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Pursuant to the motions adopted on September 18, 2025, the committee is meeting on government mandates and key priorities for the first hour, and the definition of work and the use of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code for the second hour.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. People are attending in person in the room and virtually using the Zoom application. Before we begin, I would want to confirm to the committee that those appearing virtually have been sound-tested and have been approved. As well, participants in this meeting have the option to participate in the official language of their choice. Please familiarize yourself in the room with the interpretation service. Ensure you're on the channel for the language you wish to participate in. For those appearing virtually, you can choose this by clicking on the globe icon at the bottom of your Surface. If there is an issue with interpretation, please get my attention. We will suspend while it is being corrected. I would also like to remind members to please mute your devices at this time and refrain from tapping or hitting the boom on the mic to protect our interpreters. As well, please direct all questions through me, the chair, and wait until I recognize you before you begin speaking.

Before we begin, the one housekeeping item that I wish to address is the adoption of the budget for the temporary foreign worker part of this study at \$38,650. Do we have agreement? If we don't have the budget, we have no study on the temporary foreign worker program.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): That seems unusually high.

The Chair: It is \$38,650. There are witnesses who chose to travel. It is what it is. Turn it down and there are no studies, which is fine with me.

An hon. member: [Inaudible—Editor]

The Chair: It's an estimated amount.

Members, you understand that each time when you approve a study motion, there's a cost to doing it and the clerk brings back—

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): We know that.

The Chair: Yes, I know, Ms. Falk, you do and you respect that. This is the estimate that has been given to me by the clerk.

Rosemarie Falk: I have a question on that. I know that in the past we've normally received copies of these to see their breakdown. Is that just not a normal practice anymore, or were they sent out already?

The Chair: Actually, it was on my mind too when I looked at the note, because at the other committee I was sitting on, they were done. I would ask the clerk in the future to submit the draft budget to committee members before we deal with it. I had assumed it was.

Do we have agreement on the budget? Do we have approval of the budget?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1535)

The Chair: Clerk, the budget has been approved.

Madame Desrochers, before we introduce the guest...?

Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.): Yes, Mr. Chair, thank you. I just want to address the situation at the last meeting where I used language that was unparliamentary, which was uncharacteristic of me. I just want to apologize for that and retract my words.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Desrochers, for recognizing that.

We will now begin with this hour. I would like to welcome the Honourable John Zerucelli, Secretary of State for Labour.

From the Department of Employment and Social Services, I understand we have a change from the deputy minister to Colette Kaminsky, senior assistant deputy minister, skills and development, and Sandra Hassan, deputy minister of labour and associate deputy minister of employment and social development.

Mr. Secretary, you have five minutes for your opening statement.

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour)): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that there is a much more interesting committee going on, so I appreciate everyone's attendance here today.

I'd like to thank Deputy Hassan and Colette Kaminsky for being here with me today.

Our new government is on a mission to strengthen Canadian workers and to help our economy succeed, so it's an honour and a privilege for me to be here today to highlight the many actions we're taking to support this mission. This is my first time appearing before this committee. I take the responsibility of my role as Secretary of State for Labour seriously. I'm also proud to represent the riding of Etobicoke North, because there's nothing more important to me than making sure the voices and concerns of Canadian workers are heard.

My job is to listen to Canadians. During my discussions with unions, employers and workers in the past weeks and months, I've heard the same recurring concerns. Job security in the face of tariffs is top of mind. We're listening. We're working hard to reduce the impact. For those who find themselves out of work, we have a strong social safety net. We're helping workers get through job disruptions with employment insurance and the work-sharing program, and working with the provinces and territories to avoid those situations and create the fastest-growing economy in the G7.

One of the ways we're doing that is through the one Canadian economy legislation. It clears the way to eliminate federal barriers to interprovincial trade and labour mobility. We are working collaboratively with provincial and territorial governments to improve the mobility of workers in regulated occupations so that they can move more quickly and fill jobs across Canada. Yesterday I presented to the committee on internal trade with all provinces, updating on the progress of the labour mobility plan. We agreed to change the regulations to a 30-day service standard and to reduce onerous administrative burdens on labour mobility. Certainly there's more work to do, but progress has been made.

Helping Canadian workers through these turbulent times is our top priority. We're meeting this moment with strength and conviction. We're protecting our communities, empowering families and investing in Canada. We're standing up for Canada's future and for the workers who are building it every day. Our plan is to empower a new generation of Canadian workers, and budget 2025 is at the heart of our plan. While we can't control what other nations do, we are focusing on what we can control. We're going to build. We're going to build homes. We're going to build transmission lines that power AI and power the north. We're going to build ports, rails and bridges to move critical minerals. We'll build locally. We'll build nationally.

However, we can't create the strongest economy in the G7 without building Canada's skilled trades workforce. That's why we invest nearly \$1 billion annually in apprenticeship supports for apprentices to make trades training more accessible. We do this through loans, project funding, tax credits and deductions, and employment insurance benefits. We are also supporting apprenticeship training, including through the union training and innovation program. In budget 2025, we've doubled the funding, with \$75 million

over three years. This investment will increase the quality of Red Seal apprenticeship training. It will help unlock our economic growth and make sure there are trained Canadian workers at job sites to build Canada's future.

Those job sites need to be safe and respectful for all workers, because we believe labour rights are human rights. Better working conditions go hand in hand with a strong and agile Canadian economy. We're building a future where every worker is respected, protected and empowered, but we need to better understand the challenges faced by workers. We don't pursue this just at home. We're promoting labour rights for workers with our global trading partners, with funding for such credible organizations as the International Labour Organization. We will continue to set the bar on workers' rights around the world, because every worker deserves a workplace that is fair, safe and equitable.

This is a critical time for Canadian workers. We have the programs and policies in place to help them succeed, but these aren't just policies: They're promises. They're promises to all Canadian workers that the federal government has their backs.

Thank you. I'm happy to take your questions.

• (1540)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

We will begin our six-minute round with Mr. Seeback.

Mr. Seeback.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much, Secretary of State, for being here.

In your mandate letter, it says, "we will bring together labour, business, and civil society to build a Canada worthy of our children and grandchildren." In the last 14 months, your government has used section 107 eight times to order workers back to work and take away their right to strike. How do you suggest that this is bringing business and labour together?

Hon. John Zerucelli: The best deals are always the ones that are made at the table. Our role is to uphold balanced labour relations that protect labour rights, maintain stability for employers and serve Canadians' broader interest. I know that there's a private member's bill working its way through the House of Commons, and I'm aware that this committee is doing a study on section 107. I look forward to seeing those results.

Let me be clear. Our government strongly supports free and fair collective bargaining. The best deals are the ones at the table. The reality is that 97% of disputes in federally regulated sectors are resolved without work stoppage. That speaks to the strength of the system. However, as you know, the Canada Labour Code does contain tools that could be used in exceptional circumstances where public interest is clearly at risk.

Kyle Seeback: Secretary of State, do you think that your use of section 107 is improving labour relations between those unions and businesses when you use section 107 to take away the right to strike?

Hon. John Zerucelli: The best deals, in our opinion, are always the ones that are at the table.

Kyle Seeback: Yes, but that isn't my question. I asked you if you think it's improving the relationship between the union and the employer. Everybody says that the best deals are made at the table. You guys don't believe that because you're ordering people back to work.

Do you think that using section 107 to take away a worker's right to strike improves the relationship between that union and the employer?

Hon. John Zerucelli: Again, the best deals are the ones that are at the table. Ninety-seven per cent of federally regulated disputes are resolved without a work stoppage.

I think we should highlight some examples: the Air Canada pilot dispute, Via Rail and Unifor—

Kyle Seeback: I'm sorry, Secretary of State.

I asked you a pretty specific question, and you're not answering it. You're going on about something else. If you don't want to answer it, just say that you're not going to answer.

Do you think that using section 107 to order workers back to work improves labour relations? Part of your job is labour stability in this country. Do you think that using section 107 to order workers back to work improves labour stability, or does it damage the relationship between employer and the union?

Hon. John Zerucelli: I'm actually answering the question directly. These labour situations are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Ninety-seven per cent of labour disputes are resolved without any intervention from the federal government, using our world-class mediation service. We have a number of examples: Air Canada pilots and their union, Via Rail and Unifor, DHL Express and Unifor, the Vancouver Terminal Elevators' Association and the Grain Workers Union—

• (1545)

Kyle Seeback: We don't need a list of things that were resolved. I'm asking you whether you think it actually improves or worsens labour relations.

Since you mentioned the Air Canada pilots, I'll say that I actually have a letter from the Air Line Pilots Association to Minister Hajdu in which they say:

It is regrettable that government intervention to end labour disputes in the federal sector has now become commonplace. As a result, employers like Air Canada now expect the government to intervene and are no longer interested in bargaining in good faith. This has led to a sharp deterioration of labour relations....

Since you wouldn't answer my question on whether you think it deteriorates labour relations, will you agree or disagree with what the Air Line Pilots Association is saying about what you've done?

Hon. John Zerucelli: With respect to the Air Canada labour dispute, Air Canada and its flight attendants, in fact, did come to a resolution and, ultimately, agreed to a deal. Listen. No work should go unpaid. Our flight attendants provide valuable services. I know many flight attendants. We, at this committee, all fly often. They provide a valuable service. As you know—

Kyle Seeback: However, Secretary of State, you used section 107 to order flight attendants back to work with a contract that you knew was not paying them for work before the flight took off. How can you sit here with a straight face and say that no one should work unpaid when you used section 107 to order flight attendants back to work under the existing collective agreement, which included their not being paid for pre-flight activities? How can you say that this shouldn't happen? You made it happen.

