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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.)): Good afternoon, everyone. It's my pleasure to call this meeting to order. I'd like to welcome all of you to meeting number 31 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format pursuant to the House order of January 25, 2021. The proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website. The webcast will always show the person speaking rather than the entirety of the committee.

To ensure an orderly meeting, there are a few points I'd like to make.

First off, members and witnesses may speak in the official language of your choice. Interpretation services are available for this meeting. You have the choice at the bottom of your screen of floor, English or French.

For members participating in person, proceed as you usually would when the committee is meeting in person in a committee room. Keep in mind the directives from the Board of Internal Economy regarding masking and health protocols.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. If you are on the video conference, please click on the microphone icon to unmute yourselves. For those in the room, your microphone will be controlled by the proceedings and verification officer as normal.

I remind you that all comments by members and witnesses should be addressed through the chair. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute. With regard to a speaking list, the committee clerk and I will do our very best to maintain the order of speaking for all members, whether they are participating virtually or in person.

Members, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on October 29, 2020, the committee will now continue its study of targeted infrastructure investments.

I would now like to welcome and introduce our witnesses for today. First, from the City of Corner Brook, we have Mayor Jim Parsons. From the City of Sept-Îles, we have Mayor Réjean Porlier. From the Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority, we have Ian Hamilton, president and chief executive officer. Finally, from the Insurance

Bureau of Canada, we have Craig Stewart, vice-president, federal affairs.

With that, I am going to start off with Mayor Parsons.

Mayor Parsons, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Jim Parsons (Mayor, City of Corner Brook): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the committee for providing me with the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of the people of Corner Brook.

Federal infrastructure funding is of immense importance to our community. Before I speak about the specifics of our situation as a municipality, I would like to mention one notable, recent project in our community.

Corner Brook was founded on the development of our pulp and paper mill almost 100 years ago, and we are now a modern government services centre for the west coast of Newfoundland, with a campus of Memorial University and a burgeoning tourism sector. That said, our paper mill is still uniquely important to our community and our regional economy.

We have a deep-water port here in the city. For many years, it was underutilized for industrial purposes, but two years ago we were able to secure funding through the national trade corridors fund to purchase container-handling equipment, including a new crane. This enabled us to attract a new international container service to the port, which would have our mill as an anchor tenant.

When COVID-19 hit last spring, the newsprint market, of course, in the U.S. disappeared almost overnight. This was a disaster for our mill. However, our investment in our port saved the day. Container service commenced in May 2020, allowing our mill to reach new markets, support a more diversified client base and reduce shipping costs overall. Our mill prevailed against the additional impacts of COVID-19, outsurviving many global competitors. This success is largely due to a relatively small \$5.5-million investment from the federal government, and I would like to thank MP Gudit Hutchings for her support on this file.

As a city of approximately 20,000 people, we are able to sustain our operations through responsible fiscal management. However, we rely on federal and provincial partners for help when it comes to the development and maintenance of our extensive municipal infrastructure.

Each year we fund our infrastructure development primarily through the following sources: provincial, multi-year capital funding; the gas tax, of course; the ICIP; and ad hoc funds through Infrastructure Canada like the new Canada healthy communities initiative and through programs through the ACOA and the FCM.

We typically use our multi-year, provincial funding and our gas tax funding on our “must have” or “can't wait” projects, like water and sewer upgrades, and road investment and repair. ICIP funds and other funds are used typically for bigger projects or “nice to have” projects. Since we can't count on any specific project getting funded through those latter streams, we either have to tolerate potential delays on those projects or have backup funding.

We have experienced a few challenges with the ICIP that I would like to inform you about. As it is project-based, there is little predictability as to which projects get funded. The bilateral nature of the funding has led to some misunderstandings on eligible costs between the province and the federal government at Infrastructure Canada. Finally, the ICIP seems to be unable to accommodate many large-scale projects within the overall funding categories. For example, we are currently pursuing a \$90-million waste-water treatment facility, and at the current annual allocations, this project, should it get funded, would exhaust the entire annual green-infrastructure ICIP allocation for the province. Therefore, it's unlikely to get funded.

We would like to make a couple of recommendations when it comes to any federal funding. Specifically, we would like the government enhance the flexible and predictable models of infrastructure funding for municipalities. We were really glad to see another proposal to double the gas tax this year. As a regional centre, per-capita funding mightn't be the most progressive funding model—we sustain more infrastructure on a per-capita basis—but we would be happy to tolerate that minor inequity for the flexibility and predictability that the gas tax model affords a mature, responsible municipality like ours.

Also, we would like to see more highly targeted, large-scale funding for regional priority projects. I mentioned waste-water treatment. If this is, indeed, a priority for the federal government, we would like to see a clear funding path. We would gladly do our share to build reserves and would incur debt, if it is necessary, as long as we can get a commitment and a clear path forward from our federal and provincial partners.

Thank you very much.

• (1540)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Well done.

We are now going to move on to Mayor Porlier.

Mr. Mayor, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Porlier (Mayor, City of Sept-Îles): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for having me once again.

This time I hope my remarks, which concern the dynamic use of Canada's territory, will lead to more discussion between us.

I am the mayor of Sept-Îles, an eastern Quebec city located near the centre of the province, approximately 1,000 kilometers from Montreal on one side and 1,000 kilometers from Blanc-Sablon on the other. Blanc-Sablon is near the home of my friend, Mr. Parsons, who just spoke.

Allow me to explain why I want to talk to you about dynamic use. There are many villages and towns between my home and Mr. Parsons', and their populations are slowly but surely declining. And you can understand why. Just imagine, it's 2021, and highway 138, the only road on the North Shore, still isn't finished. It's been promised to us for decades. Young people in those towns may be waiting for their yearly outing, but the transportation just isn't there. Do you think these young people, who are going away to study somewhere else, want to return to their villages? The answer, of course, is no. Those villages are increasingly isolated and in decline. Our infrastructure needs to be upgraded so we can use the territory in a dynamic rather than resilient manner, the way it is now, as we wait for our villages to shut down. How can we claim that a territory, this big, beautiful territory, that we're using in a resilient manner, is legitimate? I imagine the same is true in the so-called more remote areas across Canada.

The government is starting to consider establishing an economic corridor between Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador. For a long time, the talk was solely about isolated communities, and it was understood that wasn't good enough. Now the whole economic dynamic has been added to the picture. Everyone hopes the road is completed someday. We hope a government will have the vision to complete it, to open the economic corridor so people can come and go, which may encourage them to stay in their towns.

There's also talk about aviation. I think the territory is completely disorganized, and aviation in Quebec, generally speaking, is as well. Current ticket prices are prohibitive, and an enormous amount of work is being done to establish an aviation network. The Institut de recherche en économie contemporaine, IRÉC, conducted a study on the subject and concluded that we had to be innovative, that we had to take off our blinders and try to look at the situation from a different angle. That's more or less the message I wanted to convey to you today, that we should try to consider the dynamic use of our territory in a new way. According to the study findings, we should look to the cooperatives, where the people acquire ownership of the modes of transportation and therefore work to preserve them.

As you can see, the challenges are considerable. While we neglect these territories everywhere, we invest billions and billions of dollars to expand road networks in the major cities. I think that's counterproductive, particularly in view of the fight against climate change. As motor vehicle fleets significantly expand, we can't even complete a single road to the other side of our region, where our natural resources are exploited.

My message for you today is that we must not wait for crises like the current pandemic to happen. The way to restart the economy in times of crisis is often to focus on infrastructure. So let's at least meet the needs of the most remote communities.

Sept-Îles is a regional hub with a population of approximately 26,000 inhabitants. If none of the towns east of that hub are revitalized, we will all suffer the consequences. Sept-Îles is a hub, but it receives less and less support. Consequently, we need a vision.

• (1545)

I hope that, in the course of your proceedings, you will adopt a vision for the development of the Canadian territory as a whole because I think we must at least meet essential transportation needs, particularly in air and ground transportation. I hope you will pay attention to that.

There's also the communications component, which is increasingly under discussion. We obviously have to improve high-speed Internet access. Efforts are being made to do so, which will enable people to work remotely from virtually anywhere. We also have to make it easier for people to come and go so they no longer feel isolated, even if they live in very remote places.

That's my essential message today. I hope we can discuss it.

Thank you for your attention.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Well done.

We will move now to the Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority.

Mr. Hamilton, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Ian Hamilton (President and Chief Executive Officer, Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority): Thank you very much for having me, and good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the committee.

It is my pleasure to be invited today to discuss the power of targeted infrastructure investments to build sustainable, resilient supply chains and deliver prosperity.

The Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority or HOPA Ports, as we know ourselves now, is the largest integrated port network on the Great Lakes, with port and marine facilities in Hamilton, Oshawa and now Niagara. Our goals are to facilitate international trade, improve transportation efficiency in Ontario, reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, and serve the Ontario industries that rely on the multimodal transportation network that we provide.

In Ontario, we don't necessarily think of ourselves as a marine province, but we have 10,000 kilometres of Great Lakes shoreline and access to a marine highway in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence

that connects the North American industrial heartland to any market around the world.

Our maritime character has an advantage of geography that perhaps we have come to take for granted, but in doing so we could miss out on its benefits, especially the economic prosperity that it can deliver.

At HOPA Ports we have been working to leverage a valuable combination of strategic location, transportation infrastructure and industrial land in Hamilton's and Oshawa's working waterfronts, successfully attracting more than \$350 million in investment in the past decade, supporting 2,100 jobs on site, and handling goods worth \$3 billion connected to 38,000 jobs in the province of Ontario. Throughout southern Ontario, by beginning to see these assets as part of an integrated network we can start to explore innovative ideas that serve our growing region.

We should be thinking of how to use marine highways to reduce congestion on our clogged highways, by consolidating truck traffic onto short-sea shipping alternatives or by staging construction materials for urban waterfront development projects elsewhere in the region and delivering these materials by barge on a just-in-time basis.

We need to ensure that we are continuing to foster a positive environment for manufacturing, food processing and construction materials—sectors that are among the most valuable economic engines for our region.

As we have seen in Hamilton and Oshawa, there is enormous demand for transportation-intensive industrial land for these types of businesses, and we're currently working to activate more valuable industrial land along the Welland Canal, specifically in Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne, to allow for the attraction of new industry and jobs in the region.

It is part of our mandate and responsibility, as Ontario's largest port authority, to facilitate trade in our region. We believe the best way to accomplish this is to begin to take a more regional perspective and to tap into Ontario's rich marine heritage to help deliver a prosperous future. One way to move forward on our mandate is to ensure responsible investment in infrastructure that has the greatest return for the Canadian economy.

We were immensely pleased to see the recent federal budget renew the national trade corridors fund, a highly successful and well-administered program. The NTCF has been a vehicle for delivering targeted economic stimulus through infrastructure. Now more than ever, the NTCF can be used to support cost-effective, energy-efficient supply chains that play a critical role in Canada's economic recovery.

In 2018, the predecessor Hamilton Port Authority received an investment of \$17.7 million through the NTCF program. We matched that fund and more, and put in a total of \$45 million. Since that time, that fund has actually been able to attract a further \$50 million in third-party investment onto our property.

In looking ahead to the design and objectives of this round of the NTCF program, we would highlight the integrated nature of trade within the Great Lakes region.

We would encourage the renewed program to consider that the functions of the Great Lakes region are different from those of the coastal trade gateways. Canada-U.S. bilateral trade throughout the Great Lakes is valued at more than \$6 trillion annually. Especially in southern Ontario, Canada's manufacturing heartland, imports of raw materials are essential for the downstream competitiveness of Canadian industries.

The GTHA is the fastest-growing region in North America, with a population due to surpass eight million. Meanwhile, the region suffers from some of North America's worst road congestion, costing an estimated \$6 billion per year. We would encourage the NTCF program to emphasize increasing Canada-U.S. trade, including imports tied to domestic industrial supply chains such as those for manufacturing and construction, which will be central to economic recovery and employment.

There is a unique opportunity to reduce greenhouse gases and congestion resulting from truck transportation, through the development of short-sea shipping opportunities. Better use of the marine mode would reduce trucks on the provinces's highways, decrease road congestion, cut capital requirements for expanded roadways and decrease greenhouse gas emissions. Shipping goods by water is far more energy efficient and less costly than land-based modes. A single vessel of 30,000 tonnes of cargo can replace close to 1,000 trucks.

- (1550)

Investing in marine transportation in the Great Lakes will advance Canada's blue economy strategy, with the potential to spur growth across the board in fishing, marine transportation, shipbuilding, energy, tourism and recreation.

The expansion of trade capacity at Canada's Great Lakes ports is essential to the growth and competitiveness of the agri-food, construction and manufacturing sectors. In order to meet all these demands, we must begin making better use of our marine capacity. Doing so would represent a major step forward to delivering benefits for Canadian trade, environment and local economies.

At HOPA Ports, we are ready now to start making the investments Canada needs to emerge stronger from the pandemic. We have identified shovel-ready infrastructure improvements that

would maximize immediate impact in our regional economies while also delivering long-term benefit to Canada's supply chains.

We look forward to working with you towards a more sustainable, resilient and prosperous Canada that makes the most of its maritime transportation infrastructure, and in particular, those on the Great Lakes.

Again, thank you very much for the opportunity to address the committee. I'd be pleased to answer any questions when they come up.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. That was well done.

We're now going to move on to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, with Mr. Craig Stewart, vice-president of federal affairs.

Mr. Stewart, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Craig Stewart (Vice-President, Federal Affairs, Insurance Bureau of Canada): Thank you, Honourable Chair.

Good afternoon and thank you, committee members, for the invitation today.

I coordinate work on disaster preparedness and climate change at the Insurance Bureau of Canada or IBC—your home, car and business insurers. As an industry, we are particularly interested in strengthening resilience among businesses and households in the face of the increasing impact of climate change in Canada.

Why is infrastructure important for climate resilience? Canada is warming at twice the rate of much of the rest of the world due to climate change. For insurers, this is a material financial threat. Canada's insured losses due to severe weather have quadrupled, from \$422 million annually before 2008 to \$1.9 billion, on average, since. Our problem is your problem. In 2019, Lloyd's of London left the Canadian commercial insurance market, due in part to these significant severe weather losses. Businesses like condominium boards and tourism operators couldn't find affordable insurance after Lloyd's left the market.

Climate resilience is defined as the ability of a community to absorb future stress from floods, windstorms or wildfires while continuing to function. Infrastructure such as stormwater system upgrades, flood diversion channels or natural features such as wetlands are key to introducing resilience.

The Government of Canada has taken some important steps to address this escalating climate risk. From funding resilience retrofits through the green and inclusive community buildings program, to partnering with us to develop a national high-risk flood insurance program, early work is under way.

Public Safety Canada is leading a national risk profile to assess which communities across Canada are most exposed to flood, wild-fire and earthquake risk. Infrastructure Canada has launched a national infrastructure assessment, which considers how natural disasters such as floods and fires impact infrastructure. It also considers how to mitigate future climate risks through the deployment of defensive infrastructure, including where nature may play a role. In combination, these two efforts should provide the detail needed to prioritize future investments to lower Canadian risk.

Much more needs to be done. The investments announced are insufficient. In 2017, the government launched the \$2-billion disaster mitigation and adaptation fund—DMAF—which was quickly over-committed. Budget 2021 announced a \$1.4-billion extension of that program over 11 years. That number is still inadequate to protect Canadian communities. To put that into context, we paid out more than \$1.4 billion in losses from a 20-minute hailstorm in Calgary last June.

The Government of Canada is finally taking the future risks of climate change seriously. However, we are facing escalating climate risk right now. Climate adaptation deserves the same degree of all-hands-on-deck rigour to design the policies and programs that will actually protect Canadians today.

Here are our recommendations for your committee report.

First, Canada needs a national climate adaptation strategy that sets time-bound targets for protecting Canadians. For example, that strategy could target protecting 30% of high-risk Canadian homes and businesses from flooding by 2030. That strategy should centre on the national risk profile. The national infrastructure assessment should explicitly link to it and identify future programming, like an expanded DMAF and a resilient home retrofit program that addresses those goals for communities at risk.

