



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Industry and Technology

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 003

Monday, September 22, 2025

Chair: Ben Carr



Standing Committee on Industry and Technology

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• (1105)

[English]

The Chair (Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.)): Good morning, colleagues. I hope everybody had a wonderful weekend back.... I know it often feels short, for those of us who make our way to farther parts of the country. It's nice to see everybody this morning.

This is the third meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry and Technology.

As a reminder, for the benefit of our interpreters, who work so hard on our behalf, if you are using your earpiece and it's plugged in when not in use, please make sure that it is on the sticker in front of you in order to avoid feedback and other things that can be harmful to their well-being.

[Translation]

Fellow members, we are at this morning's meeting to discuss committee business. I understand that there have been some very good discussions over the past few days.

[English]

I understand there were some very good conversations between the parties over the course of the past few days, which, I hope, will allow us to move rather swiftly through this morning's meeting and provide the opportunity for a good amount of future business to occupy the few months we have ahead of us. With that, I know there are a few members who would like to present some motions this morning: Mr. Bardeesy is first, and, once we're done dealing with that, we'll have Monsieur Ste-Marie. I hope that colleagues have....

I believe, Madam Clerk, you have a copy of...that what was intended to be presented has been distributed.

Mr. Bardeesy, I pass the floor to you, sir.

Karim Bardeesy (Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Madam Clerk.

This is the same motion that was distributed electronically a few minutes ago.

[Translation]

It's available in French and English.

[English]

Do you want me to read the entire motion?

The Chair: Yes.

[Translation]

Karim Bardeesy: I'll read it.

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), given the imperative for Canada's self-reliance in national defence and security, and the significant level of investment announced, the committee study the opportunity to use a defence industrial strategy to regenerate and further develop sovereign capabilities of Canada's industrial ecosystem and procurement opportunities for Canadian businesses. This includes areas such as aerospace, digital technologies, cyber security, vehicle and arms manufacturing, heavy industry, scientific research, advanced materials and the bioeconomy; that the committee invite representatives from the Department of National Defence and the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development to appear on this study; that the committee hold a minimum of six (6) meetings on this study, to conclude no later than November 5th; and that the committee report its findings to the House.

[English]

The Chair: I think it's okay in English. Everyone has a copy of it in front of them, I believe.

Thank you, Mr. Bardeesy.

Madam Dancho, the floor is yours.

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the Liberals' bringing back this motion.

We broadly support it, though I would make one amendment, which I'll move now. Rather than reading the entire study, unless colleagues would appreciate that, as it's a very small amendment, I think we'll put it together rather easily. It's in the second paragraph, third line. I'll read it as amended:

that the committee invite ministers and representatives from the Department of National Defence and the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development...

That is my amendment. Again, it's just to include the ministers in this study. I think I made this point last time, but I'll make it again today. I appreciate that Liberal members and this committee are interested in reviewing a potential defence industrial policy for Canada. I think that's quite a significant area we can focus on as a committee, a quite robust area of study, and it would certainly be worthwhile that the ministers come and speak to us about that.

In particular, I know that Minister Joly has spoken publicly, on social media, about her position on this quite frequently since her appointment, so I imagine that she would welcome the opportunity to come and speak to the committee about her perspective on potential industrial policy in the defence space.

The Chair: Colleagues, just as a reminder, particularly for those who are still new to Parliament and learning the ropes of how the parliamentary committee system works, we had a motion that was presented. We now have an amendment presented, which means that we will commence a discussion, should there be speakers, on the amendment. Once we have dealt with the amendment, we will then move to the main motion, either as amended, if that is agreed upon, or in its original form.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ste-Marie, do you have anything to add?

[*English*]

Mr. Guglielmin, I see that your hand is up. You'll follow Monsieur Ste-Marie.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ste-Marie, go ahead, please.

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm obviously going to support the motion. I also support the amendment, because I think we are entirely justified in sending an invitation to the minister for a study of this magnitude.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you for your approval.

[*English*]

Mr. Guglielmin, the floor is yours. You'll be followed by Mr. Falk.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also would like to speak in support of Ms. Dancho's amendment. While departmental officials provide valuable insight to the committee, really what we're talking about here is decisions and directions at the highest level of government. The Minister of National Defence and Minister of Industry play key roles in shaping our defence and industrial strategy, and their direct participation is essential.

Conservatives are ready to work collaboratively on this important study. However, for us to fully understand the government's positions here, the ministers responsible must be present to answer our questions and provide clarity on their priorities. I think having them here will strengthen the study and demonstrate a commitment to transparency and meaningful oversight.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Falk, the floor is yours.