Hon. John Zerucelli: I'm going to finish my answer that was cut off. I'm not going to speak over the microphone.

I don't want that to be seen as....

The Chair: You can give a short answer, Secretary.

Hon. John Zerucelli: I'm going to ask you to make sure that I have the opportunity to answer the question.

The Chair: Mr. Secretary, please be very brief. We're now over the six minutes.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Okay. I will pick this up in the next round, I'm sure.

The Chair: Thank you.

Kyle Seeback: I bet you will.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Seeback. Your time has gone.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We'll go to Ms. Fancy for six minutes.

Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Thank you Mr. Chair.

Through you, welcome, Secretary. Thank you for coming today.

Up until the last election, I was a unionized worker provincially. I was an educator. I know there is a fine line when you're working with unions and within government, so I can respect that.

In your introduction, you talked about budget 2025 in terms of unions, tradespeople and skilled workers. I gave a speech earlier about the budget and the need for the support of our unions and workers who are helping to build these nation-building projects. I wonder if you could explain how the investments in workers, especially the union training and innovation program, are central to Canada's broader economic and infrastructure goals.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you very much for that question.

I'd like to take the opportunity to highlight that our budget 2025 is about putting workers first. Every part of this budget is about equipping Canadians, especially workers, for the economy we're trying to build. It's fundamentally about building a stronger economy by investing in Canadians. This is important: We are making the largest infrastructure investment in Canadian history and pairing it with generational funding for housing and workforce development. That means more jobs, more apprenticeships and more opportunities for every region.

Don't take my word for it. Let me tell you what Canada's Building Trades Unions had to say about this budget. It said, "Budget 2025 contains monumental wins for members of Canada's Building Trades Unions, including \$50 billion in investments for local infrastructure, \$75 million over the next three years for the Union Training and Innovation Program (UTIP), new Clean Economy Investment Tax Credits...and the introduction of Community Employment Benefits Agreements".

It continued, "CBTU is grateful to all Parliamentarians who supported the Federal Budget and acted in the best interest of all Canadians. We stand ready to work with the federal government, industry, and labour partners to deliver on the commitments made."

Mr. Chair, if I may, I have one more important quote I think I should read from LIUNA Western Canada, which said, "We support the Federal Liberal Government's CANADA STRONG Budget 2025. The Budget 2025 addresses major priorities of LIUNA Western Canada, including the new Build Communities Strong Fund which, in conjunction with the Major Projects Office, will result in thousands of great paying Union jobs right across Western Canada, benefiting local communities, Indigenous peoples, and women in the construction industry."

It continued, "We also applaud the middle class tax cut as well as major new funding for Arctic Infrastructure, critical mineral development, port and rail infrastructure, affordable housing construction, and clean and renewable energy development...And finally, Budget 2025 will ensure more fulsome and effective compliance inspections under the International Mobility Program (IMP) as we continue to call for the ban of the use of the IMP in the construction industry".

It ended, "We support Budget 2025 and look forward to doing our part to BUILD CANADA STRONG TOGETHER."

• (1550)

Jessica Fancy: That's nice. Thank you very much, Secretary.

I'd like to give you the rest of my time to finish your answer to the question that was cut off before and/or to explain what some of your top priorities are within your mandate.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you very much.

I want to draw the committee's attention, with respect, to the Air Canada probe. I think it's important for the committee to recognize that the Canada Labour Code rests with Minister Hajdu. I know Minister Hajdu will be presenting before the committee in the coming weeks, so it's important to note that she, ultimately, has decisions on the labour code.

With respect to the issue with Air Canada, no work should go unpaid. Minister Hajdu ordered a probe into that matter. I'm not going to prejudge the results of that study. They will come by the end of the year. That's the piece I wanted to conclude there.

Budget 2025 is an investment in workers and our economy. We see positive momentum in our economy with 60,000 jobs created in September and 67,000 jobs created in October. Wages are up 3.5%. Inflation is now within the Bank of Canada's target range. It includes the largest infrastructure investment in Canadian history; a well-deserved raise for our military and major investments into defence spending; tools that will make our economy more competitive; the productivity superdeduction, which will allow our businesses to make needed investments in equipment; a tax cut that will benefit 22 million Canadians; a national school food program; a tax credit for personal support workers, a much-needed investment in our people who take care of our elderly; 1,000 RCMP personnel; and 1,000 border guards.

These are all matters that the Conservatives voted against.

Jessica Fancy: I'd like to thank you for coming today and being able to explain your mandate and some of the things that you're excited about in working within your new role there, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fancy.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for six minutes.

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the secretary of state for being with us today to answer our questions.

I already have a request for the secretary of state: I would like to receive a document describing his mandate. He's here today to talk to us about his mandate, but we know very well that Mr. Carney broke with tradition by not giving separate mandate letters to each of the secretaries of state and ministers. Rather, it is a single mandate letter that applies to everyone. So I would like him to provide us, if possible, with a document describing his mandate for this Parliament.

That said, I really liked hearing the secretary of state say earlier that his government should support workers. I hope so. I would like to think that governments are there to support workers. I do have some concerns, and I would like the secretary of state to address each of the following points.

On the one hand, the most recent budget provides for the elimination of 40,000 public service positions. On the other hand, since last week, people have been bragging about how jobs will be created.

So I would like to ask the secretary of state the very question that CUPE, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, is asking: how can jobs be created when jobs are being cut?

Furthermore, I dare not even imagine what services to the public will be eliminated, in addition to the elimination of good union jobs in various places in Canada, including the regions.

I also have a question about Canada Post. I would like to talk not only about the job cuts that may be considered there, given the mandate given by Mr. Carney, but also about Purolator. The Liberal government also boasted about passing anti-scab legislation. However, the situation at Canada Post in connection with Purolator could be akin to a situation in which scabs would be used to do the work, which would be in violation of this act. That's how I see it, but I'd like to hear the secretary of state's opinion on the matter.

I have three quick questions.

You mentioned employment insurance, but in fact, there is absolutely nothing in this budget to indicate that the federal government will reform employment insurance. It's as if we were telling workers in my region, the North Shore, as well as those in all the other forestry regions, that they should train in a new field and that, while waiting to find a new job, they should take advantage of EI, since that's what it's there for. In other words, they're being told that they'll lose their jobs, but that, in the worst-case scenario, they'll be able to retrain for a while and then go to work in another sector. However, that doesn't necessarily work for everyone.

So I'd like you to tell us about the support you provide to the forestry sector. If you don't have time to discuss this at the committee meeting, I invite you to send us your response in writing.

We've talked about section 107 of the Canada Labour Code at length, but I'd like you to explain what you intend to do about it. Not only are there a lot of occurrences, but using it has become commonplace. Indeed, as we said at the last committee meeting, the Liberal government is using section 107 increasingly often. It's no longer a rare practice.

I'd like to know your opinion on the use of section 107. Personally, I get the impression that a kind of tradition is taking hold. I know that Minister Hajdu is also part of the equation, obviously, but I'd like to hear your thoughts on that.

Finally, I would like to raise the issue of pensions. Not only is the Correctional Service of Canada's budget being cut by 15%, but you have also decided to cut pensions. I'm surprised to see that a Secretary of State for Labour, who says he wants to support workers, would decide to reduce what constitutes a negotiated wage. Retirement income is a negotiated salary. In this case, by deciding to reduce a negotiated salary, we are violating a salary provision that was freely negotiated.

As you can see, I submitted a request and several questions. Let me summarize them.

Initially, with regard to the mandate letter, I asked you to send us your mandate objectives in writing. We're more than six months after your appointment as Secretary of State for Labour, so I'd like to get some clarification on your mandate.

Then I got to asking you questions on five different topics. I know that's a lot to cover at the same time, but I was really looking forward to talking to you. I'm very happy that you can answer my questions, Mr. Secretary of State, so I will stop talking and give you the rest of my time to answer them.

• (1555)

Hon. John Zerucelli: Indeed, there are a lot of elements in your questions. I'm sorry, my French is poor, so I'm going to answer you in English, so it's clearer.

[English]

I've noted your request to provide some of these answers in writing. We will do that for you, because there's a lot to cover, and I probably have less than a minute left to get back to you.

Let me be clear about the mandate. We're focused on building a stronger Canada with skilled workers using Canadian steel, lumber and aluminum. My mandate is to support Minister Hajdu in promoting safe, fair and inclusive workplaces while strengthening labour relations across federally regulated sectors.

My work focuses on three areas: improving labour mobility to build one Canadian economy, expanding training and apprenticeship pathways, and lowering costs, improving quality of life and supporting a more resilient economy by ensuring workers can succeed in the jobs of today and tomorrow.

I might just turn in a minute—

The Chair: Mr. Secretary, that is it. Thank you.

We now have to move on to Mr. Reynolds for five minutes.

• (1600)

Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary of State, for coming here today.

One of the Prime Minister's priorities in the spring in his mandate letter was this: "Building one Canadian economy by removing barriers to interprovincial trade and identifying and expediting nation-building projects that will connect and transform our country."