Second, governments investments can't do it all. Private capital is essential to building resilience, yet we spend a lot of time in this country debating how to price carbon and almost no time pricing climate risk. We lack the valuation framework and tools needed to price the resilience value of infrastructure and to convert this into revenue-generating financial instruments. Canada has now joined Australia and the U.K. in the Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment—CCRI—a public-private collaboration to develop the valuation frameworks needed to deploy private capital. Infrastructure Canada should be aggressively positioning this country to benefit from this work.

Finally, the Canada Infrastructure Bank should play a role in this policy development with CCRI. Currently, the CIB has not invested a dime on climate adaptation—and they won't until resilience projects can earn revenue. They should engage in demonstration pilots that build systemic resilience in Canada.

In conclusion, we're finally playing offence on climate change by aggressively lowering emissions. However, we also need to play defence to protect Canadians from the severe weather we are already experiencing. Targeted infrastructure investments from the public and private sectors must be foundational to our resilience game plan.

Thank you.

• (1555)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stewart. You raised some great points.

To all of the witnesses, well done. On behalf of the committee, I very much appreciate the valuable time you've taken today to be with us on this very important subject matter.

With that, we will go to our first round of six minutes for each recognized party. We will start with the Conservative Party.

Mr. Scheer, you have the floor for six minutes.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to echo what the chair said about the very interesting presentations by our witnesses today. We heard a lot of different aspects of Canada's infrastructure needs addressed by a very interesting group of witnesses.

I particularly liked the mention of the idea of these trade corridors. This was something that of course the previous Conservative government really championed with the Asia-Pacific corridor. Many communities throughout Canada were able to upgrade everything from roads to rail yards to port facilities in order to help deal with some of the logistics challenges that prevented Canadian companies from accessing Asian markets. That was a very successful corridor program. It's nice when you see those types of legacy projects continue and benefit diverse communities, from Newfoundland all the way to British Columbia.

I want to touch on that a little bit with the representatives from the port authorities in Corner Brook and Hamilton-Oshawa. Obviously, hard assets are a huge benefit to being able to expand our trading opportunities and export more. I think I heard the gentleman from Corner Brook talk about the ability to buy a crane. It's easy to understand how that benefits and enables the ability to expand operations. Sometimes, though, government rules and regulations get in the way of some of the expansion of some of the operations.

I want to ask a question specifically about cabotage and your view of the current rules relating to cabotage here in Canada and the ability for ships bringing goods to Canada to stop at multiple points of entry. We have two different ports here, two different parts of the country, and I'd love to hear your different perspectives on the way that rule affects your ability to grow and expand.

• (1600)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Scheer.

We'll start off with Mr. Hamilton. Then I'll move over to the mayor from Corner Brook.

Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Ian Hamilton: Thanks very much.

I guess the answer is a bit like my daughter's profile: It's complicated. I think the opportunity with cabotage, obviously, is that part of it was originally designed to protect a domestic fleet and to protect a domestic shipbuilding industry. As a result of that, we've ended with a large shipping community in Canada that has really been geared up to serving the Canadian market. If you were to abandon the cabotage rules, then I think there would have to be some consideration towards how they can manage and how they can work with their workforces, being obligated to use existing union workforces.

I say all of that as a preface to my answer, because I think there would have to be some consideration for those domestic operators today if it were to be opened up. However, the opportunities to actually opening it up I think are quite large. You would bring in a lot more competitiveness and you'd bring in a lot more capacity for ships coming into the system. I think when you look at jurisdictions like Europe, where these cabotage rules don't exist, you see how much they use short-sea shipping and smaller vessels to transport goods and how effective it can be.

There is a real opportunity to it in creating more capacity and more competitiveness, but I will acknowledge, for all of our ship-owning friends in Canada, that there has to be some recognition of the impact it would have on their existing operations.

The Chair: Mayor Parsons.

Mr. Jim Parsons: Thank you.

I believe Mr. Hamilton would have a lot more expertise in this regard. I sit on our port corporation board by virtue of my office as mayor.

We have an international container freight service here. In the past we have had a domestic shipper as well. Of course, with our mill we largely export to international markets. We have opportunities for our fisheries and fishing industry, of course, but we are somewhat limited by those rules.

Again, on the implications to the overall shipping industry, I think I'd defer to someone like Mr. Hamilton. From our perspective, it does limit somewhat what we can do and how we can support our local regional economy.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: I'll try to very briefly get to our two mayors.

Like you, we get very frustrated when we hear stories of the billions of dollars that go lapsing in government programs or the fact that the Canadian Infrastructure Bank hasn't yet been able to complete a single project and it's supposed to be a signature government program. We've heard your recommendations, but I just want to give you one more opportunity to talk about what you're looking for in terms of flexibility for local areas.

What we've heard in previous meetings is that sometimes, when the criteria get set here in Ottawa, there are a lot of great projects

that are getting filtered out because they don't quite fit in to what the government in Ottawa has set. What would you like to see in terms of flexibility to empower local decision-making?

Mr. Jim Parsons: Thank you.

As I mentioned, it's the flexibility. We've seen funding like the gas tax, which has been very helpful. Because we are a mature professional organization we have a lot of accountability and a lot of ability to decide what's best for our municipality. From bilateral funding like ICIP, we've actually seen more flexibility from Infrastructure Canada than we have through our provincial government. Sometimes there are disagreements about the eligible costs and things like that, and we get a little hung up.

As I mentioned also, the funding categories that are used sometimes limit how much can be done. Green infrastructure here in Newfoundland amounts to roughly \$30 million a year in the federal contribution perspective. Our single project, a \$90-million water treatment facility, would take up that entire allotment for a year. There's a need for flexibility at both the provincial level and at the municipal level. Municipalities are becoming more independent and more responsible, and I think we should be allowed to, as much as possible, set our own course.

• (1605)

The Chair: Mayor Porlier, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Porlier: I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Parsons that most expenditures are incurred in the municipalities. We're on the ground, but it takes time and negotiation to get funding. The project has often started by the time funding is paid out. There should definitely be a way to simplify the process.

Allow me to add a comment on cabotage, which is underutilized in Quebec but would be a big help. Studies show that we would save a lot of money on road maintenance if we used cabotage more. We should introduce incentives to encourage the practice. Once established, it will become increasingly independent. We should really establish a cabotage tradition in Quebec.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mayor Porlier. Thank you, Mayor Parsons, as well as Mr. Scheer.

We're now going to move on to the Liberal Party. We have Mr. Fillmore.

Mr. Fillmore, you're up for six minutes.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Thanks, Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses for giving us their time and expertise. There's a wonderful diversity of experience here this evening.

Mayor Parsons, I was glad to hear of the programs that you've been able to access in Corner Brook, and I hope that you'll continue to avail yourself of them. I was particularly glad to hear you give a shout-out to the CHCI program, and I hope that it lands well in your neck of the woods.

Mr. Stewart, on your definition of resiliency, thank you for putting that on the record with this committee, with resiliency being the ability of infrastructure to withstand future challenges from climate change and adapt to future risks. Thank you for that.

It's wonderful to hear your thoughts on the green and inclusive community building fund that we've released, and your thoughts on DMAF as well, and the need to continue paying attention to disaster mitigation. Thank you for that.

I would like to direct my question, however, to Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton, I'm sure the port community is actually quite small in Canada. You've probably visited the Halifax port and you know that we, like the HOPA ports, are in urban areas. When a truck has to leave the port, it has to rumble through residential neighbourhoods, the central business district, main streets, shopping districts and so forth. I was very glad to hear you talking about the interest in consolidating loads and reducing the number of trucks, which is a positive in so many ways, in terms of GHG reductions and quality of life in the downtown. It even comes down to damage to the historic heritage buildings that we have in our downtown, and that may be the same where you are as well.

I wonder if you could tell us a little bit more about the plans you have to reduce truck traffic, the way the trade corridors fund or other funds might help you, and what you're looking for there, if you would.

Thank you.

Mr. Ian Hamilton: There are a number of ways to do it. Working with your individual municipalities to ensure the following of the municipal truck routes is an essential item. I think Montreal is doing it, we're doing it and Vancouver is doing it. We were using RFID technology to track trucks to see where they were actually routed through the downtown corridors and to try to educate and ensure that the trucks were following the prescribed routes. That's the obvious thing.

For the bigger picture, what we're really excited about is the Canadian centre on transportation data, and the open data and the work that's currently going on between goods moved, transparency and freight visibility. We believe there hasn't been enough work done in Canada to create the databases of information so that we can truly understand where the capacity exists. It can be capacity in a system, as in the Great Lakes on the marine side of it, but it could also be capacity in terms of space inside of a truck and how we work to maximize utilization of that space and reduce the volumes. I know it's right in its infancy, but we really think the CCTD is a great initiative.

Port authorities across the country can really help in collecting and helping to do the analytics on that data, with a goal to try to maximize the utilization of the existing capacity, which would ultimately reduce the truck volumes. By using data to find more sus-

tainable supply chains, we believe there are opportunities to create short-sea shipping services that could take trucks off the most congested parts of the road.

Data is the new currency. Canada has worked very much in silos, based on the different modes. It's time now to integrate those silos and build a database that allows us to look at transportation in terms of integration between the modes rather than three individual silos. There are a couple of hard initiatives, but the data work that's being done is phenomenal.

• (1610)

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Thank you, Mr. Hamilton.

To hear you talk about data, you remind me very much of the CEO of the Halifax Port Authority, Captain Allan Gray, who's very much focused on data and bringing a smart view to our port operation here as well.

If there's a moment left, I wonder if I might change the topic and ask you about greening the energy used in the ships themselves. Canada has a hydrogen strategy that's emerging. Is there any discussion at all in HOPA about facilitating a move to greener fuels?

Mr. Ian Hamilton: Last year, in Hamilton, we actually fuelled the first LNG vessel that was ever fuelled on the Great Lakes. We think hydrogen is an absolutely fantastic technology, although it's just not ready for the market yet.

As to anything we can do, we're offering incentives in terms of access to our docks, as well as free storage space—in that situation—for the LNG before it was loaded onto the vessels. We're doing whatever we can to try to encourage the shipping line to use greener technologies. I think it's Desgagnés that has moved a lot of its vessels to LNG.

LNG arguably might only be a stop gap until a better technology like hydrogen comes to commercial use, but we believe the 30% reduction that LNG can provide is a great step forward, even if it might not be the *crème de la crème* that will arrive to us in the future.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hamilton, and thank you, Mr. Fillmore.

We're now going to move on to Mr. Barsalou-Duval from the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have the floor for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Porlier, earlier in your opening remarks, you cited the consequences for some towns of not being connected by road. When young people go away to study, many of them never return.

Knowing that, why do you think highway 138 has never been finished?

Mr. Réjean Porlier: It's unfortunate, but in some ways it's the same old story; it's the chicken and the egg.

There aren't many of us on the North Shore. The total population of the region is approximately 90,000 or 91,000 inhabitants. It's the second largest Quebec region. The coastline is 1,200 kilometers long. Consequently, it's hard for us to make our voices heard, which is why it's difficult to attract the investment needed to complete the highway. In addition, since the road's unfinished, there are fewer and fewer of us. I'm really convinced of that. Once people manage to leave their isolated and barely accessible villages, they naturally don't really feel like going back.

When it comes to investment, it's really a matter of will, a true uphill battle. During every election campaign for decades now, politicians have promised to complete the road to encourage people to occupy the region. There's even a joke about it. One of Quebec's leaders, Premier René Lévesque, once told a young girl that the road would be finished by the time she grew up. She stopped growing and is still a young girl.

We're eager to see the highway completed. It's unfortunate, but the reality is that it's actually a matter of political power. We don't carry a lot of weight when it comes to making decisions about where investments are made. So I think we're being deprived of enormous potential. We're slowly but surely seeing towns shut down. I think there are fewer and fewer of us across the region as a whole.

● (1615)

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I'm going to continue along the same lines. This has an impact on the vitality of those towns because the communities are isolated that way. However, building a land link to all those towns would very likely generate economic benefits. There's talk, for example, of a road link between Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador.

What benefits would it generate if it were built?

Mr. Réjean Porlier: The benefits would be enormous, not only for Quebec, but for Newfoundland and Labrador as well. I think the road would provide much quicker access to certain places, depending on it's starting point.

Trade between Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador would increase and benefit the tourism and other industries. This region is poorly known and has enormous tourism potential. That's increasingly recognized.

This miserable pandemic has had one positive the effect: the crisis has encouraged people to explore their region and to visit it more and more. At some point, however, they get to the end of the road and have to turn around.

Completing the link to Newfoundland and Labrador can't be just a dream. It has to be built soon.

Finishing the road will also provide access to the region's natural resources. This vast territory has so much to offer and is largely unexplored.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: You said the pandemic has encouraged us to explore our region. Last year, I had the opportunity to do that for the first time. I drove to the end of highway 138. Other people may also have a chance to do it one day. I was bitterly disappointed to see that the road stopped. I got to the end and felt I hadn't seen everything. I knew there were still things to see. It's sad for Quebecers not to have access to their own region.

How is this situation perceived on the North Shore?

From what I understand, this is the main challenge you face right now. Is there a consensus on it? How much popular support is there for the project? What do people think of it?

Mr. Réjean Porlier: Although it's very hard to reach a consensus on a large region such as ours, there's a consensus on the issue among the regional population and even among the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We met with mayors from Newfoundland and Labrador and the federal minister of the time in Sept-Îles. We also travelled to Ottawa with representatives of the indigenous communities. That was a first.

We discussed climate change at length and haven't finished those talks. One of the issues that has to be addressed is the fact that the boat that provides the marine link for the towns on the river is finding it increasingly difficult to land during the navigation season. It's not unusual for it to continue on without stopping at the places where it should land to deliver food, for example. That's one of our problems. So people hope the road will be completed.

There's also the health issue. When weather grounds aircraft and prevents boats from sailing and a medical emergency occurs, the result is a real challenge for these people. So we understand why they don't want to live in the region.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I'm going to ask one final question, since I see I don't have much time left.

I know the North Shore was affected by the cuts Air Canada made to its regional routes.

What do you think of the agreement reached between the government and Air Canada?

Mr. Réjean Porlier: Competition declines every time Air Canada is significantly subsidized. We've experienced it. So that's my biggest fear. Air Canada has a virtual monopoly in Quebec.

We're setting up a cooperative that will provide a minimum fee schedule, and that will belong to us. We know this is possible with larger aircraft such as the Q400s. We'll finally have a say in the development of aviation in Quebec, particularly in the regions.

In our view, Air Canada's record of service to citizens isn't all positive, and that's unfortunate. Its prices are prohibitive. I've seen a one-way ticket from Sept-Îles to Quebec City sold for \$1,400. It's less than a two-hour flight. It's ridiculous, but that's the way it is. So these airlines are underused because their prices are prohibitive. Some people drive their cars in the dead of winter to get medical care in Quebec City, where the major centres are, since they can't take a flight because prices are too high.

• (1620)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and thank you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

We're now going to move on to the NDP and Mr. Bachrach.

You have the floor for six minutes.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for your presentations. I'd like to continue with Mayor Porlier.

It's really good to hear your testimony. You represent a very rural region that I imagine is probably similar to some parts of northwest B.C.—very small communities with difficult transportation connections and other aspects of remoteness that impact the quality of life in those places.

Could you describe for me what the current state of affairs in your region is when it comes to rural connectivity and access of rural residents to broadband Internet?

[Translation]

Mr. Réjean Porlier: A special effort has been made in recent years. Naturally, even programs that come from Ottawa are, in many instances, administered by Quebec City, and they've finally understood that the region has to be served. We're seeing efforts being made to do that. Commitments have even been made and timelines set for communities in all Quebec regions to get adequate bandwidth access. I'm talking about high-speed Internet access.

We're seeing light at the end of the tunnel. This is definitely one of the factors that will ultimately help people stay and work their community.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Thank you, Mayor Porlier.

Following up on that, one of the things I think we see across Canada is that the model for building access to broadband in rural areas involves partnering with the private sector, and then the private sector goes out and tries to put together a business case. Usually the most sparsely populated areas are left out or they're at the end of the line when it comes to service.

Do you think the current model, which relies on the private sector and the existence of a profitable business case, is adequate for rural areas such as the one in your region?

