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# Standing Committee on Natural Resources

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Chair: Mr. John Aldag





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• (1610)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

We'll get started now because of the delay that we had due to the votes.

I'd like to welcome everyone to meeting number 18 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee is continuing its study of creating a fair and equitable Canadian energy transformation. Today is our third meeting with witnesses on this study.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of November 25, 2021. Members are attending in person in the room or remotely, using the Zoom application. It's a delight to have people attending in person and have audience members joining us, as well, once again.

I'd like to take the opportunity to remind participants that screenshots or taking photos is not allowed when we're in session. Today's proceedings will be televised and made available via the House of Commons website.

As per the directive of the Board of Internal Economy on March 10, all those attending the meeting in person must wear a mask, except for those who are at their place during the proceedings.

We'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of witnesses and members. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, you need to click on your own microphone to activate your mike. Please mute it when you're not speaking.

For interpretation for those on Zoom, you have a choice at the bottom of your screen of "floor", "English" or "French". Those in the room can use the earpieces and select the desired channel. Our team will look after turning your microphones on and off. If it's your first time here, speak in a regular conversational tone so that our interpreters can keep up.

All comments should be addressed through the chair.

We also try to speak one at a time. When we get to the question-and answer period, it's very much up to the members to identify the witness they're going to turn their attention to, and I give them a fair bit of latitude. If we find that you're not getting a chance to answer questions, I may give you some time at the end of the allocat-

ed time for each round, but it's been working pretty well, and we hope it works again today.

With that—

Mr. Angus has a point of order.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Chair, we've lost 45 minutes today and we may lose 15 minutes at the end. We have witnesses who have very important information. We have many good witnesses, but there are no other witnesses who are going to speak specifically to the issues of labour. There are many technical issues about transition that I believe only the labour witnesses are going to be able to provide to us, because they deal with them all the time.

I feel that they're being shortchanged, having lost an hour, and I would put it to the committee that afterward we look at a way of having an opportunity to make up this hour. This is technical information that I think will very much help us to be able to make credible recommendations.

**The Chair:** We'll see how far we get through today.

As I mention at the end of all of the meetings, all witnesses are invited to submit an additional written brief of up to 10 pages, and then we'll look at the committee.... We have an extensive list of witnesses for this study and we'll try to get into it as quickly as we can.

With that as the introduction, I'd like to welcome our witnesses. First of all, we have, from the Alberta Federation of Labour, Gil McGowan. From Blue Green Canada, we have Jamie Kirkpatrick. From the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, we have Denis Bolduc and Patrick Rondeau. From Unifor, we have Sari Sairanen. From United Steelworkers, we have Roy Milne. Appearing in person, we have Lionel Railton and Steven Schumann. .

We're going to get into opening statements. I will go first to Mr. McGowan for a five-minute opening statement.

So that everybody knows, I'll use a yellow card system to give you a 30-second warning and a red card when the time is up, but don't stop mid-sentence; wind up your thought and we'll move on to the next person.

I'd like to quickly welcome as substitutes Mr. Chambers, Mr. Shipley, Mr. Morrice, Mr. Sorbara and another member joining us virtually.

Mr. McGowan, it's over to you for five minutes.

• (1615)

**Mr. Gil McGowan (President, Alberta Federation of Labour):** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

As president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, I have the honour and privilege of representing more than 170,000 workers, in every sector of the Alberta economy, including oil and gas. I also had the honour and privilege of acting as the chair of what we called the coal transition coalition. The CTC, as we called it, was a coalition of unions representing most of the workers in Alberta's coal-fired power plants and associated coal mines. These were the workers who lost their jobs when the previous Alberta government announced the phase-out of coal power and when private power companies dramatically accelerated the phase-out of that power because from their perspective it made economic sense for them to do so.

Together with Roy Milne from the steelworkers, who is another guest on your panel today, we negotiated with the Alberta government for what I think remains the first and only sector-wide just transition package in Canadian history for workers displaced by climate policy. The package we negotiated provided for EI top-ups, training vouchers, relocation allowances and pension bridging for workers. It also envisioned joint employer-employee workplace committees to address site-specific issues and it provided money for coal communities to do some economic planning, which was important, because in many cases the coal plants and mines were the biggest employers in town.

The Alberta approach to just transition in the coal sector was laudable, and I'm proud of it, but one of the reasons I'm here today is to tell you that it was no panacea and it cannot and should not be used as a full template for the energy transition that's already unfolding in oil and gas.

Why do I say that? It's mostly because there are big differences between the coal sector and the oil and gas sector, differences that matter for policy. For starters, there's the simple issue of scale. There were only about 2,000 workers in Alberta affected by the coal phase-out, the majority of them working in mines. In contrast, the Alberta oil and gas sector currently employs 130,000 people. That's down 40,000 since the price of oil and gas collapsed in 2014, but it's still a much bigger number.

There's also the issue of representation. Almost all of the workers in the coal-fired power sector were union members. That meant we had a structure in place for engaging with them and talking with them. In contrast, outside of oil sands-related construction and downstream facilities such as refineries, most workers in oil and gas are not unionized. This is problematic, because engaging with workers needs to be a key part of formulating just transition policy. Unions in coal provided the infrastructure for communication, engagement and, frankly, legitimacy. Without unions in much of the oil and gas sector, talking to workers and getting them on board is going to be much harder.

The final big difference has to do with the nature of the workforce and the nature of the transition itself. In coal, the workers were mostly full-time, permanent, long-term employees, and it was clear that they were losing their jobs because of government policy. In the oil and gas sector, on the other hand, many jobs are short-term and temporary, and it won't be clear-cut why their jobs are be-

ing lost. Is it climate policy? Is it market forces? Is it technology? The truth is it's all of the above, and that will make it much harder to decide who should qualify for benefits.

All of that means we can't simply cut and paste what we did in the coal-fired power industry and apply it to oil and gas. It's clear to me that if we're serious about helping Canadians navigate the energy transition, in addition to talking about labour market adjustment for displaced workers, we need to be talking about economic transformation. Band-aids won't cut it. We need to intentionally build a new economy that gives workers new opportunities to thrive. That means money, lots of it, especially for oil and gas provinces such as Alberta. It means having a plan for industrial development. It means having a plan for labour force development to match the industrial plan. It means not leaving it to the market. It means channelling our inner C.D. Howe, if you will, and it means mobilizing like we did for World War II or the Allies did with the Marshall plan in the aftermath of the Second World War. Anything less will be a failure to our climate aspirations and to the economic needs of our citizens and workers, and we need to rise to that challenge.

Thank you.

• (1620)

**The Chair:** That's excellent. Thank you.

We'll move right on to Mr. Kirkpatrick.

I'll turn the clock over to you. You have five minutes.