In June the government passed Bill C-5, the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and Building Canada Act. One of the keys to labour mobility and to building Canada is the harmonization of construction safety standards. As the sitting vice-president of IBEW Local 2085 in Manitoba, I have many friends who take jobs in other provinces, such as Ontario, and it's difficult because the safety courses aren't recognized interprovincially. For example, working at heights or aerial work platform certificates are regional. It's crazy, because all the equipment is the same. Harnesses are the same. Lifts are the same. That's just one example.

What has been done so far to harmonize construction safety certifications interprovincially?

Hon. John Zerucelli: I'd like to thank the member for that intervention. I think that's a very good question.

Labour mobility is essential to building our economy, especially as we deliver housing and major projects.

On a personal note, your previous union is contributing a lot to Canada and to the economy, so thank you for the work you do, and thank you for serving here today.

Labour mobility is critical to our economic growth. Skilled workers still face barriers when moving between provinces, as you note. I spoke at the committee for internal trade yesterday as we presented our plan on working with labour ministers across the country.

I may turn, just for a moment, to Deputy Hassan, who can speak a bit more about the technicalities of the harmonization of the safety regulations. It's certainly something that I believe in, and I would welcome your work together to move those forward, because I think it's critical to building a Canadian economy, one that will be better for workers.

Deputy Hassan.

Sandra Hassan (Deputy Minister of Labour and Associate Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Development, Department of Employment and Social Development): Thank you.

There is a federal-provincial-territorial committee that looks at the issue of occupational health and safety, and we are seized with the importance of making sure we focus on harmonization of those rules. We had a meeting in October and we have impressed on that committee the need for those rules to be prioritized, so as to, hopefully, come to agreement with the provinces and territories on that issue.

Hon. John Zerucelli: I have to say that gravity is the same whether you're in P.E.I. or in British Columbia, and there should be no reason why a worker in Prince Edward Island cannot work efficiently. This is something that we're seized of and the committee is seized of and that we will continue to work on as effectively and as fast as we can.

Colin Reynolds: Do you have a timeline for when?

Sandra Hassan: May I respond?

Hon. John Zerucelli: Yes, please.

Sandra Hassan: This is an area in which we're working with our provincial and territorial counterparts. The federal government has a set of rules, and each province has its own set of rules to come to harmonization. It's not something we impose.

Colin Reynolds: I'm definitely familiar with that.

Sandra Hassan: Exactly. We don't impose the rules. We need to work with the other jurisdictions in order to come to a consensus view around each of those important rules, which are there to protect workers.

Colin Reynolds: Thank you.

Hon. John Zerucelli: If I may, I'll add to that.

Your advocacy on this is helpful. We've been working with the building trades from all across Canada to push this agenda forward. Your advocacy is welcome on the matter.

• (1605)

Colin Reynolds: Another major barrier is harmonized apprenticeship training.

For those who aren't familiar with it, the interprovincial exam for Red Seal trades is standardized across Canada. However, the apprenticeship training structure is not. Some provinces have four levels of training for a particular trade, and some can have up to eight levels for the same trade in order to get to their Red Seal.

Has this government done anything to harmonize apprenticeship training among the provinces?

The Chair: Give a short answer, please.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Let me answer it first.

We need more apprentices in this country. That's why, in this budget, we made a \$75-million contribution and investment in the union training and innovation program. If we want long-term stability, we need more apprentices moving into high-demand jobs. We will continue to make investments in apprenticeships. We already invest over \$1 billion through loans, grants and EI contributions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

[Translation]

Ms. Desrochers, you have the floor for five minutes.

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Secretary of State, thank you for being with us this afternoon. I also want to thank you for all the work you do.

Thank you in particular for your efforts to ensure that budget 2025 contains real measures, concrete measures, to help Canada's labour force. I'm thinking in particular of the skilled trades that we'll really need in the coming months and years to successfully implement our plan.

Given my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, I'm very well aware of the current needs in construction and the labour shortage needed to carry out government projects.

Could you explain how expanding internship and training programs will support our goal of doubling housing construction to build a strong Canada?

[English]

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you very much for the question.

Apprenticeships are essential to Canada's growth, especially as we build housing and major projects, as you mentioned. The federal government plays a key role as a funder and supporter. Every year, we invest \$1 billion through grants, loans, tax credits and supports like the labour mobility deduction. We are seeing strong growth, including of women, in the Red Seal trades, with 593,000 job openings expected in the next 10 years. We are working with provinces, employers and unions to strengthen our apprenticeship pathways and ensure apprentices can start, continue and complete their training.

I will call on Colette to speak about some of the supports that are available for apprenticeships.

I'll turn it over to you, Colette.

Colette Kaminsky (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Skills and Employment Branch, Department of Employment and Social Development): Thank you for the question.

There are a number of programs available to help the trade and apprenticeship system in Canada, including direct programming that works with unions, which was recently doubled in the latest budget. Previously, the union training and innovation program helped nearly 30,000 individuals receive training and upskilling in 2023-24. That funding has now been doubled. We will be working to quickly implement that new program.

There are other supports that we work on with the provinces. The labour market development agreements program, for example, will

help hundreds of thousands of individuals move from displaced occupations into new occupations. The latest funding we implemented as part of the tariff response plan is \$570 million over three years to help workers displaced and impacted by tariffs. A major priority through that funding will be to support the skilled trades.

Those are just a few examples of the programs that help in this space.

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you.

Maybe this is more of a question for one of the deputy ministers or for you, Secretary. On that, can you share some examples of how these kinds of programs help smaller communities and projects in rural areas?

• (1610)

Hon. John Zerucelli: Do you want to give the UTIP example?

Colette Kaminsky: Sure.

To give a tangible example, one is a project we did with the operating engineers, Local 955. Over the course of three years we helped diversify heavy equipment operator and crane operator apprentices to ensure that we move from paper-based methods and physical attendance to allow for audiovisual upgrades, new computing and online learning. That allows us to reach rural and remote communities more easily than requiring people to have to move to the training.

This one example helped 1,800 individuals, including over 800 from equity-deserving groups, reach and have access to training and upskilling to enter and advance in the skilled trades.

Caroline Desrochers: Where was that program?

Colette Kaminsky: I don't have the exact location.

Caroline Desrochers: That's okay. I was just curious.

Colette Kaminsky: It was in Local 955. I can get you the exact location.

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you.

I have 20 seconds. Is there anything you'd like to add?

Hon. John Zerucelli: I'm sure there will be more opportunity to have a conversation, but I want to highlight the personal support worker tax credit and what the SEIU had said about the budget. It said this means "More money in the pockets of PSWs" and it "means more care workers at the bedside of Canada's seniors, and a stronger, more resilient public health care system."

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Secretary and Madame Desrochers.
[Translation]

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Once again, I thank the secretary of state for being with us.

I mentioned the mandate letter. You talked about building a strong Canada through the budget. More specifically, I would like to know what your five objectives are. Mr. Carney has given you a fair amount of freedom, which may be why you don't have a very specific mandate letter. In any event, you've been in your position for six months, so I imagine you know very well what your five main objectives are. I would be grateful if you would share that with me.

What would you like to have accomplished at the end of your four-year mandate, if it goes that far, of course? I understand that you want to build a strong Canada, but that remains abstract to me. In concrete terms, what are your objectives? You can only have three, too. If they represent a huge amount of work, that may be enough.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you for the question.
[English]

My role is in supporting Minister Hajdu in her role as the Minister of Jobs and Families. I'm working closely with her on a number of areas, including strengthening partnerships between unions and employers, improving labour mobility and expanding apprenticeship and training programs.

Particularly, the Prime Minister has tasked us with supporting those missions across the government from credential recognition to workforce development, ensuring—

[Translation]

Marilène Gill: I apologize for interrupting you, Mr. Secretary of State. I think you're reading from a document. I understand that you're saying that your work supports the work of the minister. However, what are your own objectives? I imagine that, as secretary of state, you also want to accomplish certain things. Of course, we all enter politics with ideas and a desire to help our constituents. What are your objectives? What do you want to achieve during your term in office?

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you for the question.
[English]

In summary, it's to help workers get better skills and get better jobs.

[Translation]

Marilène Gill: Okay. So you're talking about skills and—

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Gill.

Marilène Gill: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Seeback, you have the floor for five minutes, please.

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

In your response to the question from my colleague from the Bloc, you said you considered one of your roles to be to strengthen labour relations.

I'm going to go back to the questions that I was asking before. Do you think the government's use of section 107 eight times in the last 14 months strengthened labour relations in this country?

• (1615)

Hon. John Zerucelli: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the question from the honourable member.

Our role is to uphold balanced labour relations in Canada that protect workers' rights, maintain stability for employers and serve Canadians' broader interests. That's what's key to keeping our economy moving forward.

I'm aware that this committee is conducting a study on 107. I'm aware that there's a bill moving through Parliament discussing 107, but again, this government strongly supports free and fair collective bargaining. The best deals are the ones at the table, and the reality is that 97%—

Kyle Seeback: Secretary, my question took 20 seconds. I let you go on for a minute and you didn't answer it.

I'm going to put something to you. The head of CUPE's Air Canada component said, "The Liberals have talked out of both sides of their mouths. They said the best place for this is at the bargaining table.... Now, when we're at the bargaining table with an obstinate employer, the Liberals are violating our Charter rights to take job action". Section 107 has had a corrosive effect on the bargaining environment in recent years.

Do you agree or disagree with that statement that section 107 has had a corrosive effect on the bargaining environment in recent years?