[Translation]

Mr. Réjean Porlier: I think you've asked an important question. Private companies are in business to make profits, whether in this sector or elsewhere, even in aviation. So they'll go where the money is, which is where populations are concentrated.

The government naturally has to help serve places where it's less profitable to do so, but we can't wind up with prohibitive prices either, as I said earlier, because that's what happens when you let the free market solve the problem. People who have access to the service—that is, if they can even get access—will pay impossible prices. Only a few will get access. There has to be assistance from all levels of government.

Internet access is an essential need in 2021. Everyone should have access to the Internet on the same conditions, and those conditions depend on access. Access makes everything else possible, including development. I'm one of the many who think you need only put development tools in place. Once that's done, we'll do the rest. Give us a minimum level of resources, whether it be in transportation, data or digital access, then watch us develop. We can be very imaginative, but the bare minimum condition is that prices must be affordable for citizens across the region.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mayor Porlier, what you mentioned about affordability is very interesting. What we have seen with the federal government is that pretty much their sole strategy for ensuring the affordability of broadband is competition. In my estimation, there are many parts of rural Canada where there are so few customers that they can only support one service provider. There is always a monopoly in those areas.

Do you feel that the government's current strategy for driving affordability through competition is going to serve rural areas adequately?

• (1625)

[Translation]

Mr. Réjean Porlier: You're right to bring up competition. There are places where it's not possible as a result of the number of people who live there. That has to be acknowledged. However, we shouldn't have to subsidize excessive costs either.

Somewhat the same model applies in aviation. We subsidize the assistance provided to purchase an airline ticket, but we think ticket prices are too high in many cases. What we do is subsidize private business rather than take all that money to set up a better system.

I agree with you that it's a matter of strategy. You have to establish a strategy that's designed, not to enrich a business that's serving a non-viable market, but to lay the necessary groundwork to provide service access to everyone. There's a price to pay, but I think that will provide us with a better service.

Airline ticket prices are an excellent example. It makes no sense to sell an airline ticket for \$1,200. That's an entirely unreasonable price. If I subsidize ticket purchases, all I'm doing is taking the money and giving it back to the airline. Consider the cooperative example I mentioned earlier. According to the proposed fare schedule, a round-trip ticket from Sept-Îles to Quebec City will cost \$318, including tax, for a flight on a Q400 because that's a good aircraft. The entire difference between \$318 and \$1,200 for a round-trip ticket will go directly to the wrong place.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Thank you, Mr. Bachrach.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We're now going to move on to our second round, starting with the Conservatives for five minutes.

Ms. Kusie, you have the floor.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much to all our witnesses who are here today.

I'm going to continue down the Liberal line of questioning of my colleague MP Fillmore in regard to ports. I really liked what he was talking about in that conversation about data and freight visibility. That was very encouraging to me. Certainly many of the stakeholders I've talked to have indicated the lack of a supply chain map within our nation clearly identifying all modes and how they interrelate to each other, and secondly, the lack of transparency as to data. This was something that I mentioned in my speech regarding the port of Montreal discussion that we had last week.

Building on that, one of the other items I talked about in my port of Montreal speech was the concern that many ports have in terms of the lack of capacity and the infrastructure that would be required, and a necessity to meet the demands of capacity going into the future.

To Mr. Hamilton, I would ask if he has any concerns in regard to future capacity constraints for his port, please.

Mr. Ian Hamilton: Specifically for Hamilton and Oshawa, we certainly feel the constraints now and we're struggling to meet demand, which is why we're looking at other opportunities along the Welland Canal in Niagara.

Although we don't do too many containers, container volumes generally grow at about double what GDP grows at. It's sort of a rule of thumb. You can see that there is going to be continuing demand for imported container volumes, which puts increased capacity issues onto particularly the gateway ports, but we see it inside the interior ports as well.

To answer your question, yes, we do see capacity issues. The other area that we see is what we could call "gentrification". So many cities were built around the ports because they were there. In a lot of ways, sometimes the city has outgrown the port and now there's continual pressure. You see it in Hamilton, you see it in Toronto and you see it certainly in Vancouver, where the residents

are wishing the port wasn't there. It's very important that we start to look at ports outside the urban boundaries.

Again, this is why we're looking into some of the more rural areas of the Niagara Peninsula to see opportunities to expand.

• (1630)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Hamilton, my next question is going to be if capacity concerns were felt by many of the ports in Canada, in your opinion. You touched upon ports within your region. Do you ever have conversations about these concerns with the other major ports?

MP Fillmore brought up Halifax, of course, since that's where he is, but I continue to have conversations with other ports, such as Prince Rupert and Vancouver. Do you ever have conversations where these concerns, by these larger ports, are shared as well with these port authorities?

Mr. Ian Hamilton: I serve on the board of the Association of Canadian Port Authorities, which is a fantastic forum for the CEOs of the port authorities to talk and share concerns. We know that, universally, every port feels they have the same issues—some more acute than other ones, and some looking at more of the long-term problems. Some of the ports you mentioned, particularly around Vancouver and Prince Rupert, which see phenomenal growth, are probably some of the ones that are the most acute, but some great projects in Montreal have been announced to address some of their shortages. I know that Quebec City has a neat project on the go. I know that expansion on the east coast has always been a consideration for Halifax.

Yes, I think every port is faced with the same situation, some worse than others, and we do communicate together on that subject.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Thank you very much, Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Chair, with my last half a minute here, I will move to the notice of motion that I put on advisory two days ago. I know there have been conversations amongst all parties, as well as the clerk, so I'm hopeful I can present it, we can vote on it and move along to the rest of the rounds with our witnesses here today.

I'll put it forward again. I move:

That with the exception of the planned appearance of the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the study of the Government's Response to the Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 Tragedy and one meeting on the Twin Otter type aircraft study, that the committee prioritize all remaining meetings before June 10th in the Spring schedule to the consideration and adoption of reports with regard to the following studies: Aircraft Certification Process; Impact of Covid-19 on the Aviation Sector; and Canada Infrastructure Bank.

I would just like to get the assurance of the committee that we will do our best to complete these reports and get them to the House, given the quantity of work that we have done on them to date, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kusie.

I want to speak on this as well. I think we can go to the vote.

Mr. Clerk, I had a discussion with my assistant today, and I understand there is a bit of a problem for Tuesday's meeting. If you can let members of the committee know what that challenge is with respect to how it affects our schedule, I'd appreciate that.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Michael MacPherson): The issue is that one of the witnesses we were looking at bringing in currently resides in the U.K., and we have very late evening sittings on Tuesdays. He would have required technical assistance and support, and he would not have been able to get IT support. I guess it would be around midnight where he is.

On the subject matter of that study, there's a report coming out next week. I believe the department wanted to share that information with the families first and would have felt really awkward being at committee to answer questions on that before they had a chance to discuss it with the families.

The Chair: What does that do for our scheduling?

The Clerk: I guess the impact would be, if the committee wants to begin looking at draft reports on Tuesday, we would simply bump it back and move the first meeting that we were thinking of for Ukraine Flight 752 into June, and everything else would pretty much stay the same. We would just focus on reports, except for next week's visit with the ministers.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Yes, I'm fine with moving the first meeting of the study.

I should just add, Clerk, the motion also states that the Twin Otter study remains as well, not just Flight 752, just to clarify for all committee members.

Thank you.

The Chair: That's correct.

Are there any further questions or comments from members of the committee as per the motion?

With none, Mr. Clerk, I'll ask you to call the vote, please.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Thank you, members.

• (1635)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Thank you, colleagues.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kusie.

We're now going to go back to that second round of questions. We have the Liberals, with Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Rogers, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Thank you, Chair, and welcome to all of our guests today.

I especially want to highlight Mayor Parsons from the beautiful, scenic city of Corner Brook on the west coast. I'm happy to hear that you're getting great support from your MP, our colleague Gudie Hutchings.

Mayor Parsons, I just have a couple of questions. First of all, you talked about the impact of the infrastructure programs and the funding you get for the city of Corner Brook. I guess the alternative to

that is what the impact would be on small and medium-sized cities like yours, and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, without further future infrastructure investments from the federal government.

Mr. Jim Parsons: As you know well, Mr. Rogers, the municipalities here are facing a difficult situation when it comes to the state of infrastructure. Our city has been in this area for about a hundred years and incorporated as a city for only 60 years, but we have a great deal of infrastructure needs when it comes to upgrades and maintenance.

Without substantial support, it is almost impossible to keep ahead of it. We undergo a pretty rigorous asset management program, but there is never enough infrastructure funding to go around. It is imperative, really, that we continue a steady, predictable stream of infrastructure funding.

As I mentioned in my testimony, the gas tax model has worked really well for us. We don't have to wait. We can move ahead. It offers us a great deal of flexibility to make decisions for ourselves and really prioritize, as opposed to project-based funding, which is more difficult to predict.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Mayor Parsons, I was going to ask you about the gas tax funding and about the stability that it brings to you and the flexibility and so on.

Do you have any other suggestions or recommendations to the federal government in terms of the gas tax fund, how it's currently deployed and the flexibility it provides?

Mr. Jim Parsons: I think there are sort of two sides to our needs.

Any municipality requires ongoing maintenance and upgrades to infrastructure, so predictability is super important. If we can maintain and grow that aspect of it while at the same time providing a clear path for large infrastructure projects—these once every 20 year-type projects—that are the priority of our federal and provincial governments...

I think providing more predictable, steady funding would be key and would allow us to do a lot better asset management for our municipalities.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Of course, the fact that we're doubling that gas tax fund for this year is tremendous news for you and other mayors across Newfoundland and Labrador and across the country.

I have one final question for Mr. Stewart with regard to the insurance programs.

Is paying greater attention to risk management by municipalities the way to prevent future escalating premiums for municipalities and, I guess, for all around the sector?

Mr. Craig Stewart: Thank you for the question.

Canada is becoming a riskier and riskier place for insurers to do business. If you take a look at the losses that insurers have paid over the last decade on the property side, there are some areas of the country where insurers are actually losing money. Focusing on risk reduction at the municipal level is a way to make sure that constituents and businesses pay a reasonable amount of insurance instead of the increases that we've been seeing lately.

• (1640)

Mr. Churence Rogers: For our good friend from Sept-Îles, how do you see the value of the infrastructure funding in completing work in your particular region?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Porlier: Thank you for your question.

I'm thinking in particular of the recreational and sports infrastructure financial assistance program, PAFIRS. During the last campaign, needs were in the order of \$1.4 billion and the fund had only \$282 million. The fund includes money from both the provincial and federal governments. As you can imagine, the gap is a big one.

We currently have to renovate an arena that's coming to the end of its useful life, and we still aren't in a position to do it.

I want to point out, for those who don't know it, that Sept-Îles is a port city. We have the largest mineral-handling port in North America. When the mining companies arrived, they built the ski resort, the golf club, the curling club and so on, but that's not the case today. So cities are finding it very hard to keep up with the pace of replacing all that infrastructure. The needs are very great.

We're naturally grateful for the efforts that have recently been made, such as those concerning the gasoline tax. However, a lot more needs must be met.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Thank you, Mr. Rogers.

We're now going to move on to the Bloc.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My next question concerns a matter that may previously have been addressed in committee, though without necessarily being subject to questions.

Mr. Porlier, in rural municipalities such as those on the North Shore, where there are no roads, we often see that maintenance of certain types of infrastructure, such as wharves and in some instances airports, is deficient and causing problems, even for regular supply purposes.

From the moment a road is built, the federal government often uses it as a pretext to stop maintaining, or at least funding, those wharves. However, the wharves represent the livelihood of the people who live there because they affect fishermen, who can't go and fish in the forest.

Do you think that stopping maintenance on your infrastructure, just letting it go, on the pretext that you no longer need it since you have a road constitutes bad practice on the government's part?

Mr. Réjean Porlier: It's actually even tougher when we're told that we'll be getting a road and, consequently, that there will be no

investment in other infrastructure, but the road doesn't come quickly.

However, you're right about the fishing. There's fishing all along the coast. Earlier I said that we have 1,200 kilometers of coastline back home. When you need to travel fast, you take a plane, and that'll be the case for a long time to come. So we have to keep providing a minimum level of maintenance on our infrastructure, and that remains a problem. We can't say we'll focus on only one aspect.

It all goes back to the question of vitality, of dynamic use of the territory. There's a real difference between using a territory in a dynamic manner and using it, as I often see, in a resilient manner. We tend to think that people will cope, that they're used to investment funding not always coming in. However, all those people are exhausted. They can't wait to cut the ribbon.

I'll be the first to jump into my car and go visit Newfoundland, and many people are eager to do the same.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Thank you.

I'd like you to go back to aviation, even though it's not directly related to infrastructure. The existing federal program subsidizes transportation only where there are no roads.

Is this kind of program viable in a place that's located thousands of kilometers from the major centres?

• (1645)

Mr. Réjean Porlier: We're fortunate to have the road in Sept-Îles, but I should point out that we have the third busiest airport in Quebec. It's a regional hub, a place where passengers arrive from the north, the Far North, Wabush and all the communities east of the city. So our infrastructure has to be maintained and kept up to date. It's about development; not just economics, but socioeconomics. It's about the communities.

Actually, the economic component will often overwhelm everything else, but it's very important for the people who inhabit this region.

What I'd like, and what I've been requesting for a long time, is that we sit down with representatives of the two orders of government so we can come up with a strategy together and be able to say that we now have the tools we should use to ensure a dynamic use of the territory.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mayor and Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

We'll move to Mr. Bachrach of the NDP.

You have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Stewart, I found your presentation at the beginning very interesting. I understand that you welcomed the government's intention to conduct a national infrastructure assessment. Can you share with the committee what you feel the priorities of such an assessment should be? What areas of infrastructure should the assessment focus on?

Mr. Craig Stewart: In context, in our view it's important to take a step back and conduct an assessment to figure out where the greater needs are across the country. As I said in the presentation, I'd like to stress, though, that it should be coordinated with two other activities in government. One is the development of a national adaptation strategy. Two, it should be coordinated with the work done by Public Safety Canada, Finance Canada and Natural Resources Canada on a national risk profile. We need to get an understanding of who is most vulnerable to climate risk and we should be reducing their risk accordingly. Therefore, only a national infrastructure assessment that links in to these other two studies will give us the sort of eagle-eyed view of the whole country that we need.

Implicit in my answer is that we believe climate resilience is, of course, the number one issue. Trade corridors are important, of course, and there's enormous demand for broadband in rural and remote communities. We get that. But as insurers, we also believe that due attention needs to be paid to climate risk in this country. Frankly, we have done very, very little collectively to address the issue of our growing climate risk. The amounts that are being allocated in infrastructure programming are too small to meet what the needs are of municipalities across the country.

In short, we believe climate resilience should also be prioritized in programming from Infrastructure Canada. The infrastructure assessment will be key to eliminating that.

The Chair: Mr. Bachrach, a quick question.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Oh, a quick question....

Well, I guess it's daunting to hear the magnitude of the climate adaptation challenge. We're not investing nearly enough in climate mitigation. I think the amount we're investing in adaptation is even less. This isn't an easy question to answer in two seconds, but I'm wondering how we make sure that both of these two tranches related to climate are moving forward adequately. Right now, it feels like neither is.

The Chair: That's a key question.

Mr. Craig Stewart: In our view, private sector capital is important on both sides of the equation—bringing private sector capital into Canada and doing the necessary work to attract it. As I mentioned, there are efforts on price resilience under way globally. Canada should be tying into those efforts and figuring out how we attract that capital to Canada. It can't be just governments that are footing the whole bill.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stewart and Mr. Bachrach.

We'll now move to Mr. Scheer of the Conservatives.

You have the floor for five minutes.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I really appreciate the testimony that we've heard. I certainly appreciate the different perspectives. I always find it interesting when

proponents come in and give governments ideas on how they can do a better job of things. It's not necessarily always about just spending more money. The expenditure of money is not necessarily the best metric to determine success. It's the efficiency of that program. When you spend a lot of money but get poor results, we've got something wrong.

I really enjoyed the feedback on the impact of cabotage rules and the consequence on our shipping industry and our logistics industry. I'm hopeful that we can continue on with this line of questioning.