**Mr. Jamie Kirkpatrick (Program Manager, Blue Green Canada):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I live and work in the Treaty 6 territory in the city of Saskatoon, but I'm joining this meeting today from the unceded lands and traditional territories of the Mohawk and the Algonquin peoples. We also call this Montreal.

My organization, Blue Green Canada, was founded in 2010 by Canada's largest private sector labour unions and prominent environmental and civil society organizations to do what we're all here to do today: advocate for working people and the environment and to promote solutions to environmental issues that have a positive employment and economic impact.

So far we've seen that the federal government has climate plans, but it does not have plans that lay out the future of workers, particularly those working in oil and gas. It doesn't have a future in mind for those workers that aligns to the global 1.5° temperature limit and our own goals of net zero by 2050. This approach is leaving people with an uncertain future.

It's crucial that the government understand and consider the impacts on workers and communities as we're acting to address climate change, because we have to plan for a well-managed and inclusive transition. That has to be guided by those very communities and workers who are feeling the impacts.

As we work to collectively meet the challenges of climate change, we have to do so building a movement that's inclusive and addresses the needs of indigenous people, young people, workers, women, newcomers and even environmentalists. We must find solutions so our economy is just, inclusive and fair. It's clear this has not been the approach that's understood so far.

For instance, concerning NRCan's recent "People-Centred Just Transition" discussion document that was used to guide the consultation with Canadians, nowhere in that document will you find the words "fossil fuel", "oil" or "natural gas". There's also no mention of retirement, security, unions or even equity.

One outcome of this process is to create an advisory body to help further government knowledge on this topic. As it's currently envisioned, it's not the solution. What we've done so far is we've managed to divide this work across many government ministries.

The experience of the task force that Mr. McGowan mentioned with the Canadian task force on "Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities" was that they required interventions of ministries of labour; Finance; Infrastructure and Community; Northern Affairs; Innovation, Science and Industry; Natural Resources; and Public Services and Procurement, and, of course, it was housed in Environment and Climate Change. The result was that no one was given the jobs to do, so the jobs then didn't get done.

We just saw this outlined to us in great detail by the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development. The key findings were that, overall, NRCan and Employment and Social Development Canada were not prepared to support the just transition to a low-carbon economy for workers and communities. Although the government had identified this as a priority, NRCan began as the lead in 2019 and took no identifiable action until 2021.

Frankly, federal departments and agencies have not established frameworks to measure success, to monitor the work or to support Canadians in this transition.

Some of the initial challenges are pretty clear. Again, Gil did a great job of laying them out. There are hundreds of thousands of workers in dozens of communities who have a larger than average dependence on the fossil fuel industry for their livelihoods. The current—and I say the current—unmanaged transition to a low-carbon economy is causing significant hardships for these people and for their regions. We need our governments to give employers and workers certainty about the future. For instance, are there going to be constraints on oil and gas production? Are we going to take the

steps needed to limit temperature rise to 1.5°? Are we going to be able to do so in a fair way?

Workers need the government to be honest about the future of work under this new framework and this idea of net zero by 2050. More generally, transition plans and policies shouldn't be limited just to workers who are in energy-intensive industries or who are directly or indirectly in the fossil fuel sector. It's very important that we prioritize those workers, but they're not the only ones who are going to be impacted by this. Whether you're an auto worker, a teacher, a postal worker or a health care worker, your workplace is going to be changed as the climate changes.

One thing I'd like to suggest is that the government consider mandating joint worker-employer low-carbon transition committees so Canadian workplaces can continue to be prepared for the changes that are coming. We have health and safety issues in every workplace, so decarbonization should also be considered an issue to add to that in every workplace.

• (1625)

I'll wrap up by saying that this would be a more effective approach than bringing out more blanket grants for some unproven technologies and payments without conditions.

Thank you for your time.

**The Chair:** That's perfect. Thank you so much.

We're now going to the Fédération des travailleurs et des travailleuses du Québec.

You have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Bolduc (General Secretary, Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec):** Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. My name is Denis Bolduc, and I am the general secretary of the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, or FTQ, for short.

Joining me is Patrick Rondeau, union adviser for the environment and the just transition. Mr. Rondeau is our expert.

First of all, I would like to thank you for inviting us to speak with parliamentarians about the fair and equitable transformation of Canada's energy sector.

Now I will say a few words about the FTQ.

The FTQ is the largest labour federation in Quebec, with over 600,000 members, in all sectors of activity. That includes the energy sector, where thousands of FTQ members are facing challenges related to climate change. The FTQ has developed significant expertise in just transition matters over the past six years. We understand the importance of addressing the energy situation in Canada, and we commend the government for considering just transition principles to achieve this. However, we believe that the government is moving in the wrong direction by applying the just transition lens only to the energy sector.

We recommend a holistic approach that includes all sectors of activity. In this regard, we deplore the fact that this file no longer appears in the Minister of Environment and Climate Change's mandate letters. We are concerned that the concept of just transition is being reduced to an issue of skills training in the energy sector only. The assigned mandate letters containing just transition hint at this fear.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's most recent report on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability could not be clearer: we need to decarbonize, transform our entire economy and move away from fossil fuels. The report also indicates that we have the means to do this and that it must be done according to the just transition concept. Canada has signed a number of agreements that clearly define what a just transition is, so Canada has all the parameters necessary to quickly adopt a just transition plan and mechanisms.

I would be remiss if I appeared before you today without mentioning the report the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development presented to Parliament this week. The very first finding of the report reads as follows:

Overall, we found that Natural Resources Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada were not prepared to support a just transition to a low-carbon economy for workers and communities.

In the report, the commissioner goes on to highlight the Government of Canada's commitment to undertake a transition that helps affected workers and communities by offering financial assistance, retraining and, of course, employment opportunities.

We are worried. It is important to mobilize all workplaces and communities. It is only in this way that we can ensure that no one is left behind in the complex process of transforming and decarbonizing our economy. The FTQ has long been advocating the need for adequate funding and mechanisms that demand results. The European Union's just transition fund is a good example.

In concrete terms, the Government of Canada must decide on real mechanisms, such as the obligation to set up joint committees on just transition in the workplace. Just transition is about fairness, so a whole range of accompanying measures must be adopted to address job losses. The government must ensure that the new jobs created are of high quality and that everyone has access to them. We also believe that communities have a voice. We therefore recommend that the government follow up on the proposal of the federal task force on just transition for Canadian coal power workers and communities, and establish just transition centres.

The government must take strong leadership on this issue. It is in charge. We welcome the consultations undertaken since last sum-

mer and the inclusion of the just transition concept in the 2030 greenhouse gas reduction plan. We believe that unions must be at the heart of the process, together with employer organizations. That is why we find the idea of setting up another advisory council outdated. In this regard, we recommend that you study the two commissions on just transition in Scotland and Ireland, as well as the work done by Spain.