Mr. Lesosky will be here later, so I'm going to make sure he's aware of your response.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for that question.

No work should go unpaid. That is why Minister Hajdu ordered a probe into the very specific issues around the Air Canada dispute with airline attendants.

Kyle Seeback: With all due respect—

Hon. John Zerucelli: I'm not going to prejudge the study.

Kyle Seeback: That wasn't my question. My question wasn't about a study into unpaid work. My question was whether you agree with the statement that your use of section 107 has had a corrosive effect on the bargaining environment.

If you don't want to answer it, you could say, "I'm not going to answer that", but reading prepared notes that are unrelated to the question doesn't actually help anyone.

Hon. John Zerucelli: I'm actually answering the question directly. In fact, you are the one who raised the example of Air Canada, and I'm trying to provide you the answer that you're looking for, which is that no work should go unpaid—

Kyle Seeback: I wasn't asking about unpaid work. I was asking about whether or not the use of section 107 has a corrosive effect on the bargaining environment. That was my question. I am not asking about unpaid work.

Hon. John Zerucelli: I remind the honourable member that 97% of federally regulated disputes are resolved without work stoppage. That speaks to the quality of the labour relations mediation service. The tools in the labour code exist for only exceptional circumstances.

Again, I'll remind the member of a number of recent examples, like DHL and Unifor bargaining units across Canada. There was no intervention by the federal government. That matter was resolved without intervention. Our government strongly believes in free and fair collective bargaining. The best deals are the ones at the table, and the reality is that 97% of disputes in federally regulated sectors are resolved without a work stoppage.

Kyle Seeback: Minister, that has nothing to do with the question I asked. However, if you want to talk about how people shouldn't work without pay, were you or were you not aware that flight attendants in this country, prior to the strike on April 16, 2025, spent a significant amount of time working without pay? Were you aware of that or not? They had a huge, massive PR campaign on it, so you had to have been aware.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you for that question. I appreciate the honourable member's interest in this matter.

As I've said, no work should go unpaid. With respect to the flight attendants and the dispute with Air Canada—

Kyle Seeback: You ordered them back to work under the existing collective agreement where they weren't being paid. How can you make that statement?

The Chair: Just a moment....

[*Translation*]

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The member is speaking over the secretary of state, which is causing problems for the interpretation. He has to stop interrupting him.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Joseph.

Kyle Seeback: Mr. Chair, obviously, the secretary of state is not going to answer any of my questions, so I will conclude my time.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Mr. Chair, I have been very direct in answering the honourable member's questions.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Kyle Seeback: Give me a break.

● (1620)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Seeback and Mr. Secretary.

[*Translation*]

I now give the floor to Mr. Joseph for five minutes.

Natilien Joseph: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm not going to cut off the witnesses.

I want to go back a bit.

There were labour disputes in 2011 at Air Canada and Canada Post. Everyone around this table remembers that Mr. Harper then passed legislation that forced workers back to work. Unlike the legislation that Mr. Harper passed, invoking section 107 of the Canada Labour Code allows the minister to set up arbitration, so that the union and the workers can find an agreement that is dignified, in compliance with the Canada Labour Code. It's a completely different approach from what we saw in 2011.

Mr. Secretary of State, can you explain in more detail the difference between the use of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code and Mr. Harper's behaviour in 2011?

Sandra Hassan: May I answer the question?

Natilien Joseph: Yes, go ahead, Ms. Hassan.

Sandra Hassan: As a tool for getting people back to work, a bill can be introduced in the House of Commons that may contain a certain number of provisions explaining what will happen after it comes into force.

Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code is a general provision that can be used and provides that "[t]he Minister...may do such things as to the Minister seem likely to maintain or secure industrial peace and to promote conditions favourable to the settlement of industrial disputes or differences".

In one case, it involves a bill; in the other, it involves general provisions found in the Canada Labour Code.

Natilien Joseph: If I'm not mistaken, Mr. Harper's bill was deemed unconstitutional at the time. Can you explain why that was the case?

Sandra Hassan: I don't have that ruling in front of me, so I can't comment on the issue and tell you why the bill had been declared unconstitutional. I'm sorry.

Natilien Joseph: Okay.

My next question is for the secretary of state.

We know that a number of programs have been put in place by the government. For instance, I'm thinking of the Canadian apprenticeship strategy and the union training and innovation program.

How is the government ensuring consistency among the 13 provincial and territorial authorities to address the shortage of skilled labour?

[English]

Hon. John Zerucelli: Let me answer the first part of that question, and then I'll let Colette answer the second part.

Every part of our budget is about putting workers first. We doubled the union training and innovation program so that more people can enter and complete skilled trades apprenticeships, which is essential as we tackle our housing challenges and infrastructure needs. Through the build communities strong fund, we're ensuring public dollars support Canadian materials and union labour, and with workforce alliances and the workforce innovation fund, we're aligning training programs with real labour market needs.

I also would like to highlight that yesterday I was with federal and provincial colleagues working and bringing forward amendments to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

I'm going to let Ms. Kaminsky address this further.

Colette Kaminsky: Thank you.

Secretary Zerucelli attended the committee on internal trade yesterday as co-chair of the forum of labour market ministers, where the labour market ministers came to a national consensus around amending the Canadian Free Trade Agreement that would allow for several changes that will ensure consistency of credentials and administrative procedures and advance the mobility of workers. This includes ensuring that workers have to have a response within 30 business days of their request to move between jurisdictions; that there would be a harmonized number of demands that can be put on workers, limiting the number of administrative requests apprenticeship authorities can request from individual workers; and finally, that there would be transparency for workers and Canadians on the responses to those demands by workers.

The secretary secured that agreement yesterday.

• (1625)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Joseph.

[English]

Because we still have some time, we're going to conclude with a two-minute round for each side, beginning with Mr. Reynolds.

Colin Reynolds: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Recently, we saw Stellantis using foreign labour for the construction of the NextStar battery plant in Windsor, shutting out Canadian tradespeople. Stellantis recently hinted that it is planning to move Canadian jobs in the auto sector down to the United States.

The Liberal government gave it billions of dollars of taxpayer money and Canadian market access. What we got in return were jobs for other countries. What is this government doing to protect Canadian tradespeople to make sure this doesn't happen again?

Hon. John Zerucelli: The Stellantis situation is unacceptable. I know the Minister of Industry has written Stellantis and has commenced legal proceedings against it.

Let me be clear. I've been travelling the country. I've met with forestry workers. I've met with workers in the auto industry. My message has been clear and direct to them. We will be there for them and their families. That is why in the budget we provided \$570 million to provide training supports—

Colin Reynolds: Excuse me. This is my time.

What are we doing to protect Canadian jobs?

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you very much. I was just about to answer the question before you cut me off.

Budget 2025 provides the largest infrastructure investment in Canadian history. This is the budget you guys voted against. This investment will be building roads, bridges and hospitals.

Colin Reynolds: How many jobs?

Hon. John Zerucelli: These are projects in the national interest. This is how we're going to build Canada up, and that will create thousands of jobs in the skilled trades.

I ask my honourable friend the question: Is my honourable friend for the Darlington nuclear project that will create 18,000 jobs in construction and 37,000 jobs annually?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Next, we go to Ms. Fancy for two minutes.

Jessica Fancy: Through the chair, Secretary, I'd love for you to discuss something that is near and dear to my heart in terms of personal support workers. I have quite a few elderly people in my family who really benefit from the hard work of our CCAs, our personal support workers and our care workers.

I'm wondering if you could elaborate a bit and discuss the \$1,100 tax credit that is available through the budget for those workers.

Hon. John Zerucelli: This is something very personal to me because when my father passed away, personal support workers fed him and bathed him when my brother and I couldn't. My brother is a police officer and he can't take time off the job. Personal support workers were there for my dad when my brother and I couldn't be.

I have a number of personal support workers in my riding. These are largely women, single women and single mothers, who take the bus to work every day. The only thing they care about is taking care of our elderly. They deserve more. This budget gives them \$1,100 in a tax credit. This is really significant for them and something that I'm enormously proud that we have done.

I wish we could do more at this time, but we need to do more for the people who take care of our elderly. I'm enormously proud of the work that Prime Minister Carney and, frankly, you all have done to bring this forward.

• (1630)

Jessica Fancy: Thank you very much for joining us today.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Fancy.

Mrs. Gill for two minutes.

Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will use my two minutes to let the secretary of state respond to the last question I asked him earlier. He did not have enough time to respond.

I would like him to explain to us in concrete terms what his own objectives are, the ones he set for himself. I am not talking here about the general mandate letter provided by the Prime Minister.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you for the question.

[*English*]

Our number one priority right now, with respect to the union training and innovation program, is encouraging unions and others to bring forward projects that can be funded to bring forward more apprenticeship opportunities in the skilled trades, because, as you know—

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: I apologize for interrupting you. You said “our,” but is this truly your priority? I am really speaking about your own objectives.

Your explanation is quite general. You are talking about initiatives with Minister Hajdu, which are programs. What are your actual objectives?

Hon. John Zerucelli: Thank you.

[*English*]

The union training and innovation program is under my authority, as delegated by Minister Hajdu. I was about to explain the priorities that we have, and I will turn it over to Colette to talk about how that program will be moving forward.

Colette Kaminsky: Thank you. The—

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: I am sorry to interrupt you, Ms. Kaminsky.