Mr. Chair, we have had a motion before the committee for the last few meetings. Many members have had the opportunity to express themselves. Hopefully, we can quickly take care of some housekeeping and then move back to give our witnesses more opportunity to discuss this very important topic.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to move that we resume debate on the motion and the amendment we were dealing with at the last committee meeting.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Scheer.

We have a motion to resume debate. Are there any questions on that motion?

Mr. Fillmore, do you have question on that motion?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Yes. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Fillmore, my apologies. There are no questions on that. It goes straight to a vote.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Is the motion we're voting on now whether to resume debate?

The Chair: That's correct.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fillmore.

Mr. Clerk, can you call the vote, please?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

We have one hand up so far. I would encourage others who are going to have questions or comments to get their hands up.

Mr. Fillmore, you have the floor.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I do want to make some remarks, but I want to begin by saying thank you to the witnesses who joined us and shared their wisdom with us tonight. It's much appreciated.

I guess the first thing I'd ask is whether Mr. Scheer consulted with Ms. Kusie. We just passed a motion by Ms. Kusie on how to best spend the time of this committee, and here we are with another Conservative motion thwarting the intention of how this committee should best spend its time.

I want to carry on. We've had some interesting debate on this motion. Unfortunately, it's been very time-consuming. It's left witnesses who have prepared for the meeting unable then to speak. We did a little bit better today. Unfortunately, we're still leaving maybe an hour on the table that we're not going to be able to have with the witnesses.

I really have been reflecting on the motion and the motivations behind it. The more I thought about it, the plainer it became that this is simply a motion that we can't support.

I know we've moved some amendments that have tried to make marginal improvements to the motion, but they've been just that—marginal. We've been tinkering at the margins.

We tried to make changes to a completely unreasonable deadline for a request that will run into the thousands of pages for a document production order. We tried to make an amendment to make sure we respect official languages in how this motion would be responded to, given the importance that we all place on ensuring that both of our official languages are respected and that official language laws are always followed at the federal government level. We even tried to make amendments to ensure that our committee is not asking the Canada Infrastructure Bank to violate its own statute.

At the end of the day, those amendments—even if they all got passed—would only serve to make slight improvements to what is a fundamentally flawed motion, and one that we simply cannot support.

The point is that this motion has been designed to sabotage the Canada Infrastructure Bank's ability to fulfill its mandate, which is to attract private and institutional capital to get more projects built across the country to benefit Canadians.

We heard, even this evening, testimony from a witness who twice brought up the importance of attracting private capital to investments in public infrastructure in Canada, and the necessity of that, the ability to appear attractive and to bring investment partners online for projects of scale that are important to job creation, and to moving toward a low-carbon economy and toward creating an inclusive economy. Yet here we are, persisting with a motion to sabotage the CIB.

The CIB is investing in important projects all across the country, such as the biggest public transit project in Quebec in the last half-century, the Réseau express métropolitain, the REM, in Montreal; projects like the Alberta irrigation infrastructure project, helping to make farmland more productive and to enhance Canada's food security and strengthen our homegrown agricultural industry; and projects like the very topic we are discussing with the excellent witnesses we have with us right now, the Erie Connector, the subject of this motion and project that will reduce Ontarians' electricity costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create jobs.

This motion is meant to put a stop to projects like these, by harming the Canada Infrastructure Bank's ability to attract the very private and institutional capital that is at the heart of the CIB's mandate to make Canadian tax dollars go further, as underscored by tonight's witnesses.

The Conservatives claim to be on the taxpayers' side, but it's hard to see how, when they are trying to sabotage the CIB's ability to make every tax dollar get more built for our citizens. This motion is an attempt to drag confidential business information from the Canada Infrastructure Bank's investment and project proponent partners into a partisan committee where it can be used and misused for political purposes by the opposition.

As I said on Tuesday, it grieves me to see the other opposition parties following the Conservatives' lead on this. It's really unfortunate. It's an attempt to destroy the independent and apolitical status of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, an institution that is intentionally insulated, through its statute, from political interference so that we can actually attract that private and institutional capital in an unhindered and unimpeded way.

• (1655)

I'm going to share with you that in one of the places where I was a city planner over my long career trying to build communities and build infrastructure, my observation was that many of my colleagues were—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I'm calling on you to say that you've started a filibuster.

[*English*]

Mr. Andy Fillmore: I'm sorry. Is this a point of order, Mr. Chair? I'm not sure....

The Chair: Do you have a point of order, Mr. Barsalou-Duval? Go ahead.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: I think he's indicating that, no, it wasn't.

The Chair: No, it wasn't? Okay.

Go ahead, Mr. Fillmore.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: It was a mistake with the mute, I think.

Okay, thank you.

When we were trying to regenerate the downtown of my city, we came to realize that there had been a culture that had emerged within certain departments in the local government that was more concerned with enforcing stale rules than with understanding the nature of capital and how capital builds cities, how capital builds infrastructure. I was able to bring some experts to the community to speak to fellow staff members about the role that capital plays in regenerating a downtown and rebuilding a city. That shifted the culture in the institution. As a result of people's understanding capital, understanding the risks of private capital that the people providing that capital go through, the risks they take, we were able to redirect the fortune of my city, and we are now in an incredible renaissance.

I think that maybe some members of this committee could use the same remedial instruction on the importance of capital and the frailties of it when it comes to overexposing proprietary secrets.

I also mentioned on this committee before that I worked on the Boston Big Dig project. That was a \$14-billion project that spanned seven miles through the downtown of Boston. Had the lead company, Parsons, Brinckerhoff Quade and Douglas Inc., had to reveal their business case when bidding for that project, that project still wouldn't be built because they would have run away from building what is one of the greatest modern infrastructure projects in contemporary urban history.

What would happen if this motion were passed? Investors, infrastructure companies, and managers of institutional capital in Canada and abroad would see that there is now a new risk that they need to account for on top of all the other ones—pandemics, changing interest rates, and every other financial risk we can imagine that must be accommodated in a business case. They would now need to account for a risk in negotiating and finalizing infrastructure projects with the CIB, knowing that everything they do might wind up on the front page of a newspaper or be broadcast on a publicly viewable Zoom committee meeting. There would now be a new political risk that they would need to account for.

It's unconscionable. How can the Canada Infrastructure Bank negotiate in good faith and sign the confidentiality agreements that are a standard part of any large investment deal, knowing that this committee might try to extract that confidential information from it in violation of its signed commercial contracts? Involving the law clerk and other such propositions won't make a difference to these institutional and private firms. What they will see is their potential investment partner being forced to break the contract that they have signed.

The privileged information section of the Canada Infrastructure Bank Act exists for a very important reason. It exists to give the infrastructure world the confidence that it can deal with the Canada Infrastructure Bank as a good-faith investment partner. It's no coincidence that Export Development Canada, the export bank of Canada, has almost word for word the same provisions in its legislation. The Business Development Bank of Canada, BDC, to name another example, has almost exactly the same provision in its legislation.

Mr. Chair, it's clear that the opposition is using this motion to try to make it appear that the CIB is somehow being evasive or not transparent enough, even though this committee could call whenever we like—as I have mentioned and as my colleagues on the government benches have mentioned—the CEO of the CIB, Ehren Cory, to answer any questions that we might have. Any question that you would like to have answered, the CEO will come and discuss that.

However, the truth is that this motion is designed to cut the knees out from under the CIB—just as it's hitting its stride—for wanton, political point gathering. The CIB has made over half a dozen new investment commitments in just the last six months and is announcing new deals all the time. These investments benefit Canadians. They grow our economy. They get new, important projects off the ground that otherwise might not ever get built—like the Lake Erie

Connector—and Canadians end up with cleaner, greener, more-livable communities in which to live, work and thrive.

• (1700)

We heard a point made by one of the members on Tuesday that parliamentary privilege somehow trumps the law by which the CIB works. That may well be, but I'll tell you this: Those infrastructure companies and those private and institutional investors have no idea of what parliamentary privilege is or why it's worth a darn. What they care about is being able to do the work that they have spent years becoming good at, years of learning how to build the infrastructure that keeps Canadian communities going.

If this motion passes, all they'll see is that they signed a contract with the Canada Infrastructure Bank that included commitments by the CIB that they would not share the company's commercially sensitive information with anyone outside the CIB, and now, the parliamentary committee, claiming privilege, is forcing the CIB to break its contract for wanton, partisan, political point-gathering. It's such a travesty and an embarrassment.

That's why I have said before that this motion, should it pass, would have a chilling effect on the CIB's ability to fulfill its mandate and attract private and institutional capital. It introduces political risk that the CIB was specifically designed, specifically conceived of and specifically executed to avoid this very thing. We won't let this opposition try to derail that, so we will continue to oppose this motion.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fillmore.

Ms. Jaczek.

Ms. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Thank you very much, Chair.

While I am pleased to enter into debate on this motion, I do want to apologize to the witnesses. I was very much looking forward to having my turn to question them.

Mayor Porlier, if you're still listening at all, I did have the opportunity to look up your wonderful site on tourism at Sept-Isles. It is very intriguing.

Mayor Parsons, one of my best friends comes from Corner Brook, but I have never visited, so I am certainly hoping to have that opportunity.

Let's get back to the motion.

This motion ostensibly is about transparency, trying to find out more about this deal related to the Lake Erie Connector. The implication is that there is some sort of nefarious, secretive stuff in various documents that presumably will reflect badly on the government.

As my colleague Mr. Fillmore has said, clearly Mr. Scheer has made his opinion of the Canada Infrastructure Bank very clear. The motion is simply a way of putting a chill on the agreement in principle. It will no doubt cause other projects that are in line for consideration by the Canada Infrastructure Bank—probably many of those already being negotiated—and for the principals of those projects to wonder if their agreement is going to be dragged in front of a parliamentary committee and scrutinized and so on.

It seems to me that it's clearly a partisan move by the official opposition that may very well, in fact, cause a number of projects to be deferred or not entered into because investors will not want to have their particular project go through this process that we're embarked on today.

As the notion is transparency, I think it's very important for people to realize just what is totally public information about the project itself, as follows:

How was the route chosen?

The Lake Erie Connector project is being developed by ITC Investment Holdings Inc., the parent company of ITC Holdings Corp., the largest independent electricity transmission company in the United States and a subsidiary of Canada-based Fortis Inc.

Why is this transmission line needed?

The Lake Erie Connector is needed to create a direct energy transmission corridor between the Ontario IESO and U.S. PJM energy markets, helping improve the security and reliability of both regional systems. It also is expected to help increase market efficiencies

—surely something the Conservative Party would approve of—

and benefit the economies of both regions. The project has the potential to strengthen the regional grid by playing a role in emergency grid restoration.

How does power currently flow between the Ontario IESO and the PJM energy markets?

The energy currently must flow across limited existing interties and through other markets such as Michigan or New York to travel around Lake Erie. Some entities do schedule power in this way, but it is inefficient and costly. The Lake Erie Connector will provide a new, direct, and efficient trading route between the two markets and will benefit both regions.

What is the route of this energy transmission line?

The proposed route of the Lake Erie Connector is between Nanticoke, Ontario and Erie County, Pennsylvania and beneath Lake Erie.

Nanticoke, as some of you may recall, was the site of a very large coal-generated electricity plant, and that was closed by the former Ontario Liberal government, and of course, it has all the infrastructure sitting there, ready to connect to this Lake Erie Connector.

● (1705)

How was the route chosen?

The two points of interconnection in Ontario and Pennsylvania were chosen because they provide excellent access to the existing transmission systems. The cable route has been optimized to connect these two points while minimizing environmental impacts, avoiding areas of historical and archaeological interest (such as shipwrecks), and utilizing low-impact shoreline crossings.

Where will the energy come from?

There are a variety of generation sources in the markets of the Ontario Independent Electricity System Operator...and PJM Interconnection, and neighbouring

regions. The shippers who purchase capacity on the Lake Erie Connector will determine the source of the energy they transfer.

How large are these energy markets?

Ontario is Canada's second largest province covering more than one million square kilometres with a population of 13.5 million people.

Actually, I think it's closer to 14 million people since this was put together. It continues:

PJM comprises all or part of 13 U.S. states, with a population exceeding 60 million—the largest energy market in the world.

Have you engaged public input on this project?"

Yes, numerous, public consultations in Ontario and Pennsylvania were held—the respective connecting points of the line—to discuss the project and gather community input.

How could this project impact homes and businesses?

[The] project development team has worked closely with local and regional planners and with local residents and other stakeholders in the U.S. and Canada to minimize impacts to local residents.

What are the major milestones in this project?

I think some people may recall, as we heard last Tuesday, that this project was first conceived of in 2014.

In 2017 [the proponents] received major permit approvals from Canada's National Energy Board [with the] issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the project...; the U.S. Department of Energy...granted the project a Presidential Permit, which is required for international border crossing projects...[and] the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers...and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection [granted approvals]. Remaining milestones in the project include completing project cost refinements and securing favorable transmission service agreements with prospective counterparties, after which ITC Investment Holdings, Inc. would proceed with construction, as soon as 2021 or 2022.

Hopefully, without the derailment of this motion, we can see this project actually start construction this year.

Next, how will the cables be installed under water?

The Lake Erie Connector will use two cables that are each approximately six inches in diameter. A specialized ship will lay the HVDC cable along the bottom of Lake Erie utilizing low-impact water jet technology to create a temporary trench that is only slightly wider than the cable itself, and which will be filled by natural forces.

Of course, this type of underwater cable was used through the years: the transatlantic telephone cable. My father actually was an engineer on that project many decades ago. It's proven technology, and it will no doubt be a very efficient and effective way of transmitting the power that way.

Is this transmission project safe?

Placing transmission cables beneath waterways is an established and safe way to move power. These cables will be well insulated, do not contain liquids or gels, and are made from non-flammable materials.

Can the cable be damaged once it is placed under Lake Erie?

This is highly unlikely. The cables will be placed safely and securely beneath the lakebed. In the unlikely event that the cable is damaged, the system can identify the location and shut down within fractions of a second. Protocols are in place at both converted stations to ensure safety.

● (1710)

What is high-voltage, direct current transmission?

High-voltage direct current (HVDC) uses direct current to transmit electricity, in contrast with the more common alternating current (AC) systems. HVDC systems are often built as an overlay to a robust AC system or for unique circumstances. HVDC transmission lines are especially appropriate for underwater applications. HVDC systems have a long record of reliable performance around the world. As an analogy, an AC line is like a highway, with multiple interconnections to the regional grid that act as on- and off-ramps. A DC—

• (1715)

The Chair: Ms. Jaczek, can I interject for just a second? I do apologize.

Members, unfortunately, once again, for the second meeting in a row, I am going to have to excuse the witnesses. It looks as though this is going to go on for quite some time.

Although the witnesses gave us their very valuable time today, which we all truly appreciate, I don't want to take more time where they'll be just staring at a camera, listening to a debate.

With that, I give my sincere appreciation to all the witnesses. It was a very robust and great discussion, back and forth, with many of the interventions by the members, as well as answers by the witnesses. A lot of great points were made. Once again, I express my sincere appreciation to each and every one of you.

With that, I will excuse all of you. You have a great evening. Hopefully we'll see you back at this committee at some point in time.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Jaczek, you have the floor again.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you so much.

Are there any other transmission lines similar to this one?

Yes, transmission lines similar to the Lake Erie Connector have been in use all over the world for many years.

What is the environmental impact of this new transmission line?

The technology involved and the line route for the Lake Erie Connector were chosen to minimize environmental impact. The line will be buried under the lake bed and at the landing points. The safe and reliable HVDC technology ensures that this energy transmission line has no adverse impact to the environment. From planning our projects within the best interest of the environment to recycling at our facilities, we focus on sustainability efforts that set a positive example for the other businesses and the communities we serve. These efforts have been recognized at the local, state and federal level.

Will there be any overhead transmission lines used?

No. The current project plan envisions all of the cable being installed underwater or underground.

For public concerns, will the cost of this transmission project change their utility bill?

The costs for this line will be borne by the parties that purchase capacity on the line.

How long will this transmission cable be in service?

There are numerous examples of similar types of projects that have been in operation for decades.