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

I too will be supporting the amendment from Ms. Dancho to ask the minister to come here. The reason I think it's important is that we need to hear what the government is thinking. It wasn't that long ago that Prime Minister Carney promised us that defence spending would be focused more on Canadian manufacturing and Canadian suppliers. Just today the media is reporting that the Canadian army is moving ahead with a \$5-billion purchase from the U.S. defence manufacturing sector. I think we need to know, really, the govern-

ment's position on Canadian manufacturing when it comes to defence spending. Are we going to focus it on Canadian sources, or are we going to focus it on American sources?

I think we need to get clarification from the minister on what the government is thinking. That's why I think it's important that the minister attend.

• (1110)

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

Seeing no further speakers, I'll call the question.

I always try to drive things first, looking around the table to see if we have agreement.

I'm seeing "yes" from the Liberal side.

[*Translation*]

The Bloc Québécois has already indicated its position.

[*English*]

Conservatives, I presume you are all in favour.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Colleagues, does anybody wish to speak on the motion as amended?

I see no further speakers.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Ste-Marie, I think you have your own motion to present to the committee, so the floor is yours.

Gabriel Ste-Marie: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, everyone.

I put forward a motion suggesting that we look at artificial intelligence. It's a long motion, so I won't read the whole thing. Some members have said that the motion has a broad scope and that we could perhaps focus more on the impact of the industry or on data protection. These are good debates. Once we start our work, we'll see how it progresses.

Another colleague reminded us that the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics will also be looking into the matter. We could start studying the motion fairly quickly, because, as I understand it, the parties agreed that we would first study the two other motions that have been adopted before moving on to this one.

However, I think today would be a good time to adopt my motion, even though it is fairly general. Then, depending on what the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics does, and depending on how our own work progresses, we can always come back to it as needed to amend it and make it more relevant. I think it would be a good idea for us to adopt the motion today.

My understanding is that it would be in the last part of the fall session.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ste-Marie.

[*English*]

Colleagues, we have another motion in front of us. I think everybody has had this one for several days now, as it was presented to us last week.

I'll follow the same process and look around the table to see if anybody has commentary.

Madam Dancho, the floor is yours.

Raquel Dancho: Thank you very much.

Certainly, I'm looking forward to this study. I think it's an important area for the Canadian economy. There is much change to come, I think, in the next few years, because of AI. It's certainly critical for Industry to review it.

I think Monsieur Ste-Marie touched on this, but I believe the ethics committee may be prioritizing an AI study. Once we are through the initial Liberal and Conservative studies—this one would be next on the docket—I would just make the friendly suggestion that we take another look. The ethics committee should be concluded. If there are different areas of focus, or if we can narrow it or expand it to fill the gaps to complement the ethics one and ensure that our committees broadly are reviewing everything that needs to be reviewed, then perhaps we could just commit to doing that in order to ensure that there's no duplication and that we're covering all the critical areas that we need to from an industry perspective on AI.

This is not an amendment. We'll be supporting this for sure. We just want to make sure that we're checking back in before we begin this study, to ensure that it's not duplicating efforts by our ethics committee colleagues.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madam Dancho.

Yes, the committee is the master of its own domain. At any point, should we wish to revisit a motion we've adopted, we certainly have the ability to do that, so I appreciate the comments.

I have Mr. Bardeesy, followed by Madam O'Rourke.

[*Translation*]

Karim Bardeesy: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We'll be supporting the amendment. I thank my colleagues for working with us on the three studies.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bardeesy.

Ms. O'Rourke, you have the floor.

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would just like to thank my colleague for recommending this study, because AI is not a partisan issue. It is a critical issue of our time that could revolutionize the way we work. It is extremely useful while being in no way partisan. I really look forward to hearing from the witnesses and seeing the findings of the study.

• (1115)

[*English*]

The Chair: I don't see any further speakers, colleagues, so we'll call the question. I suspect, based on commentary offered by members of all parties here, that we're going to have agreement, so I'm just looking very briefly around the room.

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

The Chair: We will have a couple of things, once we get to the end of this meeting, that I want to talk about in terms of scheduling.

[*Translation*]

The motion you moved, Mr. Ste-Marie, is not really a problem, but since we have the Conservative motion and the Liberal motion to study at the same time, we have to decide on the exact dates when we will do so. Your motion will follow the other two motions.

[*English*]

Madame Dancho, I believe you have something you want to raise with the committee.

Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate that we have a few hours of committee business today.

I do want to bring forward another area that I think this committee should prioritize. I have touched base with all the parties on this, and there seems to be some broad agreement that they are amenable to reviewing this issue.

I'll move the motion and then just speak briefly about it.