The FTQ believes that the government should put in place a structure similar to a Crown corporation. We also encourage the government to appoint a deputy minister for just transition.

• (1630)

Thank you. We would be happy to answer your questions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you so much.

We're now going to go to our guest from Unifor.

I probably got your name horribly wrong in the introduction, so I'll let you introduce yourself, and then I'll start the clock for your five minutes.

Welcome.

**Ms. Sari Sairanen (National Director, Health, Safety and Environment, Unifor):** Thank you very much.

My name is Sari Sairanen.

I'm pleased, on behalf of Unifor and our 315,000 members across Canada to have this opportunity to provide our input into the just transition discussions. We also want to recognize the tremendous work of the just transition for Canadian coal power workers and communities task force. Unifor was an active participant in the just transition task force, which travelled from coast to coast to hear the stories of coal-powered communities. We experienced firsthand the passion with which local workers and community members spoke of their plight as well as their vision for a better future.

The concept of just transition came out of Canada's labour movement and has always emphasized the need to protect workers' livelihoods and the environment at the same time. The government should therefore not shy away from the term "worker". We need a worker-centred just transition. The use of the term "people-centred" waters down the original focus on the needs and challenges faced by workers in fossil fuel-dependent industries undergoing transition.

Instead of reinventing the wheel, the government should adopt the seven principles that guided the work of the just transition task force: respect for workers, unions, communities and families; worker participation at every stage of transition; transitioning to good jobs; sustainable and healthy communities; planning for the future, grounded in today's realities; nationally coherent, regionally driven, locally delivered actions; and immediate yet durable support.

There's no question that there should be an independent body that not only provides advice to the government on just transition issues but also has a mandate to actively participate in the drafting of relevant policies and programs. Providing full transparency of the just transition continuum is fundamental to harness and foster support in society for the ambitious climate policies that are needed to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The independent body should have significant representation from labour unions. Just transition is a worker-centred issue, and workers should be given a fair chance to represent themselves and engage in meaningful dialogue with both the government and employers. Jobs that workers transition to must be decent, well-paid, unionized jobs. The transition cannot become an avenue for employers to engage in contract flipping by another name.

The changes that are displacing workers are happening now. Unifor's members in the oil and gas industry have experienced these impacts first-hand, and the fossil fuel industry is forecast to lose anywhere between 4,000 and 8,000 jobs per year in the near future.

Implementing a just transition will require dedicated funding to provide wage protections, pension bridging, retraining, and relocation assistance for impacted workers. Unifor's "build back better" campaign called for a dedicated just transition fund, to be partially funded through employer contributions. Impacted workers also need a single-point access for services. Regional and local just transition centres must be established as soon as possible, in line with the just transition task force's recommendations.

Beyond a just transition, this is an opportunity for the government to address gaps in employment insurance and how the Canadian labour market adjusts to rapid technological changes. Stronger social and economic protections, combined with effective policies to help shift workers from declining industries into growth sectors, would ensure that all transitions are just transitions.

Thanks very much.

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Perfect. Thank you so much.

We're going to go now to Mr. Milne.

I understand that during the sound check there was a bit of a delay with some of your audio. If we're not getting a clear transmission, I'll give you both cards, although I don't know if you can see me when you're giving your notes. If you could just pause, I'll stop the clock and we'll let the audio catch up so the translators can stay on top of it. Hopefully this will go without any problems.

I'll turn it over to you, Mr. Milne, for your five-minute opening statement.

**Mr. Roy Milne (President (Retired), Local 1595, United Steelworkers):** Thank you. I have a poor Internet connection today, so I hope I'm audible.

I'm currently retired and plan on staying that way. For the last couple of months, it's been enjoyable.

I had 38 years in the coal industry and have experienced the "glass half full" of the transition programs in place. I recall a meeting with Minister McKenna in 2016 when she described how the coal industry was going to be used as the template for the oil sands, and yet, as has been stated already, the template is a "glass half full." There were lots of holes in it. On the federal end, what we actually saw were the one-stop transition centres, which were excellent. The rest is still waiting to be seen.

Probably the most important point I could add is that it's imperative that the correct department handles the transition [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

**The Chair:** We've lost Mr. Milne, so what we'll do is that while we're getting him back in....

We're back in?

To keep things moving, Mr. Milne, we'll have three minutes on the clock for you, but I'm going to jump to our other guests in the room, Mr. Railton and Mr. Schumann.

We'll start their clock at five minutes, and then if we're able to get Mr. Milne back, we'll finish off with his three minutes.

Gentlemen, it's over to whoever would like to take the floor.

**Mr. Lionel Railton (Canadian Regional Director, International Union of Operating Engineers):** Good afternoon.

On behalf of the 55,000 highly skilled members who make up the International Union of Operating Engineers in Canada, I'm honoured to appear before the committee today to talk about this important issue.

By way of background, I would note that we are one of 14 affiliates of the Canadian building trades, representing 600,000 men and women who work in the construction sector. Our members build and maintain Canada's infrastructure. They help construct our nation's hospitals, hydro dams, mines, nuclear plants, roads, schools, solar farms, wind turbines and pipelines, to name a few. In short, we build it all.

Discussions regarding a just transition will immediately impact our men and women, and are impacting our men and women today. For a just transition to succeed and ensure that no one is left behind, many things need to fall in place. Three of those elements that we'd like to bring before the committee today are, first, the need for a clear and obtainable blueprint; second, that labour must be an equal partner; and third, that training must be undertaken correctly.

In our industry, successful construction projects follow a blueprint or a plan, which lays out what must be done, when it must be done and by whom. The plan ensures that the owner client, contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and labour all understand the timing and the steps necessary to build a successful project. In our opinion, governments must lead and clearly articulate what society must do to ensure a smooth transition.

Right now, in our observation, there seems to be no blueprint and no real clear objectives, but just a lot of talk. This uncertainty creates distrust and uneasiness among those who will eventually be impacted: the workers.

Clearly, there is much at stake. Past experiences have shown that when governments fail to act or when measures are unevenly implemented, workers clearly suffer from the upheaval caused by the transition. If the government wants to grow the middle class and at the same time ask Canadians to support a transition to a low-carbon economy, workers have to have certainty and a clear view of where their future, and comparable job opportunities, will be for them and their families. They will need opportunities that will provide the necessary supports and reskilling initiatives that will allow them to succeed in their new jobs. Any just transition plan must be worker-centric to succeed. To understand what these opportunities are and what challenges lie ahead, actual worker voices must be heard. This transition will only succeed if we have buy-in from the workers. Organized labour must be an equal partner and therefore be consulted at all levels.

The government has said that a just transition will be led by labour, but the government must show and commit publicly by partnering with labour on many of the upcoming initiatives. Training is one of those examples.