Mr. Secretary, you have not answered my question. I wanted to know what your own objectives were, but you are using the word “our” and you are talking about a specific program, which we have already discussed.

Instead, I am going to talk to you about the forestry workers issue.

What do you want to do going forward? We know there is an emergency in our communities. Mr. Carney said people may have to retrain for other jobs.

What do you think about that idea or this assertion? What do you think needs to be done?

If you do not have enough time to respond to the question immediately, you can provide your response in writing.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Gill.

Mr. Secretary, if you could provide an answer to Ms. Gill, in writing, to the committee, it would be good.

Hon. John Zerucelli: Yes, I will do that.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Secretary, we thank you, Ms. Kaminsky and Ms. Hassan for coming.

We will suspend for two moments while we transition to the last hour.

• (1630)

(Pause)

• (1635)

The Chair: I will ask the witnesses to take their seats, please, as we begin the second hour of today's study.

The second hour is on the definition of work and the use of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code.

We have witnesses appearing, but before we do that, I would just remind everyone again that you can participate in the official language of your choice. If there's an interruption in interpretation, please get my attention. We'll suspend while it's corrected.

Please direct all questions through the chair and wait until I recognize you before you proceed. As well, please refrain from tapping the boom on the mic for the protection of the interpreters. If you brought devices with you, please put them on silent mode so they do not go off during the meeting.

Today, for this hour, we have three groups. From the Air Line Pilots Association, International, we have Captain Tim Perry, president, ALPA Canada. From the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, we have Jasmin Guénette, vice-president, national affairs, and Christina Santini, director, national affairs. From the Halifax Longshoremen's Association, we have Kevin Piper, president and business agent.

Each group will have five minutes. When you get to five minutes, I'll say thank you, and I would like you to wrap up shortly thereafter.

We'll begin with Captain Perry.

You have the floor.

• (1640)

Captain Tim Perry (President, ALPA Canada, Air Line Pilots Association, International): Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee.

My name is Captain Tim Perry. I have been a professional pilot for over 22 years. I am presently a current and qualified Boeing 737 captain at WestJet Airlines and proudly serve as the ALPA Canada president. Our association represents over 13,500 professional pilots at 22 of Canada's airlines. This is equivalent to 95% of commercial pilots in Canada.

Today, I will address the government's recent routine use of section 107 and will offer two recommendations to help create a system where differences are resolved at the negotiating table.

Before I start, I must emphasize that the right to strike has been recognized as a constitutional right for over a decade. Government intervention to end labour disputes in the federal sector has now become commonplace. As a result, employers now expect the government to intervene and are no longer interested in bargaining in good faith.

More specifically, airline management has written letters to the minister, pleading for section 107 to be used, and have admitted publicly to section 107 intervention being part of their bargaining strategy, all of which occurs at the latter stages of bargaining and all of which is very negatively impactful to labour relations. ALPA Canada strongly believes that parties must be incentivized to bargain in good faith and not to seek government assistance to resolve labour disputes.

To be clear, the continued use of section 107 by the government has had a damaging impact on bargaining with our employers. Its continued use, as a routine tool, tips the scale towards employers and erodes the principle of fair and free collective bargaining in Canada. As such, we support the removal of section 107 from the code. Section 107 strips workers of their constitutional right to strike and is done by the minister, unilaterally.

In the Canada Labour Code, section 107 is entitled "Additional powers", meaning that these powers are residual in nature. It should be noted that the minister also has the authority to appoint mediators, for instance, or to appoint an industrial commission or to order a vote of the union membership on the employer's last offer. Moreover, it is ALPA Canada's view that the continued misuse of section 107 represents a symptom of broader issues within the bargaining process under the code, and we propose the following for the committee's consideration.

First, any analysis of whether section 107 should remain in the code should not be conducted in a vacuum. While changes like replacing the term "expedient" with "necessary" or providing the board with specific authority to review a minister's decision under section 107 are worth considering, the committee should also ex-

amine part I of the code, specifically sections 48 through 90, to explore potential improvements to the bargaining process. Ultimately, any proposed changes will require a broader, longer-term tripartite consultation process that meaningfully balances the interests of industry, government and labour.

Second, consideration must be given to providing incentives to bargain collective agreements, without having to resort to the notice of dispute provisions within the code. Isn't that what we all want—fewer disputes?

To provide context, the bargaining period timelines in section 50 of the code currently only require the parties to "meet and commence" bargaining but puts no guardrails around what follows during the open bargaining period. We suggest that an initial bargaining period be established, four to six months, for example, which would then be followed by a 30-day mandatory mediation period with a minister-appointed mediator, prior to the notice of dispute. This would do two things.

First, it would oblige the parties to focus on bargaining during the initial period. Too often, employers show up to the bargaining table poorly prepared and unable to discuss the issues at hand.

Second, mediation would allow for third party involvement prior to the formal notice of dispute. It would help to reduce the number of open issues and would incentivize the parties to resolve issues before the formal notice of dispute stage. At the end of the 30-day period, the parties could either agree to carry on in open bargaining or agree to embark upon a conciliation process. This would reduce the ambiguity of when mediation will happen.

Should there be a notice of dispute, ALPA Canada suggests that the conciliation period be reduced from 60 to 45 days and that more powers be given to conciliators, including a requirement to provide a formal report to the minister and/or arbitrator, and/or consideration given to requiring the parties to withdraw proposals under certain limited circumstances.

Currently, the number of actual days spent bargaining in the conciliation process is limited, and overall, the process in the aviation sector is largely ineffective. Reducing the length of the conciliation period should incentivize the parties to focus on negotiations from the beginning rather than relying upon that time for everything to come together.

• (1645)

To summarize, section 107 should never have been normalized, and its misuse undermines constitutional rights and destabilizes labour relations. We urge the committee to recommend reforms that restore balance and incentivize good-faith bargaining to take place at the negotiating table.

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

The Chair: Thank you, Captain Perry.

Monsieur Guénette.

Jasmin Guénette (Vice-President, National Affairs, Canadian Federation of Independent Business): Hello, everybody. I would like to thank the committee for this kind invitation. My colleague and I will share the speaking time allocated for opening remarks.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business represents 100,000 small business owners. We have members in all sectors of the economy and in all regions of the country.

Canadian SMEs are very concerned about the negative impact that labour disputes in federally regulated sectors can have on their business, their employees and the economy in general. Small businesses are the collateral damage of those work stoppages. Often, unions will launch strikes not just to hurt the employer but also to deliberately hurt businesses and the economy. Last year's Canada Post strike during the holiday season is the perfect example of that. Hurting SMEs is a tool that large unions are using to selfishly gain benefits for their members. Work stoppages have harmful consequences for the economy that are disproportionate to any benefit a union might gain.

Christina Santini (Director, National Affairs, Canadian Federation of Independent Business): When a strike happens at federally regulated infrastructures or employers, too many SMEs lose sales, lose fresh product inventory, pay contractual penalties, suffer reputational backlash, turn to costly alternative delivery methods or reduce production and their own staff's working hours. We lose sight of these employees.

This study on section 107 is important. It seems that, lately, every time negotiations are difficult between an employer and a union, we end up with a work stoppage. This needs to change. No labour dispute should derail the economy. We saw many work stoppages in recent years at B.C. and Montreal ports impacting small businesses and severely disrupting the supply chain. Work stoppages also recently happened at the St. Lawrence Seaway, CN, CP-KC and Canada Post. Again, all of these had major impacts on small businesses and the economy.

The federal government must have the tools it needs to end work stoppages in federally regulated sectors. Back-to-work legislation, let's be clear, is almost impossible to adopt in the context of a minority government. Therefore, using section 107 is probably the only tool available to minority governments to stop damaging work stoppages and help the economy get back on track.

Jasmin Guénette: In the past, CFIB has recommended that federally regulated workplaces that are instrumental to the supply chain be defined as essential service providers. It is a solution the majority of our members support.

At the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications meeting two weeks ago, we also suggested that a detailed cost analysis study be required to evaluate the impact of a strike on SMEs and the economy before it is even allowed to happen. If the projected harm is too severe, a general strike should not be allowed. Businesses and the supply chain must be protected 100% of the time. Both back-to-work legislation and section 107 of the Canada Labour Code must be available to government to end costly work stoppages.

Moving forward, additional mechanisms are needed to keep these work stoppages from even starting. Our members cannot afford the ongoing costs and unpredictability that work stoppages inflict upon them.

Thank you very much.

● (1650)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Guénette.

Mr. Piper, go ahead for five minutes.

Kevin Piper (President and Business Agent, Halifax Longshoremembers' Association): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and committee members. My name is Kevin Piper. I'm the president and business agent of the Halifax Longshoremembers' Association and a representative of the International Longshoremembers' Association.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for the invitation to appear before the committee on section 107 and the definition of work in the Canada Labour Code. The longshoring industry in Halifax and the longshoring industry as a whole are concerned about the unprecedented use of section 107.

Section 107 allows ministerial direction without parliamentary process. We see this as bypassing democratic oversight. One of our main concerns is that overreliance could erode bargaining power for unions, as employers may assume that the government will step in as disputes escalate. Section 107 has been used eight times in the last year and a half. Because of this, employers don't need to bargain in good faith, knowing that section 107 will be used to force our members back to work.