There has been complete openness as to what this project is all about and who the major proponents are, namely, well-established companies with a good record. It really is an indication, certainly to me, that we have no need whatsoever to demand any further infor-

mation in regard to this particular project. We want this project to go forward.

As I said before, the current Conservative government in Ontario is extremely enthusiastic about this project. It needs to go forward and any delay would be extremely unfortunate for electricity consumers in Ontario.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jaczek.

Mr. Rogers, you have the floor.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Thank you, Chair.

I, too, want to weigh in on this debate and to ask questions about what the opposition is putting at risk here, and the areas that CIB is really focused on and the importance of what they're trying to accomplish. I think it's clear to all of us that the motion is meant to harm the CIB's ability to attract private and institutional investments to infrastructure projects.

The opposition has complained about the CIB allegedly not succeeding so far in crowding in enough private capital, and now they want us to use this motion to make their criticism into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I want us to understand the areas the CIB has targeted for getting more infrastructure built. These are areas where, if the opposition succeeds, Canadians will end up with less infrastructure in our country. They will be the losers, and the Canadian institutions of capital like our pension funds will continue to build projects that benefit citizens of other countries and not our own, so let's look at what the CIB is focusing on.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the Canada Infrastructure Bank's \$10-billion plan to invest in major infrastructure initiatives to create jobs and strengthen economic growth. The growth plan developed by the CIB is expected to create 60,000 jobs across the country. Over the next 24 to 36 months, the CIB's plan will build new infrastructure that connects more households and small businesses to high-speed Internet, strengthens Canadian agriculture and helps build a low-carbon economy. These investments will help Canadians get back to work.

One of the defining characteristics of the CIB is to invest in projects in a manner that attracts private and institutional capital, now and in the future. In this way, every dollar of public investment has maximum impact.

In delivering this plan, the CIB will also work in closer co-operation with provinces, territories, municipalities and indigenous communities across the entire country—

• (1720)

The Chair: Mr. Rogers, can I just interject for a second? Apparently there's a problem with the interpretation.

The Clerk: Yes, I believe it's a connectivity or a sound issue with Mr. Rogers' connection. The sound quality was too poor for them to provide interpretation. You may have to go to a different speaker and come back because they aren't able to provide interpretation right now, and we have to be able to provide interpretation.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Did you want to do a sound check, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Mr. Rogers, from your end, do you have everything hooked up properly? Do you have your microphone on in terms of the bottom box? To me, you sound fine, so I'm not sure what the problem is. You're coming across loud and clear on my end, but apparently the interpreters can't hear. They're having some problems. I'm just making sure that the equipment on your side is all hooked up.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Yes, it is, as it was previously. I'm not sure why the sound for some reason is not coming through.

The Clerk: It appears that they're not getting a great signal. It may be a connectivity issue on your cellular network. I guess it keeps dropping out a little bit, and it's just not quite good enough for them to provide interpretation at this time.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Perhaps it's something to do with the fact that we had a major power outage today. I'm not too sure if that might have impacted the system here that's run by Bell Aliant.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: It sounds like you could you use some investments in resilient infrastructure, Mr. Rogers.

The Chair: Mr. Rogers, I'm going to go over to Mr. El-Khoury and he'll take up some time here. If you want to log off and log back on, I'll come back to you.

Mr. Churence Rogers: I will. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Clerk.

Mr. El-Khoury, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is quite a surprise to me. I come from the business world, and I can tell you that agreements on commercial projects always include a confidentiality clause.

• (1725)

Our Conservative colleagues are asking the Canada Infrastructure Bank not to comply with the confidentiality clause. They're sending a clear message to potential investors, both local and foreign, not to invest in Canada.

Let's consider the matter from all sides. First of all, what are Canadians' interests?

We've heard witnesses, including the mayor of Sept-Îles, tell us about desperate needs for infrastructure projects. We've heard about the suffering of small towns whose inhabitants move away and never come back. This kind of bank, which makes infrastructure projects possible, is essential in remote regions and small communities.

Our Conservative colleagues are saying no to that. I'd really like to hear what Mr. Barsalou-Duval and Mr. Bachrach have to say about that. Is it in Canadians' interest to obstruct the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which works in an environmentally friendly way by creating green infrastructure? The bank will also create jobs for Canadians across the country, from sea to sea.

It's hard to see where this is headed.

The toughest phase of infrastructure projects is getting funding. However, we're discouraging potential investors from investing in Canada, not encouraging them. We aren't trying to create jobs and grow Canada's economy.

I'm appealing here to Mr. Barsalou-Duval as a member from Quebec. You can't imagine how pleased and proud I was when the federal and provincial governments jointly announced an \$800 million investment to connect all Quebecers to high-speed Internet. The regions and rural areas need it, and they'll benefit from it.

What do you think about the Réseau express métropolitain, the REM? That's a project that can create thousands of jobs and stimulate our economy for Quebecers. They need it after this unfortunate and disastrous pandemic.

This isn't the time to raise barriers, and partisanship has no place here. Everyone should encourage the Canada Infrastructure Bank to continue its work and implement projects because that's what Canadians want.

For all these reasons, I'm not prepared to support this motion, and I ask my colleagues not to support it either.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1730)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. El-Khoury. Well done.

It is 5:30, members, and I'm going to go on for the next 15 minutes. I'd like to go on as long as we can but, unfortunately, the heritage committee has the resources at 6:30. They're into clause-by-clause for C-10, so we're looking at a 5:45 shutdown. I just wanted to give everybody a heads-up on that.

I now have Mr. Iacono. You have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's not surprising that this motion was introduced by the Conservatives. Long before the last election, they made it known that they wanted to make cuts to infrastructure, not to build. The 2019 Conservative election platform was based on a promise to save \$18 billion in cuts to and delays of infrastructure projects across Canada.

Conservative politicians say they're for the people, but they're far from that, since they make cuts to programs and services Canadians rely on. However, that's not really surprising because it's what Conservatives do best.

The former Conservative leader and conservatives like Doug Ford have opposed our infrastructure investments at every stage. The Conservatives' empty promises have actually meant delays and cuts to infrastructure projects across Canada.

Let's be clear: the Conservatives won't tell Canadians what crucial water, electricity or broadband projects would be shelved so they can pay for the tax cuts they're proposing for the rich. You needn't take our word for it. Just look at what Doug Ford has done in Ontario. By the Ford government's own admission, they've missed two construction seasons by putting slogans ahead of actual objectives and seeking political victories when they should have tried to start up projects.

The funding our government offered was available from day one. What the Conservatives proposed on infrastructure was nothing less than a repeat of our own commitment to build stronger communities. The Conservatives' cuts hurt. It's the families in my riding and Canadian communities who'll be affected by their plan. The former Conservative leader's platform is a failure. However, we believe that continuing infrastructure investments, not cuts, is essential to achieving the vision and ambition that we have for a more prosperous Canada.

We're putting this belief into practice by investing in various provincial projects. For example, funding for a project such as the REM will help many Quebecers get to work sooner and do so in the knowledge that their choice is the right one for the environment. It's important to note exactly what those projects are.

A commitment of \$1.28 billion has been announced for construction of the Réseau express métropolitain. The REM calls for construction of a new automated light rail system serving the greater Montreal area. The system will include 26 stations over 67 kilometers, practically doubling the length of the present 71-kilometer-long metro system. The REM is the largest public transit project undertaken in Quebec in the past 50 years. The system will gradually go into service between 2022 and 2023.

The Canada Infrastructure Bank's investment commitment includes the following items: an initial loan interest rate of 1%, increasing to 3% over a period of 15 years, with the loan commitment covering project startup and construction risks.

A project like the REM will benefit everyone. In addition to the number of jobs created, it will generate significant impact for Quebec businesses and workers. Nearly \$2 billion will be paid out in salaries in Quebec and more than \$4 billion in local content. That represents 65% of the value of the project.

• (1735)

Construction work on the REM will involve many specialized trades and professionals, including engineers, architects, automated site systems experts, cabinetmakers, steel fabricators and erectors, electricians, mechanics and so on.

My riding of Alfred—Pellan is full of talented workers. They'll be able to put their knowledge and experience to work on the construction of the REM.

In addition to increasing mobility in the greater Montreal area, the project will revitalize the region's local economy. Ultimately, the REM project, supported by the Canada Infrastructure Bank, will support hundreds of families in my riding. In addition to creating jobs and wealth, the REM will stimulate the creation of a centre of excellence and expertise in automated mass transit in Quebec. The repair and maintenance of a high-tech system will help guarantee permanent high-quality jobs and a new Quebec knowledge base.

However, we definitely must not overlook the project's environmental benefits. These investments will promote sustainable development and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Adjustments have also been made to the project to reduce its environmental impact.

Furthermore, in conjunction with the REM project, we should mention the plan to build a station at Montreal's Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport. This new station and the new rail link will thus be connected to the REM light rail system.

The Canada Infrastructure Bank's investment will be in addition to its previous \$1.3 billion investment in the REM. It goes without saying that an accessible REM station will be a major public good, providing rapid and practical service to and from the airport. Whether it's local road traffic or the weather...

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Chair, this speech is related to my colleague's remarks.

To my knowledge, when you discuss a motion in your speech, you must stay on topic. I didn't sense that a full description of the REM and the Montreal metro was actually related to the topic before us.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Mr. Chair, I was showing...

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

I'll just ask all members to try to stay within the realm of the amendment to the motion. We all have to remember that we are discussing the amendment to the motion presented by Mr. Scheer.

Mr. Iacono, we'll go back to you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think it's important to show how this project will benefit Quebecers. I'm sure this concerns my colleague since he's a member from Quebec.

As regards the Port of Montreal, my colleague is familiar with the connection between the REM and the Port of Montreal. So I won't talk about that since he says it isn't interesting.

The investments our government makes through the Canada Infrastructure Bank to support infrastructure will improve the lives of Canadian communities. These are projects that enhance both Canadians' mobility and Canada's reputation.

If our NDP and Bloc québécois colleagues choose to support this motion, they will be putting partisanship above the interests of Quebecers and Canadians. They will cause definite harm to the economic recovery of our beautiful province, among other things.

Thanks to the investments of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, the mayor of Quebec City, Mr. Régis Labeaume, can retire with the satisfaction that the REM will see the light of day. What satisfaction will our Bloc québécois colleagues derive from that if this kind of project falls through as a result of partisanship?

● (1740)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Iacono.

I'll now go back to Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Rogers, let's see how your mike is. Why don't we do a quick sound check?

Mr. Churence Rogers: I can do a quick sound check here to see if that's any better for the interpreters.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, how does that sound for the interpreters?

The Clerk: I'm told that Mr. Rogers is still cutting in and out, but I guess they will try to work with it.

The Chair: We're going to try to work with it, Mr. Rogers.

Mr. Clerk and interpreters, if it's a problem and we can't get interpretation, please let me know immediately. I don't want this to impede Mr. Barsalou-Duval or others who are expecting it to be in French. With all due respect to our members, please let me know right away.

Mr. Rogers, go ahead. You have the floor.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Do you want me to restart my comments? Interpretation was a problem, so I can start from the beginning, if you wish.

The Chair: Go ahead. We have three minutes left before I suspend.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Okay.

As I was saying, what is being put at risk here by the opposition with this motion? What are the areas that the CIB is focused on? It's clear to us that the [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] ability to attract private and institutional investments to infrastructure projects. The opposition has complained about the CIB allegedly not succeeding so far in crowding in enough private capital, and now they want us

to use this motion to make their criticism into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I want us to understand the areas that the CIB has targeted for getting more infrastructure built. These are areas where, if the opposition succeeds, we'll end up with less infrastructure in our country. Canadian institutions of capital like our pension funds will continue to build projects elsewhere. The benefits that would come to our country will now be somewhere else. Let's look at what the CIB is focusing on.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the Canada Infrastructure Bank's \$10-billion plan to invest in major infrastructure initiatives to create jobs and strengthen economic growth. The growth plan developed by the CIB is expected to create 60,000 jobs across the country. Over the next 24 to 36 months, the CIB's plan will build new infrastructure that connects more households and more small businesses to high-speed Internet—

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I see that we are encroaching upon the time. We're within one minute of when we must conclude our meeting for the next meeting to take place.

As such, I want to make a motion to adjourn—if it's in order that I do so while interrupting MP Rogers, unfortunately.

The Chair: Actually, Ms. Kusie, I was going to deal with that at 5:45 p.m.

● (1745)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay. Pardon me.

The Chair: A motion would be somewhat redundant.

I will go back to Mr. Rogers and give him his last minute.

Mr. Rogers, go ahead.

Mr. Churence Rogers: As I was saying, these investments will help Canadians get back to work. One of the defining characteristics of the CIB is to invest in projects in a manner that attracts private and institutional capital now and in the future. In this way, every dollar of public investment has maximum impact.

In delivering this plan, the CIB will also work in close co-operation with provinces and territories, municipalities and indigenous communities across the country. Given the substantial amount of work already completed, the CIB expects to begin investing in projects before the end of 2020.

Mr. Chair, I know I don't have the time, but I would like to begin highlighting what some of these investments will be: \$1.5 billion for agriculture infrastructure; \$2 billion for broadband; \$1.5 billion for zero-emission buses; \$2 billion for energy-efficient buildings and retrofits; and \$2 billion for clean energy. That leads me to be somewhat surprised by the NDP's not supporting this kind of investment, when we're talking about clean energy, clean buildings, retrofits and so on to combat climate change. There's also \$500 million for project acceleration.

Mr. Chair, given that you're about to adjourn this meeting, I would want to come back to these comments at some later point to elaborate on each of the items I've just listed.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rogers.

Thank you to all the speakers. We do look forward to this debate continuing on Tuesday.

Therefore, I will take this opportunity to suspend this meeting, and we'll see you all on Tuesday.

[The meeting was suspended at 5:47 p.m., Thursday, May 6]

[The meeting resumed at 6:35 p.m., Tuesday, May 11]

● (1835)

The Chair: Members, I will now take this opportunity to reconvene our meeting.

Welcome to the continuation of meeting number 31 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

As always, or of late, today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of January 25, 2021. The proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website. The webcast will always show the person speaking rather than the entirety of the committee.

To ensure an orderly meeting, I would like to outline a few points to follow.

First off, members may speak in the official language of their choice. Interpretation services are available for this meeting. You have the choice at the bottom of your screen of floor, English or French.

For members participating in person—I don't believe there are any—proceed as you usually would when the whole committee is meeting in person in a committee room. Keep in mind the directives from the Board of Internal Economy regarding masking and health protocols.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. If you are on a video conference, please click on the microphone icon to unmute yourself. For those in the room, your microphone will be controlled as is normal by the proceedings and verification officer. I will remind you that all comments by members and witnesses should be addressed through the chair. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

With regard to a speaking list, the committee clerk and I will do the very best we can to maintain the order of speaking for all members, whether you are participating virtually or in person.

Members, the committee will now continue its debate on the amendment to Ms. Kusie's motion presented by Mr. Scheer.

The order of speakers upon suspending was as follows: Mr. Rogers, followed by Ms. Jazcek, followed by Mr. Fillmore, followed by Mr. Scheer.

With that, Mr. Rogers, you have the floor.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to restart the intervention that I started in the last meeting before we concluded. I just want to identify some of the key areas where, if the opposition motion succeeded, Canadians would end up with less infrastructure in our country, and institutional capital like pension funds would continue to build projects elsewhere, but not in our own country for the good of Canadians.

I started to identify some of the projects and investments that I feel are critically important for Canada and Canadians for the long term. We're talking about a period of 24 to 36 months. We're talking about major projects that would create in the vicinity of 60,000 jobs across the country.

One defining characteristic of the CIB is that it would attract investment in projects in a manner that attracts the private sector and institutional capital and, hopefully, gets some of these projects off the ground and built. In delivering this plan with provinces, territories, municipalities and indigenous communities across the country, we would see major investments in projects that would benefit all Canadians.

Given the substantial amount of work that's been completed, the CIB expects to begin investing in some great projects before the end of 2020. I want to identify some of these projects for the committee and talk about their value and what it means for all of us and for Canadians right across the country—from coast to coast to coast.