Training will be a crucial element in moving forward on a just economy. It will only succeed if labour is engaged on how the funding and actual training of displaced and soon-to-be displaced workers are received. Retraining workers, especially those in the oil and gas sector, is vital to ensuring their success in other sectors of the economy.

Outside of the university and college system, the unionized building trades, through our various training centres across Canada, are the largest private trainers in Canada. We would suggest you let the union training centres be the lead on any future training to ensure that training is undertaken correctly and that best practices are applied.

Our jointly trustee, people-focused, not-for-profit training centres ensure that all workers—union and non-union—are trained to the highest industry standards, which includes employment placement. Our programs are accredited in every province with the exception of Quebec, which has its own provincial program. Training is provided by qualified, experienced instructors. Reskilling the existing workforce and training the next generation will take time and careful planning. Governments cannot expect workers to achieve the training necessary for new job opportunities from programs that offer quick fixes or fast-track training. Any meaningful employment opportunity will require training of sufficient duration and quality to ensure workers' success, which our centres provide.

At the same time, Canada is experiencing a skills shortage. Our workforce is aging, including me. There are many challenges in recruiting and retaining young workers. For a transition to happen smoothly, Canada must continue to encourage recruitment and retention in the oil and gas sector.

● (1640)

As workers are reskilled to succeed in the low-carbon economy and to ensure that momentum doesn't stall, we need a steady inflow of apprentices into the trades. We need to take all steps necessary to attract, train and retain Canadian tradespeople, including by recruiting more women and indigenous Canadians in the trades for a made-in-Canada solution.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you for your opening statements.

We do not have Mr. Milne, so we're going to go right into our questions and answers.

For our guests today, we have four rounds of six minutes each.

First up is Mr. Bragdon, and with that I will set the clock to six minutes.

It's over to you.

**Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our guests today and to those who are joining us via Zoom.

I want to begin with a couple of observations I've made. I know this is a topic that has obviously engulfed this committee right now and that will for some time into the future. It's a very important discussion that needs to happen.

I'm glad to have heard some of the witnesses today speak very clearly about the importance of making sure that the workers' voices are being heard. So much time is spent in this conversation talking about ideals, concepts, hopes, aspirations, new accords and further things being signed, but Canadians and working families live in realities. This is paycheques. This is groceries on tables. This is school supplies for their children. This is the ability to provide homes and vehicles and transportation for their families.

It's personal for me, in the sense that I grew up in a mill worker's home. My dad worked in a mill and belonged to a union for his entire life. He retired after carrying a bucket like this one—it's his bucket, actually—to a mill for 51 years. He worked in a resource-based industry.

In a lot of discussions that are held today, many of the workers across this country, who helped build this country and make this country what it is, feel as though they're being marginalized, talked down to and taken for granted. All of these workers—my dad included, as well as, I know, people from my area—respect the environment and want to be good stewards of the environment. We want to hand off to future generations a Canada that, yes, is cleaner and greener, but we also recognize the reality that our world is still largely dependent on fossil fuels and a continuous stable supply of energy. What we're seeing happening geopolitically around the world right now is putting an exclamation mark on the need to maintain safe and reliable sources of energy supply while we transition.

Canada has some of the best environmental regulations that there are in the entire world for energy extraction and use. We have a tremendous energy story to tell. We can help other economies transition to even cleaner natural fuels and fossil fuels, yet it seems as though all the emphasis is on how quickly we can get away from Canadian energy. I think the discussion needs to be that as long as the world is still largely dependent upon fossil fuels and energy, we need to make sure that it has a safe and stable supply of good, clean Canadian energy that is developed in fair and ethical ways.

I think of my dad today. I think of workers across the Prairies, across northern Ontario and all over our great country. They want to know that this committee and those who are helping to form the policies that are going to shape the next few years are hearing their voices.

Can those of us here in this committee assure that in all the consultations we do, we're hearing from those average everyday blue-collar workers who carry the buckets and still work in the factories and are still in our energy sector? I think they really want to know if this committee is hearing their voices and concerns as well.

Can any of the witnesses speak to that? I know it was a bit of a long introduction, but I really feel I want to put that on the table, because I think so many people who are listening in today are concerned about their jobs and livelihoods and want to know that this committee is hearing their voices.

I'll start with you, Mr. Railton.

● (1645)

**The Chair:** We have a minute and 45 seconds for any response.

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** Thank you for the question.

**Mr. Gil McGowan:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** The answer is yes.

The challenge that we are faced with as representatives of workers in all the sectors.... Let me be clear. We approach this particular issue with the idea that we're going to need all of the energy that Canada can produce. If we are going to electrify the fleets and all those, we're going to need all that energy.

The concern we have, and what is being expressed in the union halls in the meetings that I undertake when I travel the country, is the simple fact that there is a lot of uncertainty. You've said it. It is paycheques. I want to pay my mortgage. I want to pay my bills. As a third-generation operating engineer and a crane operator by

trade—although 30 years' removed now, I'd be nothing more than a hazard—and the proud father of two fourth-generation operating engineers who all worked in construction, I want to know that my grandchildren, who potentially will be fifth-generation operating engineers, will have jobs.

I think it is really important that the committee move from the discussion stage and start getting onto the planning stage because, as we pointed out in our submission, when you have a clear blueprint, people understand, and that eliminates the risk and uncertainties that come along with it.

● (1650)

**Mr. Richard Bragdon:** Thank you for that.

I believe you are putting your finger on something. It's the need for a concrete plan and a plan to protect workers because we know, as the Canadian Climate Institute stated very clearly, that the sectors that are vulnerable to this transition account for 70% of Canada's goods exports. That means 800,000 jobs are potentially at risk through this just transition. A transition that leaves people out of work and leaves families out of good paying jobs is not a just transition; it's entirely unjust.

We don't want to be transitioning Canadians toward poverty. We must continue to move toward prosperity and make sure that those workers' voices are being heard.

Yes, we all want to be environmentally responsible and good stewards, but I'm hoping that these concerns are being addressed and all is moving forward.

**The Chair:** With that, we are slightly over time. I know that everybody had their hand up, but to make sure we get to all the panelists, we're going to have to keep moving.

As I said, if there are thoughts that you would like to offer afterward, you are invited to submit a brief. As well, there may be other members here who pick up this train of thinking, or you can work your thoughts into answers to the next questions.

I did miss that Mr. Kelloway is a guest here today. I just wanted to say hello.

We're now going to go to Mr. Maloney for his six minutes.

**Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all of the witnesses, first of all. I want to thank Mr. Bragdon, too, because he hit on a theme I was going to start with.

I agree with virtually everything he said, with the exception of the part when he said we're trying to move away from Canadian energy. I disagree with that. I have said this at this committee before: The challenge we are trying to deal with is not production. One of our witnesses talked about putting a cap on production, which I don't agree with. The challenge is fighting emissions.