I move:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology undertake a study on financial fraud and scams in Canada, recognizing that this is a significant and growing threat to consumers and the economy, to identify best practices for prevention to strengthen Canada's anti-fraud framework; that the study examine:

the role of banks, telecommunication companies and digital platforms in preventing scams and protecting consumers;

the responsibilities of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, as well as other federal departments and agencies in enforcement, regulation and public awareness;

the adequacy of consumer protection laws, law enforcement capacity and inter-agency coordination;

the impact of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, in enabling and combatting fraud;

best practices from other jurisdictions, such as Australia, for improving prevention and enforcement measures;

and the broad economic and social consequences for Canadians;

that the committee invite the Minister of Industry to appear for no less than one hour on the study, as well as witnesses from relevant departments and agencies, industry representatives and experts; that the committee hold no fewer than four meetings on the study; and that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

I would say, colleagues, that I think we've all received the constituent complaints and calls about very prevalent scams via voice calls, texts, emails and social media messages, and we've probably received these scam calls and messages ourselves as well. It's a growing area of concern, and we have, in particular, a lot of seniors who are being scammed out of tens of thousands of dollars. Canada has taken some steps, but we're seeing other jurisdictions, like Australia.... In fact, Australia is the only jurisdiction in the world, to my knowledge, that has taken action and seen a direct decrease in the number of scam frauds going on.

I do believe that this is firmly within the industry committee's mandate to review. I certainly believe that it would be in all Canadians' interest for Canada to improve its prevention mechanisms in this regard. I believe we'll probably touch on it in the AI study as well, but with greater technology advances, this is likely to be an ever-increasing issue. I would ask for all of the committee's support.

In terms of priority, we have our Bloc, Liberal and Conservative studies that we'll be prioritizing—one, two and three—but I would ask that, rather than commit to a timeline where this has to be after those, we commit as a committee, publicly in this forum, to look into this and that it will be an area of focus at some point in the coming months.

We have about 10 months left before June, so there is plenty of time, but I do think it sends a message to all of these actors—who, of course, pay attention to the industry committee—that this committee will be taking it seriously and that we welcome their efforts, before this committee starts, to take even more efforts to prevent fraud, so that when and if they do appear at this committee, they have more to tell us of the progress they are making.

I simply ask that we pass this motion and agree to prioritize it at some point later on.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Dancho.

Colleagues, a motion has been moved. We will again enter into a discussion, should there be anyone wishing to speak.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ste-Marie, I see your hand up. You have the floor. You will be followed by Mr. Guglielmin.

Gabriel Ste-Marie: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is clearly an extremely important and extremely worrisome subject. As Ms. Dancho said, we all have cases in our ridings of people who have been scammed or been victims of fraud. We need to change the way things are done, get tough on fraudsters and make sure that these kinds of illegal practices stop. I think the subject is extremely important. I am in favour of such a motion.

However, I would like to raise two points. First, the Standing Committee on Finance, or FINA, should be consulted, because financial fraud is primarily its responsibility. That said, some aspects could also partly fall under our committee's responsibility. Second, given the short notice, I didn't have enough time to consult my entire team to see if we would like to amend the motion or adopt it as is.

I think this is an extremely important topic. I think it's important that parliamentary committees be able to address it. It could potentially be up to FINA. That said, I'm not prepared to vote on this motion today given the short time frame we had. In addition, the fall calendar is already full, which means that the study could be shunted to the winter. However, I am entirely in favour of the committee looking at this subject.

• (1120)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ste-Marie.

[*English*]

Mr. Guglielmin, the floor is yours, followed by Mr. Bains.

Michael Guglielmin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks again to my colleague for introducing another important study to the industry and technology committee.

This is a critical study on the growing threat of financial fraud and scams in Canada. As we know, these crimes are not just financial. They devastate lives. They erode trust. They undermine our economy. This study is necessary to protect Canadians and strengthen our response. Financial scams are surging in this country. In 2024, victims lost more than \$638 million—a 10% increase from the \$578 million in 2023—with the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre processing a record 108,878 reports in 2024.

That's just the tip of the iceberg. Experts estimate that only 5% to 10% of frauds are actually reported, meaning that the real cost is likely in the billions. Reported losses since 2021 have now surpassed \$2 billion. This year, as of June 30, 2025, we've already seen 24,411 reports processed, with 17,094 victims and \$342 million in losses, trends that show there's no sign of slowing from 2024.