First, let me focus on the \$1.5 billion for agriculture infrastructure. The CIB's investment will focus on transformative irrigation infrastructure projects that are high priorities in western Canada. Particularly, the benefit of this new initiative is estimated at 700,000 acres of newly irrigated land, which would increase food supply output. It would improve water resource management. It would also secure domestic food supply for all of us. Of course, there would be export opportunities.

Agriculture and agri-food sector growth can face obstacles in attracting long-term investment capital, as we know, to finance large infrastructure projects. The CIB's investment in irrigation will mitigate private sector leaders' concerns about the risks associated with financing projects that involve uncertain ramp-up periods and high-risk repayment sources due to exposure to the commodities pricing associated with revenues from agricultural products.

Preliminary estimates suggest that completed critical irrigation projects could also help stimulate an additional \$1.5 billion in investments by the use of [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] and associated precision or smart technology that would create, of course, more efficiency in the agriculture sector.

As a world leader in agriculture and agri-food, Canada is uniquely placed to build up its competitive advantage while improving the food system for Canadians and strengthening the resiliency of Canada's supply chains. We all know the importance of that as, from year to year, we experience unexpected storms, droughts and climate change problems that occur from time to time and create all kinds of difficulties for the agriculture sector. That investment in itself would be a huge win for the agriculture sector, for sure.

- (1840)

Another project investment that I would like to identify would be the \$2 billion earmarked for broadband. That would be a game-changer for all Canadians, particularly Canadians living in rural and remote areas that now have no access to the Internet system. They get left out of the marketplace. They get left out of the business opportunities that could exist, and they are challenged to receive even the basic service. The CIB's broadband investment initiative will accelerate connectivity in Canada by developing and delivering large-scale and high-impact projects.

These CIB investments will connect more than three-quarters of a million households and businesses, particularly in underserved communities by creating new economic, educational and health care service opportunities. This would assist communities, like mine, in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, and many other communities that I represent in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as other communities across the entire country, in the north and in more remote difficult areas to access.

Broadband projects for underserved areas have high capital costs as can be expected, of course, but lack the user-based density to commercially support the initial capital investment. That is always the argument that ISPs provide when they talk about the challenge of servicing small, rural and remote communities. What makes it so challenging is density. That is a big issue and a big part of the equation when it comes to investing in broadband throughout rural Canada.

The CIB intends to bridge this gap with low-cost financing to help make projects more viable, and that's what that would achieve. The CIB will offer low-cost, flexible financing to broadband projects, connecting many premises that would otherwise not be commercially viable.

The CIB will execute its broadband plan in two primary ways.

First, it will partner with other federal and provincial programs designed to encourage greater broadband connectivity. We see some of that, of course, happening today in jurisdictions across the country. Just very recently, our government announced, in partnership with the Government of Quebec, a major investment to accelerate broadband connectivity throughout northern and rural parts of Quebec.

Second, the CIB will continue its direct engagement with Internet service providers across the country on projects that will not rely on those additional government programs but can still be viable with CIB participation and support. That's the key. These projects would not happen without this kind of participation and support from CIB.

We all recognize that the pandemic has made the need for widely distributed broadband connectivity more important than ever. It's more important today than we realize. Here we are tonight, for example, on Zoom meetings. We use it on a daily basis. I can sit in [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] rural Newfoundland and connect with the transport committee and other committees, and participate in the House of Commons or other meetings throughout my entire riding, and throughout the country, wherever I want to engage with people, constituents, residents and so on. That participation is crucially important to making sure that continues to evolve and improve.

- (1845)

When we talk about the investment in broadband, it's something that will only happen with the kinds of investments we've been talking about and we've identified, and at the pace that we've identified, by 2025, with major connections across the country, and by 2030 having connected all Canadians to some sort of broadband system that would allow them to be participants in the international marketplace and be able to open businesses in small and rural communities.

Many examples of that exist here in my riding, in Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, on the tourism side. They are using that to their advantage and attracting—of course, prior to COVID—massive crowds to communities on the Bonavista Peninsula, for example. Many people were hired or employed because of the acceleration of broadband and because of the fact that these tourism businesses were able to market themselves over the Internet and were able to attract people from far and wide to that peninsula. It created hundreds of jobs in the tourism industry. It sustained many of the rural communities that would otherwise be existing on just a fishery, which has been a challenge at times.

The investment in broadband is critically important and it needs to continue.

Another investment I'd like to focus on, as well, is something that is very important for the future of our planet, our country, in terms of climate change and what we do to reduce emissions.

An investment of \$1.5 billion for zero-emission buses would bring about a dramatic change in terms of the emissions we get from diesel-powered buses in city fleets and so on. The CIB's investment in this area will accelerate adoption of modern zero-emission bus fleets and reduce greenhouse gases and operating costs over the long term. I think we all understand and realize that's certainly the case.

The financing challenges, though, have often limited the development and expansion of clean transit systems. The CIB will address financial barriers faced by bus owners and operators, such as transit authorities and municipalities, school boards and school bus operators due to the high upfront capital costs of zero-emission buses and associated charging infrastructure that goes along with that. We probably wouldn't see that kind of uptake or change occurring very quickly, if we had to depend on these private individuals and boards to make the transition themselves to zero-emission buses.

The CIB's initiative to finance the high upfront cost differential of zero-emission buses, compared to other higher-polluting buses—diesel buses and gas buses and so on—will create long-term operating savings. These savings are estimated to be substantial, as the lifetime operating costs for ZEBs could be as much as 40% lower than diesel buses.

• (1850)

The initiative, of course, would also address the transition and procurement barriers by facilitating pan-Canadian participation, knowledge sharing and, potentially, bulk purchasing, which would probably lead to a less expensive product down the road, once we are able to accelerate the kind of technology and servicing that we would get from these electric buses.

Investing in public transit is essential to growing economies and reducing greenhouse gases. These investments contribute to the Government of Canada's goal of 5,000 zero-emission buses—school buses and transit buses—over the next five years. Obviously 5,000 ZEBs would equate to quite a reduction in emissions and greenhouse gases that would normally be spewed into the atmosphere and the environment through the diesel or gas-operated buses.

Beyond the immediate priorities in the \$10-billion growth plan, the CIB will continue to focus on existing and new opportunities for transformational public transit projects across Canada, such as light rail—which we talked about—regional rail, subways and bus rapid transit. These are all great initiatives that will lead to greater transportation networks, particularly those in the large cities like Toronto or Vancouver, or bigger cities in western Canada like Edmonton or Winnipeg, and so on.

These cities would be the beneficiaries of that kind of advanced technology once we roll that out and that would make a huge difference, and not only as a transportation mode to move people. Just think about the impact in terms of cutting back on emissions and what that would mean for Canadian people living in these cities. The smog that you see on a hot sunny day, hopefully would be a thing of the past—not totally, of course, but certainly it would be far less [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

A further tremendous investment of \$2 billion for energy-efficient building retrofits is a part of the CIB plan, and that will help to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings by working with large private and public sector real estate owners to modernize buildings to use all proper lighting, heat pumps and that kind of stuff. That would make the buildings much more energy efficient and much more functional, and of course enable them to be maintained for the long term.

The CIB initiative will finance upfront capital costs of energy-efficient building retrofits, creating long-term savings from the efficiency that will of course be achieved from that.

The investment in large-scale projects will certainly crowd in private capital where investment from the private sector has traditionally been very limited due to the uncertain nature of the expected cost savings. The CIB can play a significant role in proving this market and providing the track record required to attract private sector capital.

• (1855)

The CIB is creating a mainstream, broadly marketed debt product to attract new market participants beyond the existing large equipment manufacturers and energy services companies that would be present in the current limited market. Inefficiency, energy consumption and commercial buildings are a major source of greenhouse gases, so energy-efficient buildings will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to Canada's transition to a low-carbon future.

The Government of Canada's climate plan identifies energy efficiency of buildings as a key priority, as energy to heat and cool buildings accounts for 12% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. Obviously, addressing this would be an important part of achieving climate change improvements for commercial and public buildings.

There is another \$2.5 billion for clean power and clean energy. We like to hear about this. In eastern Canada, we refer to the Atlantic loop when we talk about hydroelectric power. Clean energy would displace coal-fired production facilities and create cleaner energy for the entire country in different regions of the country.

I would have thought the NDP would agree with this, and I'm surprised to see that they're considering supporting the motion. Of course, we've heard this already in the debate, but it's important to emphasize—

• (1900)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I want to give my colleague a chance to take a breath and grab a sip of water. It will allow me to offer that we've just hit the half-hour mark, and unless I'm gravely mistaken, we're debating a motion concerning the Lake Erie Connector project. I haven't heard any remarks related to that project.

I wonder if, in the most friendly way possible, I might steer my colleague back to the matter at hand, which is the Lake Erie Connector project and the production of documents. I believe this is the topic of the motion before us.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bachrach.

To all members, I am keeping a very close eye on the comments being made. Right now we are debating the amendment to the motion. The amendment, of course, is about bringing forward documents in a certain way to the law clerk. These are the redacted documents. I'm taking out of Mr. Rogers' comments that.... A lot of what he's saying is about the implications of the presentation of those documents and, therefore, the implications ultimately on the CIB itself, its existence and the projects that are encouraged through the CIB.

Once again I'll ask that all members stick to debating the amendment at hand. Again, I'll be keeping a close eye on the comments being made.

Mr. Rogers, you have the floor.

Mr. Churence Rogers: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am pointing out to my honourable colleague that I prefaced my remarks at the beginning by saying that this motion is putting at risk the projects that the CIB has identified and we have identified as a government, so on and so forth. What I'm trying to demonstrate is what might be a result of the consequences of passing such a motion, the amended motion and so on.

I just wanted to demonstrate that these projects are projects that are critically important. If we do something to circumvent and prevent this kind of thing from happening, the projects that I'm talking about, then obviously we've failed as a group.

I'll just carry on with a couple of other examples for clean power. When we're talking about CIB investing in clean power generation, transmission and storage over the next three years, a \$2.5-billion investment is a major step towards CIB's intention to invest \$5 billion into clean power over the medium term.

The CIB's interest in clean power will include renewable generation and storage and investment in interprovincial and territorial transmission that can stimulate the advancement of clean power. In pursuing these initiatives, the CIB will work with indigenous communities towards a transition to cleaner power and more reliable sources of power.

These clean power projects are often delayed or not developed because of financing challenges and gaps in the capital structure. To help deliver clean power projects, the CIB will provide low-cost and long-term capital, often pegged to revenue streams that are not typically sufficient for traditional debt and equity investors.

In working with government and project developers on delivering clean power projects, the CIB will structure these investments to increase the use of private sector capital, reduce the weighted average cost of capital generally associated with this and provide certainty on long-term debt and equity returns. It will transfer more construction and operations to the rest of the private sector, so clean power investments will result in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and help Canada achieve its 2030 and 2050 emission re-

duction targets. Therefore, the CIB's investment and participation in these projects are critically important.

A further \$500 million for project acceleration has been identified. In addition to the five initiatives described before and as part of the growth plan, the CIB will invest in due diligence and early construction works in order to accelerate high-impact infrastructure projects in which the CIB expects to make a long-term investment.

The objective of the project acceleration is to expedite the studies, technical reports and analysis required to shorten critical paths to construction. Any capital deployed to fund development and early works activities will be structured with a view to rolling these amounts into eventual CIB investments in these projects.

Large infrastructure projects, as we know, take years to plan and develop. Many of the witnesses we've heard at committee talk about CIB and talk about infrastructure projects and development. Anybody who has been involved at the municipal or provincial government level knows that the development of projects like the Lake Erie project takes a lot of considerable planning and cannot be accomplished overnight. They are often years in the making.

Project acceleration can create more immediate employment opportunities and economic growth. We know that, of course. That's why there's investment in \$500 million to project acceleration.

● (1905)

Mr. Chair, I'll close up now by saying that the areas I just identified that CIB is focused on.... I've identified some of the areas and opportunities, and I'll go back to my initial opening comment from the previous meeting, which is that by passing a motion like this we're talking about putting at risk some of these projects and all of these jobs that I've referenced, the 60,000 jobs across the country that can be created over the next one, two or three years in the partnerships between CIB, provinces, municipalities and indigenous communities. Some of the people we heard from at committee referenced these.

Ms. Jaczek has already talked about the value of the Lake Erie project and what it means for people in her region, certainly, and for the people in Ontario.

Mr. Chair, thanks for your indulgence and I now turn it back to you. Thank you for the opportunity to be able to present all this important information with regard to the CIB.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rogers.

We're now going to move on to Ms. Jaczek.

Ms. Jaczek, you have the floor.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

I have had some connectivity issues, so hopefully there will be no interruption.

I think it's really important that everyone realizes that, while this motion is addressing a particular project, the Lake Erie Connector project, if that project gets derailed because of the conditions that Mr. Scheer has put in his amendment and the companies back out of this important project, you're really jeopardizing all the other projects potentially that are lined up waiting for approval and confirmation through the CIB. Therefore, I think it's important to really understand what the priorities and the accountabilities of the CIB are, as they've been very clearly articulated by the minister quite recently to the new chair of the board.

I think we can all recognize that infrastructure does play a critical role in building our country and growing our economy. The Canada Infrastructure Bank is a cornerstone of the Government of Canada's plan to build really transformational infrastructure in the public interest, to create good jobs and to move ambitiously to net-zero emissions by 2050.

The minister, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, has written to Tamara Vrooman, the newly appointed chairperson of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, with an updated statement of priorities and accountabilities. If you've had an opportunity to look up the qualifications of the chair of the board, first of all, Tamara Vrooman is CEO of the Vancouver Airport Authority. The bios of the other board members are all on the website, and they look particularly adept at being the stewards of the Canada Infrastructure Bank. They have very strong resumés in finance and in public procurement opportunities, so I feel that the board is an excellent one.

We heard, as a committee, from Mr. Cory, who is the new CEO. He has an excellent reputation from when he headed up Infrastructure Ontario.

When the minister wrote to Ms. Vrooman, she set out the government's expectations for the bank's activities across five priority areas: public transit, green infrastructure, trade and transport, broadband and clean power. Obviously, it's a huge range of important areas for all of us. The Canada Infrastructure Bank is already making progress in these priority areas as it implements its growth plan, which aims to invest \$10 billion over the next three years in strategic initiatives such as zero-emission buses; energy-efficient building retrofits, which is incredibly important and popular, certainly here in Ontario; agricultural irrigation; broadband, which we've been studying in this committee; renewables and energy storage.

Of course, these investments will help grow our economy, create good jobs, build inclusive communities and support Canada's climate goals.

To advance the government's commitment to close the indigenous infrastructure gap—and my colleague, Mr. Rogers, made reference to this—and to support the prosperity of indigenous communities, the government has set a target for the CIB to invest at least \$1 billion in total across its five priority sectors with revenue-generating projects that benefit indigenous peoples. Again, we

heard from witnesses at this committee what a popular and important aspect this was.

The bank recently announced a partnership for the Oneida Energy Storage project. This is an example of the ambitious projects this new investment target may unlock.

As the government undertakes Canada's first-ever national infrastructure assessment, the CIB will provide advisory services to help identify needs in Canada's built environment, particularly with respect to the role of the private sector and investment community. This speaks, of course, to having that baseline of measuring what we have, where we want to go and what we need to do to get there.

• (1910)

This work will complement the Government of Canada's overall efforts on sustainable infrastructure and building back better, and I do want to quote the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, whom we had at our committee just recently. She said:

The Canada Infrastructure Bank has all the key elements in place to deliver jobs, growth and nation-building infrastructure for Canadians that drives us to a net zero future. With new leadership and clear priorities, including a new commitment to identify opportunities to invest in major projects in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, I'm confident the Bank will help drive Canada's economic recovery and build the infrastructure we need for Canada's long-term success.

Why would we ever want to jeopardize an ambitious goal such as the minister has articulated?

As part of the government's historic investing in Canada plan and building a better Canada, the CIB was established as an innovative financing tool to address our country's significant infrastructure needs, and it has been allocated \$35 billion to support infrastructure projects across the country and attract investment from private partners to those projects.