A lot of words and rhetoric get bandied around when we're having these discussions. We do have to look at this through a realistic lens, because if we're talking about a transition, the "just" part means people have to have jobs. They have to get paid. They have to be able to pay their bills. They have to have a house to live in.

With no disrespect to any of the witnesses' testimony today, I wrote down some remarks: We need worker buy-in; we need decent pay and "well-paid, unionized jobs"; we need to move to a "new economy", and so on. I didn't hear anybody tell me where those new jobs are or what this training is going to be for.

I agree that all of these people who are losing their jobs need to be retrained. I agree that all of these people need to have good, high-paying jobs that last forever, but what are they? That's my first question.

Sir, you said we need a blueprint and you said you need to be included in the discussion. Well, that's why you're here today, so tell me what the blueprint is. Tell me where these jobs are and how we get there.

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** We're in our 125th anniversary of our organization, and you don't last 125 years without adjusting.

The response to your question would be simple. We have footprints in what I refer to as both the traditional economy and the new economy. Will an oil and gas worker be transitioned, will skill sets be transferable into building a new nuclear plant that doesn't emit anything? The answer is yes. Will there be a requirement for reskilling in that process? Absolutely, but the basic skills that they will carry forward can be used as they move forward.

With respect to the renewables, we erect most of the wind turbines in this country and we erect most of the solar farms, along with our brothers and sisters in the IBEW. That training is already starting to take place. What we see is the order of magnitude. With the order of magnitude, if you start moving away from the oil and gas sector at a rapid pace, you're going to have to scale up the ability to do what we're doing now.

One thing we've been very good at over the years is understanding where the market is going to go, and we do that with our signatory partners, our contractors and our owner clients. We do a lot of labour budgeting in meetings such as this, where we understand where the industry is going to go and what we need to do on those reskilling pieces.

We're already there in a lot of areas, but it's currently small in scale right now. I see the ramping up, if you will, and I say it's about addressing the order of magnitude with respect to how that's going to take place. I think that technology is already there.

• (1655)

**Mr. James Maloney:** Great. Thank you.

I'm glad you mentioned them, because there were two things that I forgot to mention in my opening remarks.

With regard to nuclear, you referred to nuclear in your paper. I respect that, and I think almost everybody on this committee is fully supportive of that.

I also want to add my thanks to the oil and gas workers. Nothing that comes out of this committee should ever be viewed as an attack, because we all have a great deal of gratitude to that sector. They have supported our economy and continue to support our economy, and they will continue to support our economy in the future.

I'll put these questions to you, but to other witnesses too: What other sectors are there? What other growth areas are there? We've identified nuclear and we need to support that. Are there other areas we can identify where we can focus our retraining? You talked about solar and wind farms. We've had witnesses talk about that too. Where are the easy targets? Where is the success?

I'd like to hear from other people on this too.

Mr. Railton, why don't we start with you?

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** Okay. Some of the other areas that we're currently looking at right now and discussing with our owner clients and our contractors are hydrogen development, carbon capture and ammonia development. There are a number of different areas that will allow for the transition. In the case of ammonia, we need it for our fertilizers to grow our food. You take ammonia and you extract off the hydrogen atoms and you can burn it as a clean fuel.

I think Canada can be a clear leader. You already referenced SMR technology, nuclear technology. In our opinion, nuclear technology can be one of those areas where you can transition a lot of the skill sets that our men and women have to build a non-emitting, safe application. It can reduce the reliance on diesel fuel in the north and decarbonize, or at least lower the carbon footprint of, oil sands extraction. Not only do you get the electricity, but you get high-quality steam and heat from these reactors, which you can use in lots of industrial applications.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Thank you, sir.

I'm going to move over to Mr. McGowan.

You referenced the new economy concept, and you talked about C.D. Howe and the need for a Marshall plan. What would you include in your Marshall plan? What areas would you target?

**Mr. Gil McGowan:** Before I get there, and I will, I want to address a sentiment that I heard in your questions and the previous member's comments.

I think some people are struggling, suggesting that the question we're trying to answer at this committee and in our country is whether we should transition. That's not the question. The transition is already happening, and it's happening in oil and gas. I mentioned that we have 130,000 people in my province working directly in oil and gas. That's down 40,000 workers from 2014. That's partly as the result of a drop in the price of oil, but it's also because the industry is not the engine of job creation that it once was, and it never will be.

For us, the transition is already happening, and the question is not if it's going to be a transition, but what kind of transition it's going to be. Is it going to be an orderly transition or a disorderly transition, or a planned transition or an unplanned transition? That's the question.

**Mr. James Maloney:** My question really was this: Where are the jobs that are the “just” part of the transition?

**The Chair:** We have to end here. We're over the six minutes.

The time goes quickly. I hate to cut it off, but we need to go to our next time slot.

Mr. Simard, you have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all of the witnesses.

I'm a bit torn because, like Mr. Bragdon, I'm in the mood to preface my questions with a lengthy statement. I may not have my father's lunch bucket, but something is bothering me, and I can't hide it.

I think a public decision-maker should tell the truth. It's way too easy to tell people what they want to hear. It's easy to tell them that they are going to keep their jobs, that nothing will change, but that's no way to help them. I think a public decision-maker has to be responsible, and history has taught us as much.

In Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, where I'm from, the pulp and paper industry came to a turning point. We don't sell paper anymore. It's no longer the medium most people use, so a lot of pulp and paper jobs were lost. In La Baie, a nearby municipality, AbitibiBowater shut down, and then the mortality rate skyrocketed. Researchers at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi studied the phenomenon. The same thing happened in the asbestos sector. A lot of workers fell on very hard times when asbestos mining came to an end. Nevertheless, people need to be told the truth.

They needed to be told that asbestos jobs were finished. Transition measures should have been developed to help workers. That's what should have happened in the pulp and paper sector but didn't. According to the report the commissioner released this week, we are very unprepared. As an example, he cites what happened in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1992-93, when the cod fishery collapsed. In the decade that followed, the province lost about 10% of its population. If that doesn't frighten you, then there is something seriously wrong. Climate change is real, and it's having an impact.

As a public decision-maker, my only job is to tell people working in the sector to be prepared. I have nothing against Albertans. I realize their livelihoods depend on oil, but instead of investing \$14 billion in Export Development Canada, the government should have used the money to plan for the transition. Why didn't it?

According to an Oil Change International report, all of us collectively spent \$78 billion on oil and gas subsidies in 2018. That is an astronomical amount of money. It's a bottomless pit, and who is going to suffer? Oil and gas workers, because the transition will inevitably come.

It's fine to sit here and think about how this will play well on our social media, as we talk about workers and all, but lying to people is totally irresponsible.

Witnesses come here to tell us how we can support workers. At the very least, our job is to listen to them and ask them questions about how we, as public decision-makers, can provide them with support; ignoring a known fact—climate change—will do nothing to help them. That is the wrong way to go.