What we see as problematic in our industry is that the decision-makers are not at the table with the employers' associations. The shipping lines aren't at the table and the terminal operators aren't at the table. In Halifax that's not the issue, but for my colleagues on the west coast and my colleagues in Montreal, that is the issue. In Halifax we've been very lucky. We haven't had a labour dispute since 1970. We're an anomaly, I guess, but this is not the case for other longshoring industries in Canada.

Good collective bargaining is the cornerstone of labour relations in Canada. Having the decision-makers at the table is essential to good collective bargaining.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Piper.

We will begin our first six-minute round with Mr. Seeback.

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

Thank you to all the witnesses for coming all the way here today.

Kevin, I know you came all the way from Halifax.

Just quickly, Tim, when we talk about work disruptions, there were 845 work disruptions in Canada in 2024. To me, this seems to be an increasing problem, with eight uses of section 107 in the past 15 months. I don't know if you heard or were watching, but I asked the Secretary of State for Labour if he thought the use of section 107 was deteriorating labour relations between the employer and the union. He didn't really answer the question. I think I'm being kind by saying that.

What do you think the effect of this use is on employers and unions?

Capt Tim Perry: On the use of section 107, there's no doubt about it: It erodes labour relations. There are lots of reasons for that. I don't think it's fair to say that labour disruptions are simply the result of unions going on strike. That's a myopic view. It's the result of a breakdown in labour relations. It's a breakdown of collective bargaining. It takes both parties to bargain responsibly in order to achieve a fair and good outcome.

When section 107 is used, it removes any incentive to bargain in good faith in the period leading up to what could possibly amount to being a dispute.

• (1655)

Kyle Seeback: The employer knows that section 107 is coming, so they don't have to really bargain, and then we seem to end up there anyway. One of the reasons we end up there is that the employer knows that the government's going to intervene with section 107, because they've used it eight times in the last 15 months.

Capt Tim Perry: I think it's pretty clear that it's becoming part of the plan, if not "the" plan, for certain employers. I mean, we know that. We have letters in writing to the minister asking for them to invoke section 107. We have certain leaders admitting to that being their plan on national television. It's part of the plan, and it is really harming the process. If there were a better process, we could end up with a better outcome.

Kyle Seeback: Were you surprised that the Secretary of State for Labour wouldn't even acknowledge that the use of section 107 is damaging labour relations in the country? Did you find that surprising?

Capt Tim Perry: I entered the room just as that conversation was ongoing, so I don't want to comment on the entirety of the secretary of state's replies. I will say—and I think this might answer your question—that, to me, it's very clear there is a problem here. It has to be acknowledged. To not acknowledge it or to allow for it to continue to be used is going to continue to erode labour relations in Canada. It's going—

Kyle Seeback: Your proposal seems to be to build a better mousetrap, for lack of a better phrase. You want to build a better bargaining process or a better mousetrap. That's your suggestion. Is that right?

Capt Tim Perry: I think it is incumbent upon all of us. Our union has not been on strike in...it's approaching 30 years—pilots in Canada. We don't want to go on strike. We want to work. Labour disputes are the result of breakdowns, and this just makes breakdowns more likely, not less likely.

Kyle Seeback: Do you get any sense that the government's interested in trying to find a better process, or do you get any indication that they just think the answer is section 107?

Capt Tim Perry: So far, the answer has been section 107. I am a glass-half-full type of person. I do hope that everybody here in this room, in the House of Commons and Canadians from coast to coast get interested in resolving the problem, because there is one.

Kyle Seeback: Kevin, I'll ask, basically, the same question. You did touch on it in your opening statement, but do you believe that the use of section 107, eight times in the last 14 months, is damaging labour relations in the country?

Kevin Piper: It undermines collective bargaining. What happens is there's a breakdown in trust between the parties, and the long-term health between management and the unions fails. All it essentially does is kick the issue down the road to the next time around, when you already have animosity built up between the two parties.

If I may, the example I'll use is the Port of Montreal. The Port of Montreal had their last three agreements imposed on them through binding arbitration, and, as we see, the Port of Montreal is in binding arbitration again because of that.

Kyle Seeback: That's because of section 107.

Kevin Piper: Yes.

Kyle Seeback: That's part of the problem, because when the parties don't get to resolve the dispute themselves through the collective process, it increases the animosity between the parties. Is that what you're saying?

Kevin Piper: The issues don't go away. If the issues were there in the last round and an agreement was imposed on them through binding arbitration, the majority of the time, those issues don't get addressed. They're brought up the next time around. If the employers' associations—in our industry, the terminal operators and the shipping lines—don't want to address them again, that becomes an issue for the next round of bargaining, and so on, until... If they were important enough to bring up in 2012, 2015 and 2020, then they're going to be brought up in 2025.

Kyle Seeback: Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Seeback.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Desrochers for six minutes.

[*English*]

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for joining us in person for this conversation.

I'd like to start by reiterating that the federal government is neutral in those labour disputes. The Canada Industrial Relations Board operates at arm's-length, and its independence is essential. It's there to manage disputes and to ensure procedural fairness. I also want to say that this government is pro-labour, pro-union, and we have proven that time and again. Actually, if you look into budget 2025, there are a number of measures to help unionized and non-unionized workers.

I come from a riding where there is a port, and I really appreciate the essential work that port workers do to keep our economy moving, as well as, of course, the airline industry, to keep our economy and our people moving—mobility and all of that.

The government has a role in balancing public interest and the rights of workers, particularly in critical, essential...like rail, ports and telecommunication. Those are essential to maintain. Of course, we heard from our colleagues about the impact of some of these work stoppages on small businesses. I really hope that, in today's conversation, such as my colleague mentioned, we could get to some constructive recommendations as to how we can balance the workers' rights with really strong impacts on the economy.

Maybe I'll start with a question for Monsieur Guénette or Madame Santini. Can you share a bit about the impact of some of these work stoppages, with concrete numbers, on the economy and on jobs? We're talking about Canadians losing jobs because, all of a sudden, there's a part of the system that is frozen. I'm not saying one is more important than the other. They need to work together. Can you give us a little bit of data?

• (1700)

Christina Santini: We did ask our members, back in January, how much all the work stoppages from the preceding year had cost them, and the median response was \$10,000. It's not a small cost for a small business, where that \$10,000 actually might be their margin for that month.

The reality is that some businesses lost a lot more, and not only did they lose in terms of perishable products, lost customers and things like that, it hindered their reputation when they were trying to grow. The reality too is that many had to face some decisions, particularly when you're talking about the port strikes that lasted over 13 days and the backlog that was associated. It meant they had real concerns about meeting the supply that they had, but also being able to keep production going and the hours they offered to their employees.

When we think of the economy and work stoppage, we often think of the employee and the employer who are at the negotiating table, and we forget that there are many other employers in the economy who are also concerned about whether or not they can maintain a cash flow to keep their employees receiving and being able to take home a pay. We need to make sure that's taken into consideration.

You referenced the role of balancing public interest. Absolutely, that is the role of government in these instances. It's to think, at some point we need to intervene because this is going to affect other people's livelihoods, and it's going to affect the well-being of the economy and of Canadians. Section 107 is one of those tools. There are many other recommendations that have been brought forward. I think ultimately we need to bring forward recommendations that help build the tool kit.

You spoke about impacts. There's one example that I'd like to reference. It's a concrete example from Vancouver Island, where during the port strike they had issues getting the grains they needed, and they supplied 70% of the market on Vancouver Island. This is animal feed that is needed to ensure the well-being of the cattle or

the different animals within the farms on that island. It was quite concerning that they couldn't get the shipments they needed. Even trucking it in cost a lot more, and they could only get one-eighth of what they needed. The reality was that they had key concerns about maintaining and meeting the demand of their customers on the island. In terms of revenues, it was an 80% revenue loss.

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you for that, Ms. Santini.

[*Translation*]

Did you want to add anything, Mr. Guénette?

Jasmin Guénette: No, not at this time.

• (1705)

Caroline Desrochers: Okay. Thank you.

[*English*]

Maybe this is a question for either Mr. Perry or Mr. Piper, because you are much closer to the workers and you've had those experiences.

How do you think these economic impacts play into the discussions at the table, or the decisions of the unions, to go ahead.

Capt Tim Perry: I can take a moment.

As I said earlier, our members don't want to go on strike. Nobody wants to go on strike. No one wants to reach that point. In fact, there are mechanisms within the Canada Labour Code to make sure that essential services are maintained.

Caroline Desrochers: When they're not, like when we have, for example, a wagon of...and I don't know if that's the right word in English, so I apologize. There are train containers full of food that is spoiled. Our farmers have worked so hard to harvest that food, and it sits on the side of a rail because there is a work stoppage. How does that factor in?

I understand you're in aviation and it's a different industry, but how does it work into—

The Chair: Thank you.

Caroline Desrochers: I just want to finish it, so can you maybe finish in writing.

The Chair: We'll have to come back to that.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gill for six minutes.

Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank all the witnesses for joining us to enlighten us on the use of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code and the lack of a definition of the word "labour" in this code.

I have questions for Mr. Piper, among others.

You gave very detailed opening remarks. I noted the issue of democracy. I do not want to put words in your mouth, but you talked about democratic control. It is something that concerns you. I would like you to tell us more about this.

[English]

Kevin Piper: I only heard part of that, but it was about democratic control, so if I may....

The issue we find is with our ability to have faith in the employers' associations we're dealing with and the decision-makers who are at the table, and that the employers' associations aren't just going through the motions to wait for the federal government to implement a section 107 on us.