These scams come from phishing texts, text romance scams and AI-driven deepfakes. Criminals are finding new and increasingly creative ways to exploit people. I'll highlight for the committee one example from somebody I know personally, a man in his 70s. What ended up happening to him was that he got a virus on his computer. It told him to contact a number. The person he was in contact with spent the next seven to eight months convincing him that they worked for the FBI and that he should drain all his life savings and transfer them over to them.

In this case, they targeted an elderly individual who's by himself. Of course, people have been targeting the elderly, but we've also been seeing a rise in investment scams for 55 years and under, as reported.

To echo what's already been said here, it's a very important issue and one on which I think we can find bipartisan co-operation. It's very serious that we undertake it.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thanks very much.

Mr. Bains, the floor is yours, followed by Monsieur Ste-Marie, who will be followed by Madam O'Rourke.

Parm Bains (Richmond East—Steveston, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to echo my colleagues across from me on how important the study is.

We had the commissioner in last week. I had the opportunity to raise this. I heard from the Canadian Bankers Association on the issue of \$638 million. We heard from the commissioner about how that is maybe just what's being reported.

I also have a story. My father-in-law was almost a victim of this, but my wife intervened. I also think that there's a large transnational component to this that we need to look at; we need to maybe include some of that language in here and make sure those agencies are also included.

There's the issue of the different applications and companies, like Meta and others, that probably should be included in this as well. Of course, I think they can be witnesses to this kind of study.

Look at the victims who are being targeted. We have an aging population. I think it's really important to see that those protections are in place.

I welcome this study. On our side, I hope we can support this, ensure some of the language around transnational threats is there, have other jurisdictions included in this and see how we can combat this.

Thank you.

• (1125)

The Chair: Thanks very much, Mr. Bains.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ste-Marie, go ahead, please.

Gabriel Ste-Marie: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to add that, if the entire committee supports this motion, I will gladly join your ranks today.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have Ms. O'Rourke, followed by Ms. Dancho.

[*English*]

Dominique O'Rourke: Thank you, Chair Carr.

My office has already issued a warning to the community about the prevalence of these types of scams. We see them happening on a quasi-daily basis. It's my understanding that police departments are overloaded with these.

I think we have an important role, both in raising awareness and in trying to find proactive ways.... A whole range of businesses and organizations can help to prevent these types of scams. Beyond the statistics, which are shocking, these have real impacts on people's daily lives in communities. This is wiping out people's retirement savings.

Also, it's not just about older people. I received a phone call one day in the middle of doing a whole bunch of things. A couple of minutes in, I realized what was going on and hung up, but it could have been anybody. We need all of the generations to be aware, so that they're talking to their parents, talking to one another and being proactive in preventing these types of scams.

To Mr. Ste-Marie's very good point, I think bullet one has a broad enough range of businesses and business types to make it not exclusively the jurisdiction of the finance committee. Ms. Dancho is talking about "banks, telecommunication companies and digital platforms". Bullet three talks about "law enforcement capacity", which is really critical.

I'll be happy to support this.

Again, this is what we're here for in committee: non-partisan, constructive work that's going to benefit Canadians.

Thank you very much for bringing the motion forward.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Dancho, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Raquel Dancho: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm glad to hear the broad support for this. I think Madam O'Rourke summed it up really well. I think that we can study, in a non-partisan way, things that we all agree need to be addressed. I appreciate her comments.

I did want to just mention that Mr. Bains raised an excellent point about the foreign aspect of this. It's a good point that's not listed explicitly, but I think we can have a friendly understanding that if there are witnesses who would clearly fall under the area of this study, I would be happy to include them and to see recommendations included on this, because that's an excellent point.

The last thing is more just a friendly public service announcement for our colleagues. I meant to mention this earlier. My constituency office recently got a call that showed "RBC Banking" as the caller ID, and it was not, in fact, RBC banking. That inspired some of this as well, in that it's to call on the telecommunications companies to explain what they can do to prevent that.

Thankfully, my staff were quite savvy. Their spidey senses tuned in that there was something going on, but they said that it was quite convincing otherwise.

Be forewarned at your offices. They're unfortunately not immune to this either.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate everyone's helpful comments on this.

The Chair: Mr. Guglielmin.

Michael Guglielmin: I have one more point in response to Ms. O'Rourke, who triggered something that I want to put on the public record, and that goes to the investment scams. Beyond individual losses, like the \$310 million mentioned before, there's been a huge uptick in investment scams. I believe 23% of Canadians say they were approached by fraudulent investment scams last year, which is a 5% rise, and then there's the 46% of Canadians who spot dubious opportunities for investments on social media. Beyond the calling and even the sophisticated ways caller ID is used, as Ms. Dancho just mentioned, the online world is very intrusive to people.

I've even seen ads on YouTube from our Prime Minister, offering investment advice.