My apologies for the rant.

I have a quick question for Mr. Bolduc.

In your opening statement, Mr. Bolduc, you mentioned a structure or body similar to a Crown corporation to support the just transition. Could you elaborate on that?

• (1700)

**Mr. Denis Bolduc:** Thank you, Mr. Simard.

I can give you an example of a structure that was put in place in another jurisdiction. Our resident expert, Mr. Rondeau, can provide additional information if needed.

The Scottish government set up the Just Transition Commission, which it tasked with providing advice on the development of just transition plans and on the most suitable approaches to address workplace transformation. The Scottish government also tasked the commission with reporting to Parliament, so it has to publish a report every year.

Mr. Rondeau, our expert on the matter, can provide more details.

**Mr. Patrick Rondeau (Union Advisor, Environment and Just Transition, Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec):** Thank you, Mr. Bolduc.

What you said, Mr. Simard, was especially compelling. Before I answer the question about the Crown corporation, I'd like to say a few words in connection with comments made by other members, if I may.

First and foremost, workers are the people we represent. We are doing this for them. We aren't saying that the government should dismantle Canada's economy overnight and put our members out of a job, but they are doomed if we sit around and do nothing. We have to get on with it. I agree wholeheartedly with what you said, Mr. Simard. We have seen too many cases where things were not handled properly; let's not do it again.

Coming back to your question about the Crown corporation, I would say that is why we were a bit surprised with the consultations led by Enerkem. The focus was on two components: defining a just transition and establishing the framework for an advisory body to provide advice to ministers, who would then consider it and possibly act on it.

We believe Canada is ready to take meaningful actions now, and that's why we recommended a body along the lines of a Crown corporation, but it could be another entity—a standing committee, for instance. The Crown corporation structure was one of many possibilities. We simply need some entity or place to support those actions. Before the government passes legislation, we think it's much more important to focus on the process that includes all those who will be impacted.

• (1705)

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We will now move to Mr. Angus for his six minutes.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Thank you.

Thank you so much for coming.

I agree with my colleagues from the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Bloc that this should be worker-centred, so I'm going to do something different. I'm going to try to limit my conversation so that I can hear from the workers, because I have heard all their opinions many times.

Mr. McGowan, I'm going to start with you. The Financial Post of January 22 said that the ongoing exodus of workers from oil and gas is no longer cyclical; it is structural. Even as oil and gas are making record profits right now, they are not reinvesting in workers, and we're seeing continual drops and planned drops in the workforce.

Would you say that the transition is not something theoretical or ideological and that it's a fact that is happening on the ground now?

**Mr. Gil McGowan:** The transition is under way, and it's having profound effects on Alberta communities and the Alberta labour market. As I said in my opening remarks, we have already lost about 40,000 jobs in oil and gas, just in one province, and those jobs are not coming back.

It started out as a response to the collapse in oil prices and the resulting drop in oil and gas-related investment, but oil companies are responding to the lower price environment by automating and reducing their costs. As you said, money is being piled back into the industry, partly by government and, more recently, by profits. Most of our big oil sands companies are recording record profits as a result of the recent spikes in the price of oil, but they are not plowing it back into investment. They are using it to buy stock options, pad their profits and pay down their debts.

It's clear to us in the Alberta labour movement that the oil and gas sector in our province will never be the engine for job creation that it once was, and it's irresponsible for our leaders to wave their hands and suggest that we can go back to the way things were. We're used to a boom-and-bust cycle, but the boom and bust is over. This is a structural transformation, so instead of talking about maintaining the status quo, we should be planning for a future that's going to look very different from our past.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Thank you for that.

I come from northern Ontario and I have lived through a number of unjust transitions. We lost every single silver mining job in a

year in our community. We lost the iron economy in our region in a year, with 4,000 workers gone in Elliot Lake. When those transitions happened, there was no place for those workers to go. The training didn't begin until all the jobs were lost, and it was a disaster, no matter what they said. They hired a lot of consultants.

This is a different situation. It's much more complex. There are a lot more workers upstream, downstream and in construction. I see, though, that right now in clean tech there are 430,000 jobs. Calgary Economic Development suggests there could be 639,200 jobs if—and it's a big if—government invests.

The issue here is the need for this transition and putting investments on the ground so workers can transition into better-paying jobs now. That would send a really clear signal to workers, to regions and to economic development.

I'm concerned that my Liberal colleague, who is the lead on this, doesn't know where these jobs are. That might send a pretty unsure signal to me.

Mr. McGowan, how important is it for the government to start working right now on a plan to start investing in the clean tech opportunities so that we do not see that lag for workers?

**Mr. Gil McGowan:** Clearly, what we really need is a plan.

Mr. Railton talked about the uncertainty that workers are feeling. That uncertainty is real. They know change is happening. They know their jobs are in jeopardy. Some have already lost their jobs.

Instead of just talk and hand-waving and promises about maintaining the status quo when it's clearly gone, we need a plan. We need an industrial plan that is established by governments at all levels—federal, provincial and municipal. We need funding to incent developments, and there's no shortage of opportunities, whether it's clean tech, renewable energy or housing retrofits.

There's no shortage of opportunities for job creation, but it needs a plan, it needs a push and it needs funding. We can't wait for the private sector to do this, because if we do, it will be a disorderly transition, as opposed to an orderly one, and it's workers and communities who will suffer, especially in places such as Alberta that have been reliant on the oil and gas industry for so long. It was a pillar of our past, but it can't be for our future.

• (1710)

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** I'm going to interrupt you here, because we're going to run out of time.

I want to get back to your thoughts on this Marshall plan that you talk about, because I don't see us getting to net zero in any credible way without the skills of the energy sector workers.

We have huge opportunity, yet if all we have is talk and have no coherent plan, we're going to see an unfolding disaster. The environment commissioner talked about a collapse economically, like the cod fishery. When you talk about this Marshall plan, are you talking about an economic investment plan of taking these skills and resources and actually transforming the economy now rather than waiting for this transition to unfold as many of us fear it could unfold?

**Mr. Gil McGowan:** Yes, exactly, and specifically we're talking about introduction of what we're calling a federal just transition transfer, money from the federal government to the provinces, especially oil and gas provinces such as Alberta, to fund a transition in which money would be earmarked for projects that will actually put people to work.

That was the problem we had with the coal transition. People didn't want temporary handouts; they wanted another job. If we have a plan that's funded, that's supported by all levels of government in partnering with business, we can do just that. We can help people move from one sector to another and open up opportunities for people in other sectors as well.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** With that, we're through our first round. It goes quickly. Now we'll go to a shorter round of questions.

First up, we have Mr. Maguire for five minutes.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair; and thanks to all the witnesses today for their testimony as well.