The CIB is a Crown corporation that operates at arm's length from government. Statements of priorities and accountabilities are used, however, by ministers to communicate government priorities and expectations to Crown corporations, so while the government sets the priorities for the CIB, the CIB's board of directors is responsible for the organization's ongoing governance and supervision of its business, final investment decisions, forward planning and strategic direction. As I've said, in my view, having reviewed their qualifications, they are eminently able to do so.

Like other federal Crown corporations, the CIB is accountable to the government, Parliament and the public through a corporate plan and annual report. Recently, the CIB announced its growth plan to invest \$10 billion over the next three years in infrastructure projects that will help Canadians get back to work, and it's expected to create approximately 60,000 jobs across the country. Of course, this is all related to building back better post-COVID-19.

I think it's worthwhile to look directly at the statement of priorities and accountabilities itself because it provides more insight into how the CIB is charged with attracting private and institutional investment to make tax dollars go further, something that I'm sure our Conservative colleagues are keenly interested in. It also goes into how that mandate would be unfairly impeded by our committee's passing a motion such as the one we are debating today.

I will read the statement of priorities and accountabilities letter from the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities to the chair of the CIB. She says:

As the Minister responsible for the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB), it is my pleasure to provide you with this Statement of Priorities and Accountabilities for the attention of the CIB's Board, Chief Executive Officer and management. As the CIB enters the next phase of its development, this letter sets out the Government's priorities to guide the CIB as it delivers on its commitments and develops its Corporate Plans and outlines the CIB's accountabilities to the Government and the public.

We face a health and economic crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Government of Canada is taking strong and quick action to protect the health and safety of Canadians, stabilize our economy and stimulate growth, and [in doing so will] support communities across Canada. Canada's recovery from this crisis will require aligning efforts of all our institutions, and infrastructure will continue to play a vital role in supporting job creation, planting the seeds for long-term growth, promoting inclusivity and building a low-carbon, clean economy. This document builds on the previous Statement of Priorities and Accountabilities dated December 20, 2017, and other guidance provided by the Government, and reflects the evolution of the Government's priorities for the CIB. The CIB can and must play a bigger role at this time of crisis—but also a time of opportunity to build back better—as we focus on safely restarting our economy and responding to changing circumstances in Canada and worldwide.

- (1915)

The CIB was established to ensure that Canadians benefit from modern and sustainable infrastructure through partnerships between governments and the private sector. It does this through its core responsibilities in investment, advisory services and research, that leverage the capital and expertise of the private sector to achieve public outcomes and value for taxpayers.

The CIB helps public dollars go further by investing in revenue-generating infrastructure projects in the public interest and developing innovative financing tools. The goal is more infrastructure built across the country. It is critical that the CIB collaborates with federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, Indigenous and private investor partners to transform the way infrastructure is planned, financed and delivered.

The CIB model is a component of the *Investing in Canada Plan*, designed to address our country's significant infrastructure needs and the fiscal pressure being placed on government resources. We need to attract new investments from everywhere. Families and businesses want to locate and build where they know infrastructure is modern, clean, and resilient. Canada has an excellent opportunity to be the low-carbon economy that global investors beat a path to—if we keep making smart choices right now.

The Government has allocated, and Parliament has approved, \$35 billion for the CIB to fulfill its purpose and functions set out in the *Canada Infrastructure Bank Act*. The CIB is expected to prudently manage its portfolio so the net fiscal expense to the Government of Canada will remain under \$15 billion. You will find at Annex A the Government's priorities for the CIB's investments, advisory and research responsibilities, as well as guidance on government collaboration.

As a Crown Corporation that operates at arm's length from Government, the CIB's Board is responsible for the organization's ongoing governance and supervision of its business, financial investment decisions and forward-planning and strategic direction, in line with the Government of Canada's priorities. The CIB must be open and transparent with Canadians about its operations, investments and decision-making processes, while respecting the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information.

I think that particular paragraph speaks directly to the motion that we have in front of us and the important issues that many of us

have raised with the fact that the motion could very well derail business confidence in the CIB.

It continues:

The *Financial Administration Act* requires the CIB to submit a Corporate Plan for approval by Treasury Board in order to align with the Government on a strategic vision for the organization, as well as approval of operating and capital budgets so that the CIB has financial authority to carry out its purpose and functions.

There is an Annex B:

[It] details the CIB's accountabilities to the federal government, and the Canadian public, including ensuring that the CIB's investments, advisory and research functions create jobs, grow our economy and increase our competitiveness while creating a cleaner and more inclusive future.

To fully realize its purpose and functions, the CIB should draw on a diverse range of talent and perspectives from across Canada as well as international best practices. This includes continued commitment to diversity of the workforce in

—the organization, the CIB—

and efforts to foster the inclusion of a broad range of voices and views in governance and decision-making. In doing so, the CIB should take into consideration Canada's gender, linguistic, cultural and regional diversity, including the unique perspectives of Indigenous Peoples.

The CIB has an unparalleled opportunity to deliver critical and innovative infrastructure projects that maximize taxpayer value and benefit all Canadians, including demonstrating how partnerships among governments and the private sector create jobs and growth, build a more inclusive society and fight climate change.

- (1920)

[The minister is] committed to support [the CIB] and everyone at the CIB to achieve these goals. [Her] department officials, as well as those in partner departments and central agencies, as always will provide the CIB the support it needs to be successful in meeting the infrastructure needs of Canadians and their communities.

As Mr. Rogers has detailed, the government priorities are many. There are five major areas, and I think again it's worth thinking long and hard about how important these areas are.

Public Transit, including major transit projects, and zero-emission buses with a long-term target of \$5 billion in investments.

That's a subject, actually, that the industry, science and technology committee has been hearing a tremendous amount on from witnesses at that committee.

Green Infrastructure, including energy efficient building retrofits, water and wastewater with a long-term target of \$5 billion in investments.

Trade and Transport, including trade corridors, bridges, passenger rail and agricultural infrastructure, with a long-term target of \$5 billion in investments.

Broadband,

—which we have hear so much about—

including for unserved and underserved community broadband connectivity with a long-term target of \$3 billion in investments.

Clean power, including renewables, district energy, storage,...and transmission with a long-term target of \$5 billion in investments.

These five areas are absolutely crucial for us in terms of building back better not only for Canada but also for the opportunity to be a real model for consideration going forward.

As the Government undertakes Canada's first-ever national infrastructure assessment, the CIB will be expected to participate in consultations, research and providing advice, particularly on the role of the private sector in identifying Canada's long-term infrastructure needs and priorities. Such an assessment is considered a global best practice, and is critical as our Government moves into recovery planning and charting the path towards net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Now I will focus on the accountabilities:

The CIB is accountable to the federal government and Canadian public through the mechanisms set out in its enabling legislation, the Canada Infrastructure Bank Act, as well as legislation applicable to all Crown Corporations, including the Financial Administration Act, Access to Information and Privacy Act, and Official Languages Act. The CIB is responsible for meeting all of its legal obligations, including responding to the Duty to Consult to Indigenous groups and ensuring that projects have met environmental assessment and other regulatory requirements.

The CIB's annual Corporate Plan should set out how the CIB will invest, provide advice and conduct research in the priority areas, including by detailing investment strategies and ensuring that investments are revenue-generating and in the public interest. The Corporate Plan should explain the total capital and operating budget for the organization, over a five-year period and should continue to describe how the CIB will conduct due diligence and analysis as it manages its resources and investment portfolio, including under adverse investment scenarios.

In order to guide the development of future Corporate Plans, the CIB must work in partnership with Infrastructure Canada to collaborate with public officials across relevant departments and central agencies to inform project development and the parameters of the CIB's financing initiatives. This engagement will allow the CIB to align with policy priorities, avoid overlap with government programs and assess risks associated with CIB investments.

The CIB must remain accountable to the Government and Canadians through its Corporate Plan, which will include plans to achieve the objectives and outcomes through the CIB's activities. This work will involve a Results and Delivery Framework with a clear articulation of the characteristics, thresholds and risks for investment or initiatives. Additionally, the framework should set out the intended outcomes of a particular initiative, such as economic growth or job creation, impacts on diversity and inclusion, and anticipated greenhouse gas emission reductions.

- (1925)

The CIB is required to produce an Annual Report on its operations and activities that is provided to Infrastructure Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat, and that must be tabled in Parliament. The Annual Report must include information on the CIB's finances, an auditor's report and information on how the CIB has met the objectives and achieved the outcomes set out in its Corporate Plan.

As required by the *Canada Infrastructure Bank Act*, [the minister] will be undertaking a review of the CIB's enabling legislation by mid-2022 to ensure that its provisions and operation enable the corporation to achieve its purpose and functions, and meet the government's policy objectives. This will be an opportunity to review the CIB's impact to-date, consider any landscape changes and lessons learned, and to ensure the CIB remains positioned for success throughout its mandate.

As far as I'm concerned, this statement of priorities and accountabilities is extremely thorough. To a certain extent, it does explain that these are very large projects requiring a huge amount of consultation, consideration and research, and certainly, these are very time-consuming projects to actually deliver, but we're well on the way.

In respect to the Lake Erie Connector project, you may recall from the last meeting we had that it was actually started in 2014, so at this point, to derail it through this particular motion that asks for

information to, as far as I'm concerned, absolutely no purpose other than to jeopardize the future work of the CIB as well....

Mr. Scheer has made it very clear how he feels about the CIB, and it seems to me that the purpose of this motion is simply to have this particular Lake Erie Connector project fail, potentially endanger the future of the CIB, and in that way, become almost a self-fulfilling prophecy that Mr. Scheer keeps hopping on that the CIB at this moment in time is a failure.

Therefore, I will certainly not be accepting the amendment or the original motion.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

- (1930)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jaczek.

I'll now move on to Mr. Fillmore.

Mr. Fillmore, you have the floor.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Thank you very much, Chair.

I want to start my intervention by referencing Mr. Bachrach's point of order.

We're all very focused on the relevance of what we're saying here this evening. The motion itself and the amendment that we're debating now open a very wide and dangerous door. It's not just a door that my colleagues and I are now compelled to walk through. It's actually a door that future investors are going to walk out of, potentially at great loss.

One of the areas that we know is the focus of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, where we're intent on attracting private and institutional capital, and where, if we lose that it could be particularly harmful, is in indigenous infrastructure. The last thing we need right now is a motion or amendment like the ones we're debating, which would jeopardize the Canada Infrastructure Bank's ability to get much needed infrastructure built in places that need it most.

We've spoken, in previous meetings, about the potential harm to investors and what this motion and this amendment might do to them and their willingness to participate. Let's also remember the potential harm to future beneficiaries of these investments. This is very serious business.

I want to just give you a quick quote from Ehren Cory, the CEO of the Canada Infrastructure Bank. He said:

The CIB's initiative is an engagement toward collaborative, respectful and beneficial partnerships with indigenous communities. The CIB is a unique tool to address the infrastructure gap in these communities through innovative financing. This is another example of the CIB taking action and focusing on investment to deliver impactful infrastructure. When indigenous communities grow and thrive in a sustainable manner, all of Canada benefits.

Furthermore, as a press release notes:

The Canada Infrastructure Bank recently announced “the launch of its Indigenous Community Infrastructure Initiative (ICI), which will enable the building of new infrastructure projects in indigenous communities. The CIB initiative is going to generate more investment in projects that are vital to economic growth and to environmental protection with indigenous communities across Canada.

Here is what the Minister of Indigenous Services, Marc Miller, had to say:

The infrastructure gap in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities has existed for far too long. Indigenous Services Canada welcomes the new Indigenous Community Infrastructure Initiative as it will help advance the Government of Canada's commitment to closing the critical infrastructure gap while also supporting wealth and job creation in indigenous communities.

I want to talk for a moment about the experience I had in the 42nd Parliament as the chair of the indigenous and northern affairs committee. In that chair, I led a study on the unforgivably high rates of suicide amongst indigenous youth. As part of that study, the committee members and I—I don't see any of my colleagues from that committee on tonight's committee—had the opportunity to travel to northern and remote communities to understand, see and learn first hand the kind of infrastructure challenges that are present in these communities.

It was a life-changing experience. This is not hyperbole. This was literally a life-changing experience for me. We saw communities in which there were not culturally appropriate facilities for blanket ceremonies, for talking circles or for healing circles. There were not culturally appropriate—or, in fact, humanely appropriate—infrastructure assets in place for medical care, for protecting women and children from abusers or for addictions healing. There wasn't proper energy infrastructure. There wasn't proper transportation infrastructure that allowed indigenous students who were going to the south to learn to be able to come home for important holidays and to reconnect with their family and their elders in a way that they could afford. We all know of the atrocious costs of travel between the north and the south in Canada.

● (1935)

The wake-up call that came from that trip sent me on my own mission. I was heading to New York city to watch a play written by a playhouse in Halifax: 2b Theatre. The play was called *Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story*, with “Old Stock” taken from those unfortunate words spoken by Stephen Harper on the eve of 2015 election, differentiating and essentially creating two categories of Canadian citizens: old stock and new Canadians.

While I was in New York, I took it upon myself to create a meeting at the United Nations with the office that manages the United Nations sustainable development goals. I was so glad that they were willing to grant me an audience.

We spoke for quite a long time about a number of the goals that pertain to reconciliation and the needs of indigenous communities in Canada for more investment and more attention. They were goals like number six, clean water and sanitation; goals like number one, no poverty; goals like number 17, partnerships for the goals; number 16, peace and justice; number 14, life below water; and number 11, which I wear on my T-shirt whenever it's clean—it's often not clean because I wear it so much—sustainable cities and communities.

It was a profound moment for me to be visiting that office on the 24th floor, it might have been, of the United Nations building on the banks of the East River. What they said to me was that the work that Canada is leading in reconciliation is leading the world. Now, this was in 2018. We've come a long way since then and, of course, we have a long way to go, and the CIB, the Canada Infrastructure Bank, is part of the way in which we are going to get across the distance we need to get across with reconciliation in Canada.

That was another life-changing experience: sitting in that office with those professionals who have dedicated their lives to the UN SDGs and, in particular, those who serve indigenous communities.

As stated, first nations, Inuit and Métis communities will have “the opportunity to partner with the [Canada Infrastructure Bank] to make innovative investments in...projects” that are going to help address the infrastructure gaps in indigenous communities. I want to tell you what Perry Bellegarde, the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, said about this. He said:

The Canada Infrastructure Bank...Initiative is a major step toward closing the infrastructure gap in First Nations, while prioritizing green energy projects—

—like the Erie Connector—

in the overall effort toward climate action. I support the efforts of the CIB to work directly with First Nations in meaningful and collaborative ways that will lead to much needed investments toward better infrastructure and sustainable economic growth.

That was from National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

The projects that the Canada Infrastructure Bank enables have the potential to provide more low-carbon energy supplies. They have the potential to provide enhanced energy security, reduced greenhouse gases and improved broadband connectivity.

I should have mentioned that when we were studying the high rates of suicide among indigenous youth, online connectivity is a major and even fundamental cause of that.... We landed in Iqaluit and, like many people, once I found my way to where I was going to sleep that night, I tried to open my laptop to check Facebook to see what my constituents were saying and who was trying to reach me. I could not get on Facebook. Now, imagine being a young person whose entire social life is based around the Internet and not being able to get on Facebook because of poor digital infrastructure.

Let's not trivialize it by just talking about social infrastructure. This is also the infrastructure of commerce, of innovation and of health and telehealth. These are fundamental investments that are needed in first nations communities for them to live the life that people on this committee, including me, take for granted every single day. We must not take them for granted. We must do everything in our power to enable them.

Community-based revenue-generating projects can be from any one of the CIB's priority sectors, be they green infrastructure, clean power, broadband, public transit, trade or transportation, as I've discussed.

• (1940)

This program, the ICII, the indigenous community infrastructure initiative, is a major step towards investing in infrastructure projects that benefit indigenous communities. Now, one party present on this committee has put a few stakes in the ground on the importance of investing in infrastructure for first nations communities. I would hope for them to be able to open their eyes a little bit wider and see that this dangerous, reckless motion, and this equally reckless amendment, are a roadblock to providing the exact kind of help they campaigned on and testify to in the House of Commons on a near daily basis.