In Halifax, at the table, we have representatives from the shipping lines and from the terminal operators, and to reiterate, it's been 50 years since we've had a labour issue. That's not the case in other ports in Canada. I've been told by my colleagues that the employers' associations in those ports have to leave the table to make decisions. They come to a tentative agreement or an agreement in principle. Then they come back the next day and that agreement is gone, and they have to start over again.

I hope that answered your question.

[Translation]

Marilène Gill: Yes, absolutely.

Let me illustrate the situation with an analogy. In certain circles, section 107 is often referred to as a kind of hockey enforcer. The two parties are there, that is, the workers and the employer, and then a third party comes along, acting a bit like a tough guy in hockey, and pins the workers against the boards. That is somewhat what the workers are experiencing. There is a kind of force that upsets the balance in what should be free negotiations. That is somewhat what is happening.

[English]

Kevin Piper: Again, I apologize, as I'm only getting partial interpretation.

[Translation]

Marilène Gill: I understand it's not your fault.

Mr. Chair, when I am speaking, is the sound acceptable? I see that Mr. Piper did not hear the interpretation, so I simply want to ensure that it's not too difficult for the interpreters.

[English]

The Chair: Madame Gill, there are issues with the Internet connection that you have.

[Translation]

Marilène Gill: Is it better if I do a sound test with the technical team? I don't want to waste the witnesses' time.

• (1710)

[English]

The Chair: Madame Gill, you....

A voice: It should be better now.

The Chair: We'll give you the time.

Madame Gill, could you repeat your question?

[Translation]

Marilène Gill: Indeed, I will move to another question. My intervention was rather long, but I think my question was answered.

Mr. Perry mentioned he had a number of recommendations to make regarding section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. He mentioned them very briefly in his opening remarks. I would like to know if it would be possible for him to send them in detail in writing to the committee for the purposes of our study.

[English]

Capt Tim Perry: Thank you for the question.

Of course, we would be more than happy to provide any recommendations in writing to the committee.

I'll back up by saying that what we want.... I think we should all agree that disputes are not the point of bargaining. The point of bargaining is to reach collective agreements that work for everybody. If you shortchange the process, then they don't work for everybody in the long run. The reason we're talking about section 107 and the reason it's so important to us is that it undermines the good process from which a good outcome can ultimately be reached.

To answer your question, which I appreciate very much, focusing on section 107...we believe it should be removed from the Canada Labour Code, but our attention should then be directed to the process that precedes it. We want meaningful bargaining to happen right from when a notice to bargain is issued—right from the very beginning. We're finding this is not happening. We're finding that employers are disinterested in having the meaningful, difficult conversations and are leaving so much of it to the end.

When we end up in arbitration, it's quite often the case that it's just a very small number of issues that get addressed. To my colleague's point, many issues go unaddressed, simply by the way things get narrowed through the process of arbitration. There are all sorts of things other than money or pay tables that need serious consideration, and when they go unaddressed, it leads to destabilization of labour relations.

We're talking about a number of things, and I'm just going to try to characterize them, because it really is to provide focused negotiations early in the process that will lead to better outcomes.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Gill.

Marilène Gill: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Reynolds, go ahead for five minutes.

Colin Reynolds: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much, witnesses, for coming here today. I really appreciate your attending in person.

I know that this government has been saying a lot about supporting workers and that they favour workers, but I think we can all agree that actions speak louder than words. The government's actions are very contradictory to what they have been saying regarding the rights of workers.

My first question is for Mr. Piper.

The very foundation of the relationship between an employer and its unionized workforce is based on the ability to collectively bargain in good faith. Do you think that the government's repeated use of section 107 is undermining those relationships?

Kevin Piper: We do. We think that section 107 is detrimental to the bargaining process. It unfairly levels the playing field toward the employers.

During the ILWU-BCMEA dispute, they appointed two federal mediators, Mr. Ready and Amanda Rogers, and they came back with recommendations about changes in the way that bargaining should be addressed and the implementation of mediators, and they upheld the right to strike.

That's where our concern is. If recommendations like that aren't implemented, the employers won't change their MO. They're going to continue on the same path that they're on now.

• (1715)

Colin Reynolds: With the government's tendency to rely on section 107 to force unionized employees back to work and their respective unions into binding arbitration, which prevents strike action, do you think the process shifts the contract negotiations in favour of the employer?

I'll ask that of you, Mr. Perry.

Capt Tim Perry: I believe that there's no question that it does shift the bargaining landscape in favour of the employer. It's because no employee group wants these discussions delayed, and this is something that delays meaningful bargaining. To me, it's clearly not in the interest of members or unions, and it's not in the interest of the processes that will lead to stable outcomes.

Colin Reynolds: Again, Mr. Perry, and I'll ask the same question of Mr. Piper: Do you think that this process leads to unions and its members feeling cheated out of their right to collectively bargain in good faith?

Capt Tim Perry: Is that for me?

Colin Reynolds: Yes, Mr. Perry can go first.

Capt Tim Perry: I'm going to answer this by saying that no collective agreement has ever been concluded without establishing some trust across the table and some trust in the system. That trust can be fragile, and it takes a long time to re-establish it once it goes away.

I will say that when section 107 or government intervention in general is seen or understood as taking sides, as I said earlier, it creates an unlevel playing field in favour of employers. It undermines trust, which I think is another way of saying that it leads members to feel cheated out of the process.

Colin Reynolds: Go ahead, Mr. Piper.

Kevin Piper: I would agree wholeheartedly.

When organized labour believes that the employer and the federal government have an edge—section 107 being that edge—when you begin bargaining, it's problematic. A good round of negotiations and a settlement at the end is generally when both parties leave the table somewhat dissatisfied. That would be the definition of a good round of bargaining and a conclusion to bargaining.

When the employer isn't living up to their end of the bargain, their end of the deal during bargaining, and they're just going through the motions waiting on section 107 to be implemented, that's when everything falls apart. That's a building factor going through negotiations, because you can see that's what is happening across the table. It's not a surprise to anybody as that process builds.

Colin Reynolds: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for your time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joseph for five minutes.

Natilien Joseph: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will address Mr. Tim Perry.

I do not want to go on and on, so I will try to keep my questions brief.

I would like to reiterate that Mr. Tim Perry is a pilot.

That is what you said in the beginning, did you not?

[*English*]

Capt Tim Perry: Yes, sir.

[*Translation*]

Natilien Joseph: Could you explain the difference between the use of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code and Bills C-5 and C-6 from 2011 under the Harper government?

Let me be clear: The problem I see with Bills C-5 and C-6 is the way in which workers were forced to return to work without their right to strike being respected. On the contrary, the use of section 107 ensured that your right to strike was fully upheld and gave you the opportunity to reach an amicable solution.

You said the right to strike was a constitutional right. Could you tell us the difference between the right to strike and mobility rights, as a pilot?

[*English*]

Capt Tim Perry: Thank you for the question. I'll do my best to answer, as I may need to become somewhat more familiar with the bills that you're referring to. However, I think that, in general, I can answer your question.

Government intervention, in general, is what we're talking about. Section 107 is one way that the government can intervene in collective bargaining. Putting the question before Parliament can be different in that it's not a unilateral action. It's not the action of one person at one time. In a sense, it's the people of Canada speaking. I think for members, while it may be distasteful, it's understood somewhat differently than one person, one minister, acting.

Is that a fair answer to your question? Does that answer your question?

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Natilien Joseph: That does not answer my question, but I will ask you another.

Does a union's decision to force staff to strike sometimes cause financial harm to families or small and medium-sized businesses? Are you aware that this can break up families?

[*English*]

Capt Tim Perry: There is no question that taking that decision to go on strike.... First of all, members being forced to go on strike, I think, is a mis-characterization of it. Members vote on whether to authorize the strike at the bargaining table. That's a democratic process, which is respected by members and unions. Also, it's a question that's taken profoundly seriously because it impacts all workers, as well as others.

I would like to add one thing. When a labour dispute gets characterized as just an action of a union, I think that fails the conversation. I received a question earlier about whether union members care about the arrival of goods by train that are important. Of course they do. It's everybody's job to make sure that they do their utmost to reach an agreement that continues so that businesses continue and so that members can continue to receive paycheques. It's everybody's job.

It's a very serious question.

[*Translation*]

Natilien Joseph: Do you know why I am asking you this question? At the time of these events, we were in our ridings. At our offices, we were receiving many calls from fathers, for example, asking the government to take action. In some cases, families were stuck in Cuba with their children, and the start of the school year was approaching. They did not know what to do. The government therefore made the right decision. It did the right thing. This is very different from what was done in 2011 with Bills C-5 and C-6.

Do you have a message for the people who were held hostage in Cuba, Paris, or the Dominican Republic as the new school year was about to start? Do you also have a message for people who were not paid for three or four days, or even three or four months, if the conflicts lasted that long, and who were forced to put their homes up for sale? Do you have a message for these people?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Joseph.

[*English*]

Please give a very short answer.

Capt Tim Perry: They should hold everybody accountable, including employers, and the issues should not be oversimplified.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gill for two and a half minutes.

Marilène Gill: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If I understand correctly, Mr. Perry and Mr. Piper, you are both in favour of the removal of section 107. Am I correct?

[*English*]

Capt Tim Perry: For my part...yes.

Kevin Piper: Yes.