I have a quick question here to start with. On a really cold winter day in Alberta, 1% of the energy comes from wind and solar, so how do we define “just transition”? I mean, 99% has to come from somewhere else. We're not anywhere near being able to meet the needs of provinces across Canada yet, not just Alberta.

We know there's going to be transition. We know there are alternative energy sources coming, yet the environment commissioner even yesterday, in the just transition report or audit, said the federal government “was not prepared to support a just transition to a low-carbon economy”. They're not ready yet.

My question is for the International Union of Operating Engineers gentleman here today. Do you have specific recommendations, other than increased consultation and funding, as to how the federal government can better prepare workers when adapting to these alternative energy sources?

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** Well, you've heard from some of the other witnesses. There were lots of good ideas put forward today, but as to some of the recommendations, clearly we have to identify...

First and foremost, and we've said this time and time again, we need a labour market analysis to clearly understand in a meaningful way what the current skills base is at this point in time. Then you would know the order of magnitude that you have to deal with and who's going to be transitioned from what.

There's a patchwork of LMI information that comes forward and there isn't a comprehensive program. In our opinion, the federal

government should undertake that, because that is a nationwide exercise.

As we transition to some of these other energy sources, the other piece of it is to clearly identify what is going to fit in what region of Canada. We're currently in discussions with the provinces of Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick about how we can deploy a nuclear fleet across the country, which would take up and provide that baseload that would allow renewables to take their rightful place in our society as they evolve and grow. Unless you get that certainty of power baseload that will keep people warm and keep the lights on, renewables won't have the ability to take up that space—

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Sorry about the time here. I appreciate your comment about the baseline being part of the plan that you're looking at having.

You mentioned nuclear energy. We've had some comments on that in previous meetings. How many of your members are directly or indirectly involved in the nuclear energy sector right now?

• (1715)

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** Two major projects are under way right now, among some of the biggest construction projects in all of Canada, the retrofit of Bruce Nuclear Generating Station and Darlington. Bruce is \$13 billion and Darlington is \$12 billion. At some point in time, we're going to have to replace Point Lepreau in New Brunswick, because it's coming to its end of life. There's a really good opportunity there, in our opinion anyway. Our research shows that SMRs could replace that nuclear plant and also be used for some industrial applications—

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** There are a couple of things I'd just like to add here. Sorry for cutting you off.

I'm assuming your members, then, think that nuclear is a safe and clean energy source.

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** Many thousands of them go to work every day to support that industry and retrofit. In the province of Ontario, 60% of the baseload comes from nuclear. When you turn the light switch on in the morning, guess where it's coming from?

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Can you supply the committee with any data that you have on the unionization of workers in the nuclear facilities? There are lots of jobs in building them, but once these facilities are built, can you just give us some data on how many—

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** The entire workforce, both in the construction and the operation of these plants, is unionized 100%.

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** It's the operations as well—

**The Chair:** Sorry, Larry. I'm going to stop the clock here for a second.

I apologize. The vote bells have just started. For our witnesses, this means that we're not allowed to continue without unanimous consent of the committee members.

I would suggest that it would take us just under 11 minutes to finish off this round. Are we good to go?

Yes, there is consent.

We'll still aim to wind up by 5:30 p.m. That'll get us into the bell period.

Larry, it's over to you.

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Thanks.

Do you know of any data in terms of union rates in wind and solar?

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** Unionized rates in wind and solar are low, and the compensation packages in wind and solar are also low. It's within our industry while they're being constructed, because we erect most of the wind turbines and solar farms. That portion of the construction is highly unionized, but it's pretty simple. When you drive by a plant, be it nuclear or a refinery, you'll see lots of cars and trucks parked in front of it. Drive by a solar farm or a wind turbine farm, and guess what? There may be one truck there, and that's the maintenance technician's.

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** That's a good point. We've heard that 96% of the jobs in the nuclear supply chain are made in Canada, so those jobs and the wealth stay here.

Should we take into consideration supply chain challenges and energy security when providing recommendations to the government on this just transition?

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** I think it's in all of our best interests as Canadians to ensure that we have energy security. Clearly, the events in the world—I'm no expert on it, so I won't speak to it—are having major impacts on our citizens in Canada, and energy security clearly should be top of mind, I would think.

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** That's a good point that leads in to my next one—

**The Chair:** No, we're out of time there. It's over the five minutes. We need to jump to Madame Lapointe.

[*Translation*]

Go ahead, Ms. Lapointe. You have five minutes.

[*English*]

**Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair Aldag.

My question is for Mr. Railton.

In Canada, most of our natural resources are geographically situated in northern, remote and rural areas. Given that skilled labour is presently at a crisis point in many sectors, how can we bridge local labour sources with training and employment opportunities, in your opinion?

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** Thank you for the question.

We have a very good example of this. We represent 1,100 workers who work in an iron ore mine called the Mary River on Baffin Island. It's a very remote mine. It is the richest iron ore body that's currently being mined in the world, and actually one of the greenest iron ore mine operations in the world, believe it or not.

To your point, we were very proactive with the company in using our training facilities and bringing people from the north, having them train so they could work in that mine. We drew from the five communities on Baffin Island—Pond Inlet and others. Currently, of

the 1,100 who are working there, 350 are from the communities of Baffin Island. We're very proud of that. We've also trained over 1,100 workers out of the north, the Territory of Nunavut, to support their communities and build their communities—their houses and their roads—and maintain the roads.

Most of it is non-union, but they saw us as the best option with respect to training their workers, because, first and foremost, we had training facilities that provided dormitories where they could come and stay. For a lot of these community members, this is the first time they've been out of their community. We brought their elders to supervise them. We brought their diets.

We are very proud of the number of workers we have trained for the north. We're very skilled at it, and it's a very proud legacy as far as we're concerned.

• (1720)

**Ms. Viviane Lapointe:** Thank you for that.

An equitable labour transformation through Canada's energy transformation is critically important, but I believe what's even more important should be equitable opportunities for those traditionally left out of these opportunities.

Can you tell us what your organization is doing specifically in the mining sector—I am from Sudbury—to grow the representation of indigenous workers in Ontario, who are presently under-represented in the skilled and Red Seal trades, and what you need from government and legislators to create those opportunities?

**Mr. Lionel Railton:** Well, one of the other proud legacies that we point to is that we believe we're playing a very important role on reconciliation. How are we doing that? We're taking those workers....

Listen, the indigenous communities, as most of us would know, are the fastest-growing and youngest population in Canada, and we need those workers, so what are we doing? We're approaching the various different communities and explaining to them the opportunities in the construction sector and the mining sector as to the skill sets they would require.

We are doing two things. One is that we are bringing mobile training directly to their communities, which will give them the necessary life skills that will allow them to work outside of their communities, as a lot of them don't have them, and the other piece of it is that we're upskilling them, once they have the basic life skills, to actually have a meaningful career in the mining sector or the construction sector. We're well advanced in that area.