A voice: Fraudulent ads.

Michael Guglielmin: Yes, fraudulent ads.

A voice: We think.

Voices: Oh, oh!

• (1130)

Michael Guglielmin: It's a widespread problem for sure, and it's something we can highlight to the public that we are taking seriously. Part of the issue with the economy is consumer confidence and investor confidence. If we can take measures to demonstrate that we're acting in a very constructive and serious way, I think we can inspire some of that public trust back.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, colleagues.

I'm certainly hearing a consensus build.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ste-Marie, are you now in favour of the motion? You're nodding yes.

[*English*]

In that case, without any opposition, looking around as we've done a few times this morning, I see unanimous support for the motion.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Colleagues, unless some of you have a surprise up your sleeve, I think that was all in terms of what was intended this morning, which means I would like to get to a couple of other things quickly, if I may.

One is that I have to bring forward a motion for the committee to adopt our budget for the briefing sessions that we have with the CRTC and the Competition Bureau. These were sent to everybody, and I'm looking around the table just to see if there's any opposition to the adoption of the budgetary motions.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Colleagues, the next big thing that we have to figure out is how we want to schedule the concurrent studies that we have now adopted. These are the study that Madam Dancho put forward last week that we adopted and the study that Mr. Bardeesy put forward.

What I'm going to do is suspend very briefly, and here's why: I would like the representatives from each party to speak over here with the clerk and the analysts, so that we're all on the same page in terms of finding out what's going to be the most effective and efficient way of scheduling this. We can see if we can come to a very quick agreement, which I imagine we will, and then we will come back publicly here and have a general consensus, I hope, about what that schedule looks like.

To summarize, I'm going to suspend. We're going to talk to the analysts, the clerk and the reps from each party to determine what the schedule of this concurrent study is going to look like.

The last thing I will say is that, now that we have substantial orders of business in front of us and a path forward, please make sure as soon as possible that you're starting to get your witness lists with contact information in to the clerk and the analysts. It's very difficult. What often happens is that we have a meeting on a Wednesday, and we have five people whose names are there, but four of them aren't available. We want to make sure we have a really solid, critical mass of people ready to go, so that we have that manoeuvrability when necessary.

I'm going to very quickly suspend. We'll try to get some agreement on a schedule for these two studies, and we will report back very soon.

Thank you.

• (1130)

(Pause)

• (1145)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

Here's the plan moving forward. The first hour on Wednesday this week, as we agreed upon previously, will be for the CRTC officials to come and talk about their mandate and some specific decisions that I know members are eager to discuss.

As far as the schedule moving forward is concerned, it's going to look like this. We're going to have a rotating schedule of the two studies we passed motions for, on productivity and industrial defence policy. This will be dependent upon the availability of witnesses. For example, if one study is not able to accommodate the witnesses who would be needed for an effective or efficient meeting, we won't burn that meeting; we'll go back to the other study, assuming we have enough witnesses, so that we keep the ball rolling.

The consequence, if you will, of running concurrent studies is that it will take the analysts more time to provide a draft report to the committee. We should anticipate that we will not get draft reports until about December, so please temper your expectations in terms of getting reports back to the House on either of those two studies prior to the House rising in December. It's simply not possible when we're doing two studies concurrently.

Which study we begin on Wednesday in the second hour, as I mentioned a moment ago, will be dependent upon the availability of witnesses, but there was agreement among party representatives that that is okay.

There is also agreement—we have not passed a specific timeline, but I want to state this publicly on the record—that when we have concluded the two studies before us, we will move to Monsieur Ste-Marie's motion on AI, notwithstanding legislation that is presented to us or something else that requires our immediate attention as a committee. The plan is that, should members put forward new motions for study from this point forward, we are honouring Monsieur Ste-Marie's study as being the third in the queue. As I said, this is assuming that we don't have any other urgent legislative or political matters before us.

I don't think this is going to require any type of formal vote. I'm just looking around the table to ensure that there's no further commentary on any of this. Okay.

Before adjourning, colleagues, I want to comment quickly on one thing for the four Canadians who are watching the live feed of the industry committee right now. It is really important to note how well we have started here in building consensus. Members of parties are elected by their people to come to Ottawa and advocate, but working so cordially, productively, effectively and efficiently together in order to ensure that these interests that matter wholesale to Canadians across a variety of topics can be elevated to the floor of our discussion here at industry, I think, is really important. I want to provide my gratitude and thanks to the representatives of all parties and all members for their willingness to work together quite promptly to make sure that we have some important business before us.

● (1150)

With that, colleagues, the meeting is adjourned. I'll see you in a few days.

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