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: Okay, thank you. I absolutely agree with you about section 107. As I said earlier, it is somewhat like the third player inviting themselves to the game to determine the outcome of negotiations.

Mr. Guénette, I do not want to put words in your mouth, but you said earlier that, in the context of a minority government, it was different, and that the use of section 107 was the only means it had to negotiate.

I would like to hear the opinion of Mr. Perry and Mr. Piper on this matter.

• (1725)

[*English*]

The Chair: Monsieur Guénette, could you answer the question?

[*Translation*]

Jasmin Guénette: I do not believe this question is addressed to me.

Marilène Gill: Indeed, it is not addressed to you but rather to Mr. Perry and Mr. Piper.

[*English*]

Capt Tim Perry: I'm sorry. I thought the question was being directed elsewhere. Could you kindly repeat it? I'm very sorry.

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: Yes, of course.

Mr. Guénette, please correct me if I am misrepresenting your words, but you said that, in a minority government context, the only means at its disposal in this type of labour dispute or negotiation was to invoke section 107.

I was asking you then, Mr. Piper and Mr. Perry, whether you agreed with that statement or not.

[*English*]

Capt Tim Perry: No, I do not agree with the statement because, as I mentioned earlier, there are other mechanisms available to the minister to act, including compelling a vote of the membership, appointing a commission or directing the parties to mediation.

There are other tools available, and I think, personally, with respect, it's an oversimplification.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Gill.

[English]

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

Rosemarie Falk: Thank you very much, Chair.

I'd like to thank each of the witnesses for taking the time to be here.

It's talked about a lot in the House and also in this committee that we're in a housing crisis in this country, and many Canadians can't find a suitable place to live. We also have two million Canadians a month who are visiting food banks. Life has become so unaffordable for so many hard-working Canadians who just want to be able to get ahead in life.

I'll start with you, Mr. Perry, quickly, because I don't have a lot of time.

To what extent is the affordability crisis driving the recent increase in labour disruptions in Canada?

Capt Tim Perry: Thank you for the question.

That's a complex issue for sure. I'm going to talk about members and working people. From that perspective, the strains on them are numerous. You've identified certainly one area where that's the case—

Rosemarie Falk: It's some of them.

Capt Tim Perry: Yes.

A good way to approach that is to have a healthy collective bargaining system that can make wages and working conditions move along with the times and—

Rosemarie Falk: I'm sorry, Mr. Perry. I just don't have a lot of time.

How about you, Mr. Piper? I know that your union hasn't had a strike in a long time—since before I was born—but in general, would the cost of living crisis seem to put pressure on those folks who are working?

Kevin Piper: Well, it's hard to speak for the industry as a whole—

Rosemarie Falk: For sure.

Kevin Piper: —but the problem we see is that the profits the shipping lines and the terminal operators are making since COVID are record profits, and they don't seem to want to bring us with them.

There's a disconnect between the shipping lines and the terminal operators and their bottom line, and what they're willing to pay the hard-working men and women of the longshoring industry.

Rosemarie Falk: Thank you.

For CFIB, would you agree with the statement that the cost of living crisis is increasing the pressure on working folks?

• (1730)

Jasmin Guénette: I'm not sure the living crisis was the reason why the Port of Montreal saw three strikes in a few years. I don't think that's the reason we saw several strikes at B.C. ports. I don't

believe that it was this reason that we saw the St. Lawrence Seaway paralyzed.

I believe that there's currently a momentum for unions to strike, because they believe they have the upper hand, and they want to use it to maximize the benefits to their members.

Rosemarie Falk: Thank you.

Mr. Chair, with my remaining time here, I would like to quickly move a motion. I move:

That the committee invite the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and the Minister of Jobs and Families, for no less than one hour each, separately, to testify in relation to the Supplementary Estimates (B) 2025-2026 before the December adjournment.

This is a very standard procedure among other committees. I am sure that we could pass this quite quickly.

The Chair: Give me a moment.

Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): On a point of order, is this on notice?

Rosemarie Falk: It's on notice, yes.

The Chair: I've been advised that the motion is in order.

Is there discussion on the motion of Ms. Falk?

I'll just ask the witnesses to bear with us. This is within the member's right to do.

Do you have a question, Ms. Desrochers?

Caroline Desrochers: I'm just a little confused by this, because both of these ministers have been invited and are scheduled to testify in this committee already. I don't know if the member is asking to add the issue of the supplementary estimates to their testimony or suggesting that they come back one more time. I'd like some clarification.

Rosemarie Falk: Absolutely, it is a long-standing practice in each committee to have the ministers responsible for departments come to their respective committees and have dedicated time specifically for the supplementary estimates (B). Absolutely, it's additional on top of what they're coming for already, given that those are specific studies or specific mandates.

Again, this is something that almost every committee does as a standard practice, even within this committee, as the chair would know.

The Chair: Is there any further discussion on the motion put forward by Ms. Falk?

Marie-France Lalonde: I'm sorry. I'm helping out today. I just wanted to know.... I understand that our member of Parliament is reflecting on this. I'm just curious to know.

I was under the impression that we were here to study a certain motion and you're introducing a motion. Was that discussed among all parties? Did you have an agreement?

Rosemarie Falk: It was on notice. This is, again, standard practice, specifically for sure for HUMA, as the chair would know, being a long-standing member with me. This is just what committees do.

We're bound by a timeline in the House as well. We have to report that back before the House rises, before Christmas, so again, I thought this would be something easy that we could just pass, because it's what this committee has done.

The Chair: Thank you.

Again, the motion is in order.

We have Mr. Seeback, Ms. Fancy and then Ms. Desrochers.

Kyle Seeback: Mr. Chair, we didn't think that this would be an issue, and we're now past time. If this isn't going to be passed or if we're going to continue speaking, we should probably let the witnesses go.

The Chair: If it's the will of committee members....

Mr. Seeback, do you have the floor, or are you finished? I have two others who would like to speak.

We have Ms. Fancy on the motion by Ms. Falk.

Jessica Fancy: Thank you for this motion.

As we know, the ministers are already scheduled to be here. The only thing I would have is an amendment to take out "before the December", as it can impede our already scheduled calendar of events.

The Chair: To clarify, are you amending the motion?

Jessica Fancy: Yes, I'd like to amend the motion by removing "before the December".

• (1735)

The Chair: Ms. Desrochers.

Caroline Desrochers: I'd like to support my colleague and just say that we agreed to a calendar a few weeks ago, but every week we add a new thing that pushes us further away from that calendar. We've been very flexible in accommodating these, but I just want to say that.

I'd like to add a subamendment to strike out the "no less than" so that it's "one hour each" and to remove the word "separately" so that we can have the option of combining, if possible.

The Chair: Madam Desrochers, we have to deal with the amendment because you can only subamend the amendment that was made by Ms. Fancy.

[*Translation*]

Caroline Desrochers: Okay, I understand.

[*English*]

Jessica Fancy: May I roll that into one then, adding the striking out of "no less than" and the striking out—

The Chair: You would need unanimous consent to change an amendment that's already on the floor.

Just to be clear, we have an amendment moved by Ms. Fancy.

Is there discussion on the amendment? If there's none, I will....

Ms. Falk.

Rosemarie Falk: I would say that, pursuant to Standing Order 81(5), "Each...committee shall consider and shall report, or shall be

deemed to have reported, the same...not later than three sitting days before the final sitting" of the supply period, which is not later than Wednesday, December 10.

This is a standing order, so I don't know how we could take out when we have to report by. This is something that the House is saying we need to do. It's Wednesday, December 10, or "three sitting days before...the last allotted day in the current period."

I don't know how we could be in agreement with that amendment.

Jessica Fancy: I guess my only question to that is this: Will that push the temporary foreign workers study into the next House sitting?

The Chair: It very well could if it's adopted.

Rosemarie Falk: I will also make note, too, that the committee can meet extra if we need to meet extra in order to meet these dates. I don't see an issue as long as we have resources so that we can have meetings.

The Chair: You're both correct.

Jessica Fancy: Can't the ministers just come after December, after we finish our regular schedule? We could have them come in afterwards. That way we're not—

An hon. member: Not on the supps.

The Chair: I'm sorry. I have Ms. Gill next.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gill, do you have a question on the amendment?

Marilène Gill: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Indeed, I was simply wondering whether, by deleting the deadline, the amendment does not distort the motion itself.

The Chair: Ms. Desrochers has the floor.

[*English*]

We're still on the amendment by Ms. Fancy.

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: I apologize, Mr. Chair, but I did not get an answer to my question.

[*English*]

Kyle Seeback: I would like to release the witnesses, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Seeback.

Witnesses, thank you for coming in and appearing before HUMA on this very important study. With that, we'll excuse you.

Members, please come back. The meeting is not suspended. Thank you.

If the members could return to their seats so that we can conclude the discussion.... I'm going to suspend for two minutes.

• (1735) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1740)

The Chair: Members, if you could take your seats, we will resume.

Ms. Fancy had the floor, with discussion.

Jessica Fancy: Chair, in goodwill to the committee, I am willing to retract my amendment and get this sucker passed.

The Chair: There has to be consent to retract.

Do we have consent for Ms. Fancy to withdraw her amendment?

(Amendment withdrawn)

The Chair: Thank you.

We're back to the motion put forward by Ms. Falk. Is there any further discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: With that, is it the will of the committee to adjourn?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: We are adjourned.

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