In my particular case, I can point to an example in Manitoba. Over 40 years of hydro generation and construction of the hydro fleet in Manitoba, my membership in Manitoba now is represented by 40% Métis and indigenous members who openly identify themselves. Forty per cent of my membership in Manitoba is a direct result of some of these applications that we've applied over a long period of time, and they are from those indigenous communities. We're very proud of that legacy as well.

**Ms. Viviane Lapointe:** How much time do I have left, Chair?

**The Chair:** You have a minute.

Is there anybody else?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** I'll go.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We'll stop there.

Next we'll go to Mr. Simard for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Thank you.

My question is for Mr. Bolduc or Mr. Rondeau.

In your opening statement, you talked about the importance of a holistic approach, saying that the government may be moving in the wrong direction by focusing solely on the energy sector.

That reminded me of a reality that is specific to my region, the aluminum sector, in particular. I'm not sure whether you know, but we will soon be producing carbon neutral aluminum using inert anodes. It's project ELYSIS. We know that what generates jobs in the aluminum sector is the need to change anodes frequently. A good chunk of the jobs revolve around that.

One of the things that worries us is the fact that the federal and provincial governments are making major investments in project ELYSIS but providing no guarantees when it comes to jobs.

That makes me wonder whether the FTQ has identified any sectors where the transition will be similar—in other words, they will receive government support but no assurances that jobs will be protected. I'm not sure whether the FTQ has examined that.

**Mr. Patrick Rondeau:** Yes, absolutely. Thank you for your question.

Aluminum production is an excellent example of a sector that requires a holistic approach. The inert anodes you mentioned have to be produced. They do indeed last longer, so jobs will be lost. That's why direct distribution channels are important, meaning that anode production plants should be built close to aluminum smelters. That is just one of many examples of how jobs and skills can be transferred.

We anticipate that oil and gas will be the most impacted sector in the near future, but there are others, including steel plants, cement plants and plastics. Those are all industries currently on our radar, and we are working with our unions in those workplaces. The FTQ is setting up pilot projects in co-operation with employers to find solutions and build the road map for a just transition within those workplaces. It does exist, then.

The European Union is also home to some great initiatives. The United Kingdom, for instance, carried out prospective studies on climate change impacts by industrial area, not by industry. Neither Quebec nor Canada has similar data; if we did, we could plan for the impacts and adapt accordingly. That's another initiative we'd like to see implemented.

The mandate letters of the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion all mention the just transition. Under the approach being advocated, the processes and measures would apply to an industry as a whole, but history has shown us that one size fits all isn't the way to go. Each sector of employment will need its own tailored plan.

• (1725)

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Regrettably, we're out of time.

We're going to Mr. Angus for his final two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Thank you.

I remember that when we lost all of the silver mining jobs in my community, I went to the retraining centre to visit a friend who was a highly skilled miner. There were 30 guys all playing solitaire on a computer. I asked them what they were doing, and he said, "This is how we get trained to be entrepreneurs." If you study the reports, everyone will pat themselves on the back and say that was a good just transition, but that's how it goes down in real life.

Ms. Sairanen, I want to ask you about the issue.

We talk about people and we talk about transition, but we need a worker transition that has a worker focus with organized labour's presence. There's a need to have training, bridging for pensions and funding for relocation written in and guaranteed for people who have to move. Could you speak to the need to have that presence of labour at the table?

**Ms. Sari Sairanen:** Absolutely. Thanks very much.

We're actually going through that today at one of our auto plants in Ingersoll, Ontario. The General Motors CAMI plant is shutting down. The last of the internal combustion engine vehicles that are being built are just coming off the assembly line. They will be shutting down the factory as they retool it, and once it reopens, hopefully by the end of this year, we'll have our first electric vehicles rolling off the assembly line.

How do you prepare the workers for that? There are going to be different skill sets they are going to need as they retool. As well, not all of the workforce is going to be needed. You're going to have to have a clear plan and be honest with the community and the workforce on who is needed. How do you ensure that the ones who are able to or want to retire have monies available to them, or that there's bridging if it needs to take place, as well as ensuring any new skills that will be needed? The collective agreement has to have that kind of language. It is a bipartite agreement that needs to take place.

It's not just those direct jobs. The parts plants are also being affected. You're not going to need all of the parts an internal combustion engine would need. Electric vehicles will need fewer internal parts. They're being affected as well. It's working with those community members, employers and workers as well. It's having that holistic view of how that change is happening.

These are ongoing discussions that take place. You don't do it at the eleventh hour. You build for it and you plan for it so that everyone knows what is coming down the pipeline, so to speak. It is either that blueprint or a road map. Everyone has a right to know how their livelihood is being affected, and then make those appropriate changes. If needed, have government involved with monies to ensure there is a fair and just transition that takes place and that those communities are looked after.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Chair, I know my time has run out, but can I ask about getting some written recommendations? We have lost an hour.

**The Chair:** Yes.

First of all, I want to thank everybody for making themselves available and I apologize for the interruptions that we've had today.

As I mentioned, you are invited to send us up to an additional 10 pages of thoughts based on the conversation we have had today or other thoughts. If you have specific recommendations you would like to send us for the just transition, you are invited to do that as well.

I will take the point of Mr. Angus at the beginning of the meeting. We'll see how our witness list goes for the rest of the study and see if there may be a way of bringing any or all of you back.

I know all of you online. This is our first week of hybrid sessions, and the hands kept going up. I appreciate your engagement. It's always regrettable that the time doesn't allow us to get to each

of you, because I know each of you has so much to offer to this conversation.

Thank you so much for being here today.

• (1730)

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Can I ask for some specific points?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** If we are bringing them back, there may be really specific things that we may not get from anyone else. In the recommendations they send us in writing, I'd like to ask them to consider the concrete mechanisms we need for training that's done by the trades; training and upgrading; the bridging that's necessary for older workers, which includes pensions; the community investment; the relocation services; what plans we have in place to help those who are fly-in, fly-out; and the contract workers who may not be covered by labour but who may be very affected. Those workers could easily fall through the cracks.

If they have any recommendations that we could bring forward to government to say what has to be part of the plan, that would be very helpful to us.

**The Chair:** Sure, Mr. Angus.

**The Chair:** I would say you can go beyond those ideas or suggestions that Mr. Angus has provided.

For our members, we will be adjourning after this. We're going to be back on Tuesday for an hour on this study, and then we'll be continuing in camera with the draft report on the emissions reductions fund. When the notice goes out for that, all of the draft recommendations will be sent to you, so you'll have them, and we can come prepared and ready to go with the discussion on recommendations.

On the 4th we have a panel of indigenous representatives. I think we have five witnesses lined up so far for next Wednesday.

With that, we're adjourned today.







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