The indigenous community infrastructure initiative was developed with input from indigenous leaders, communities and infrastructure organizations to create an initiative that will support access to capital for community-based projects. I would like to quote from Natan Obed—I'd like to call him a friend, but he's at least an acquaintance—who is the president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Mr. Obed said:

Major long-term investments are essential to build the infrastructure Inuit need to thrive. Innovative programs like the ICII add to the financial tools we can use to begin to address the longstanding infrastructure gap between Inuit Nunangat and other parts of Canada.

He's just asking to begin to close the gap. Please let us not let this motion and this amendment prevent Natan from his work of allowing his community to begin to close the gap.

In connection with the launch of the indigenous community infrastructure initiative, the Canada Infrastructure Bank has expanded its specialized indigenous investment team to provide advice, develop projects with indigenous communities and conduct internal due diligence on all project investment opportunities. The Canada Infrastructure Bank is taking action quickly, following the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities' statement of priorities and accountabilities to the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which sets a target of at least \$1 billion in indigenous infrastructure across its priority sectors. That's \$1 billion. This motion and this amendment are putting a roadblock in front of that.

Now, I've spoken about the need that I saw first-hand and that I think members on the committee here have seen first-hand. There is an abject need for investment in the infrastructure of indigenous communities in Canada. We must not let frivolous, partisan motions stand in the way of that.

This is what Minister McKenna had to say:

We have a huge opportunity to work in partnership with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities to get important infrastructure built which benefits their communities economically, creates jobs and addresses the Indigenous infrastructure deficit. That's why I set a new target for the Canada Infrastructure Bank to invest at least \$1 billion in revenue-generating infrastructure projects in partnership with and that benefit Indigenous Peoples. I am very pleased that as part of this initiative, the CIB will advance smaller-scale projects and will drive progress towards that target.

Now, I want to remind my fellow committee members that the Canada Infrastructure Bank is designed to act as a catalyst—a catalyst—for revenue-generating infrastructure projects that are in the public interest and that support economic growth for the benefit of Canadians. It's not designed to be a repellent. It's not designed to be susceptible to motions and amendments that cause the CIB to be

come a repellent to these kinds of investments, as the opposition parties seem to want it to be. The indigenous community infrastructure initiative is a sign of further momentum for the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which is focused on executing its growth plan to make investments in community, make investments in projects in priority sectors and get more infrastructure built to grow the economy over the long term.

This is a nice moment to share with committee members what David Chartrand, national spokesperson and vice-president of the MNC, the Métis National Council, had to say. He said:

There are many areas where lack of infrastructure holds back the social and economic development of Métis communities. We believe the [Canada Infrastructure Bank]'s initiative is an important step towards closing the infrastructure gap in our communities, as the Government of Canada committed to work with the Métis Nation to close this gap by 2030.

• (1945)

Those are the words repeated again and again by indigenous leaders: close the gap, invest in communities, help our people. This is what the CIB can do.

As an example of the growth plan in action, the Canada Infrastructure Bank's recently announced memorandum of understanding on the Oneida energy storage project is a partnership between NRStor Inc. and Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation for the largest energy storage facility in Canada. Investment in our first nations' communities, moving Canada toward a low-carbon economy, creating jobs, building an inclusive economy in which all Canadians can participate is at the core of the Canada Infrastructure Bank's mandate.

I want to dwell for a moment, if I can, Mr. Chair, on the Oneida energy storage project. This is an incredible opportunity in Canada and for first nations' economic growth. Another area that the CIB is making great progress on, as we discussed, is clean energy projects, like the Erie Connector and many others.

These benefit Canadians economically, and they also benefit our citizens and future generations by helping to combat climate change.

If members on this committee can recall, the last time we were all knocking on doors in 2019, it wasn't just the mid-career professionals and retirees who were talking about climate change. It was students, youth and older Canadians whom I had never heard talk about climate change as a serious issue before for the reason that their kids are talking about it. It was dinner-time conversation in Canadian households across the country.

This battle against global climate change is so very important, and it's also an area where large pools of private and institutional capital can be tapped to get even more built even faster to benefit Canadians. This is what we mean when we say you can't have a strong climate plan without a strong economy.

Climate action is an economic development proposal. It will create jobs, it will save the planet, it will provide a future for our children. If the opposition gets its way and decides to intentionally impede the Canada Infrastructure Bank's ability to fulfill its mission, we are not going to be able to perform at our highest calibre. We are going to be hampered in reaching our net-zero commitments.

I would like to give you a good recent example of the Canada Infrastructure Bank's making a difference on a clean energy project.

The CIB, the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and Oneida Energy Storage LP announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding earlier this year for the Oneida energy storage project in Ontario. Oneida Energy Storage LP is a joint venture between NRStor Incorporated and, as I mentioned, Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation. This MOU confirms the CIB's collaboration with Oneida Energy Storage LP in support of the project. The CIB and Oneida Energy Storage LP have an agreement on the parameters around a CIB investment in the project, which will be confirmed imminently by further due diligence and a final investment decision in the spring of 2021.

This partnership is another step forward toward the CIB's delivering new clean power infrastructure as part of its \$10 billion growth plan.

This is a project that checks so many of the boxes that we urgently need to be checking: investment in first nations, clean energy, job creation, economic growth, recovery from a pandemic. It is all here. This is what the CIB is for.

- (1950)

The Oneida energy storage project represents the largest project of its kind in Canada. The proposed Oneida energy storage project includes development of a 250-megawatt/1000-megawatt-hour energy storage facility in southwestern Ontario. The facility would provide clean, reliable power capacity. It would draw and store existing surplus, baseload and renewable energy during off-peak periods, to flatten those peaks and troughs that we know about from renewable energy generation. Power would be released to the Ontario grid when energy demand is at its peak. In addition, the energy storage facility would help stabilize Ontario's electricity sector by providing important grid balancing services.

By helping to better use the existing assets of Ontario customers, great efficiencies would be secured, leading to a more affordable and cost-effective electricity system.

What would be the benefit of the CIB's involvement in this project? The CIB engages and builds relationships with all levels of government—at least in the absence of such harmful motions as the one we're currently debating—and with indigenous communities and private and institutional investors. Its team of infrastructure experts conducts market analysis and provides special commercial and investment expertise, including innovative financial modelling, project structuring and procurement options to support project sponsors.

You can hear in this the language of relationships, the language of trust, the language of contractual fairness, the language of rea-

sonableness, which this motion and this amendment fly in the face of.

Here are some endorsement for this approach:

The CIB is excited to be part of this project as it has the potential to deliver sustainable, reliable and affordable energy for customers in Ontario. The project is founded on a strong partnership between an innovative Canadian energy company and a First Nation community. The CIB is proud to support this partnership.

—as we all should be, as members of this committee.

As part of the Growth Plan, the CIB has a goal of investing \$2.5 billion in clean energy projects across Canada within three years. The CIB will continue to encourage projects which include meaningful Indigenous community participation.

That is something that Ehren Cory, the CEO of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, said.

Now, Annette Verschuren is a name we know in the east. She's made her name known throughout Canada. She's the CEO and founder of NRStor, among many other entries in a long and notable resume. She said:

Energy storage is a game-changer that can help to enable Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy and make Ontario a global leader in cleantech innovation. We are excited to work with industry-leading partners on the Oneida project to deliver grid efficiencies at scale resulting in meaningful savings for rate payers. We believe Oneida will be just the first of many exciting storage projects on our country's horizon.

Elected Chief Mark Hill of Six Nations of the Grand River had this to say:

The Oneida Energy Storage project has the potential of contributing significantly to our mission of achieving economic self-sufficiency for the people of Six Nations.

Just let that sink in for a moment: “the potential of contributing significantly to our mission of achieving economic self-sufficiency for the people of Six Nations”.

Reconciliation is about self government. It's about self-direction. It's about economic independence. It's about empowering residents of a nation to build economic opportunity and to provide for themselves, to enrich themselves and to give their kids the same opportunities that the rest of us on this committee enjoy.

Matt Jamieson, president and CEO of Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation, said:

We are thrilled to partner with NRStor to develop energy storage as the means through which energy savings can be realized while providing reliable clean energy to our communities and businesses.

Those are First Nations communities and First Nations businesses he's talking about.

Greg Rickford is the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and the Minister of Indigenous Affairs in Ontario, and he said:

Ontario is uniquely positioned to take advantage of energy storage solutions and I congratulate the Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation, NRStor and the Canadian Infrastructure Bank on this important project milestone today.

I understand from engaging in debate on this motion with committee members over the last several weeks—it might be two weeks; it might be more—that they, as opposition members, would like to substitute their judgment and their belief for these indigenous leaders, for these infrastructure leaders, for these community leaders. I must say, it is offensive.

• (1955)

We have created, through consultation, the Canada Infrastructure Bank. We have created, through consultation, the indigenous infrastructure investment organization—the indigenous community infrastructure initiative—to allow the will of first nations communities in Canada to proceed and for their leadership to provide for the needs of their communities.

This will close the gap of some of those terrible situations I described to you, which I witnessed first-hand from being on the indigenous and northern affairs committee, and which have led, in the worst cases, to suicide and many other shades of horror. These are present in indigenous and first nation communities, and they are directly traceable back to insufficient investment in infrastructure.

That is what we're trying to change. It is incumbent upon us, in 2021, in the context of the United Nations sustainable development goals, the mandate of the Canada Infrastructure Bank and the indigenous community infrastructure initiative to allow these programs to proceed, not by throwing roadblocks in their way or to discourage investment, but instead by removing roadblocks to accelerate their success, and to always keep in mind the end-user, the beneficiary, our community members from across this country, first nations and others alike.

Bringing it full circle back to the government's intention here, I want to tell you what Catherine McKenna, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, said:

Renewable energy projects in partnership with Indigenous communities - like the Oneida Energy Storage project with the CIB, Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation and NRStor Inc. - are a great example of how our economy will grow in the future and how forward-looking investments can help Canadians achieve their economic and environmental goals. Investors here in Canada and from around the world are looking to locate and create jobs in places that innovate in this way, helping them reduce carbon emissions and be more competitive at the same time.

She's talking there about the attraction of foreign capital, of investors from outside of our borders, to help make our communities better, to help us face the challenges of the future, to help us face the fight against climate change, to help us recover from the economic scourges of the pandemic, to help us build an economy that brings everybody along with it, so that we all prosper equally and no one is left behind. We don't just focus on those who stand to profit; we focus on those who must survive, and whom these projects can help to survive.

One of the reasons I'm surprised to see this motion moved by the Conservatives is that their ideological brothers and sisters in the Prairies have a lot of very nice things to say about the Canada Infrastructure Bank and its ability to get important new projects off the ground.

I'm not sure why the NDP and the Bloc are swimming in the wake of the Conservatives on this. Perhaps they'll have something

to say about that themselves, and about why they want to block, for example, investment in indigenous communities.

However, for the moment, Alberta's government, together with the Canada Infrastructure Bank and eight irrigation districts, is modernizing irrigation infrastructure to create jobs, to expand agricultural production, and to diversify value-added food processing.

We're talking about 21st century economies here, about bringing a workforce from a shrinking means of production to a growing means of production, and helping to continue to grow the economy of Alberta. An \$815-million investment will modernize the irrigation district infrastructure, and increase water storage capacity, creating up to 6,800 direct and indirect permanent jobs, and up to 1,280 construction jobs.

• (2000)

Indeed, Jason Kenney said:

This historic investment in irrigation infrastructure will create thousands of jobs and support Alberta's economic recovery, while strengthening our competitive advantage.

He went on to say:

Agriculture is the beating heart of Alberta's economy and as global demand for agri-food products continues to grow, our producers and irrigation districts will be better positioned to meet that demand for generations to come.

Again, he was talking about historic expansion for irrigation in Alberta at the hands of the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

Michael Sabia, the former chair of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, had this to say:

The [CIB] is very pleased about the opportunity to invest \$407 million in agricultural infrastructure to grow Alberta's economy and create jobs. This project is the single largest irrigation expansion in Alberta's history. Our investment is an example of the CIB's \$10 billion Growth Plan in action. We look forward to developing more projects with the Government of Alberta, to invest in its infrastructure and to strengthen and diversify the province's economy.

Catherine McKenna, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, said about this project:

Today's irrigation investment announcement shows the immediate and tangible results delivered by the Canada Infrastructure Bank through its new three-year \$10 billion Growth Plan to improve [the] lives of Albertans and Canadians. This Thanksgiving, we can be thankful that further improvements to Alberta's already diverse agri-food sector will boost food production while strengthening Canada's food security and expanding [our] export opportunities. Through its Investing in Canada Plan, the Government of Canada is helping build sustainable modern public infrastructure, creating jobs, and making Canada more globally competitive.

Devin Dreesen is the Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, and he had this to say:

[The] visionary investment in agriculture is made possible thanks to the partnership between Alberta's government, the CIB and irrigation districts. [The] expansion will see hundreds of kilometres of pipelines built, contribute about \$436 million annually to Alberta's GDP, and create over 8,000 jobs. The more than 200,000 acres of new irrigated farmland created from this expansion is roughly a third of P.E.I.'s total farmland. Alberta started out and always will be an agriculture powerhouse.

Let's just go back to his words. This is a "partnership between Alberta's government, the CIB and irrigation districts". Had any three of those partners been asked, as this motion asks, to show the competitive details of an infrastructure project, commercially sensitive, proprietary information, the door that this motion opens, I think we would have seen these partners walking out that door and not in through it.

Marie-Claude Bibeau, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, said this:

This is a major development for Alberta farmers. Through the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and with our provincial counterparts, this investment will leverage private sector partners to significantly increase the acreage of irrigated land in southern Alberta. For farmers of grains, pulses, and other crops, this will not only increase the yields of their crops, but also the long-term sustainability of their operations.

The CIB said:

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding amongst all parties and agreement in principle for the CIB to invest about \$407.5 million in this project, to be paid back by the irrigation districts, represents an innovative approach to...a unique asset class.

Projects focus on increasing water conveyance efficiency and allowing more acres to be irrigated with the same amount of water.

It said that modernizing and building new irrigation infrastructure would increase irrigated acreage, increase primary crop production, improve water use efficiency, increase water storage capacity, enhance water security, and provide flood protection to support long-term value-added processing activity. The Government of Alberta will contribute \$244.5 million to this and the irrigation districts are contributing \$163 million towards this important work.

Dan Shute, board chair of the Western Irrigation District, said:

This is a historic day, for the Western Irrigation District and for irrigated agriculture. A generational investment is being made to ensure productivity and stability of Alberta farms long into the future. With this funding, we will expand irrigation, increase water efficiency, and make the service we provide to our water users even more secure.

● (2005)

Only two months after this investment was announced, it was able to reach financial close so that the work could begin.

This is what's at stake here when we talk about the Erie Connector and the importance of preserving the legislative privacy of that deal. Do we want this project to proceed? Do we want it to proceed after lengthy court dealings? Do we want it to be terminated because of commercially sensitive information being revealed? Do we want it tied up in court because this motion is asking the Canada Infrastructure Bank to violate its own legislation, and to violate the trust of the investors and partners in that project? This is what's at stake:

[In December] the Canada Infrastructure Bank... Alberta's government and eight irrigation districts... formalized an agreement for the Alberta Irrigation Project with the CIB investing \$407.5 million.

The Alberta government will contribute \$244.5 million, and the...districts will contribute \$163 million to build modern irrigation infrastructure and significantly expand irrigable land opportunities.

Achieving financial close signifies all contractual steps have been completed. All partners have worked diligently to close the transaction after signing a memorandum of understanding in October. The project is the single largest irrigation expansion in Alberta's history and will help grow Alberta's economy and create jobs.

Look, just in that paragraph, it states: "signifies all contractual steps have been completed. All partners have worked diligently to close the transaction." They have signed a memorandum of understanding to create the single largest project of irrigation expansion in Alberta's history.

Trust is paramount in deals of this magnitude in which we're trying to attract private and institutional investment to make the lives of Canadians that we all represent, that we were all elected and sent to this place to represent, better.

Now, when the deal was completed, Ehren Cory, the CEO of the Infrastructure Bank of Canada, said:

The CIB is delivering on its commitment to invest \$407.5 million to expand irrigation infrastructure in southern Alberta. This is an innovative deal that will create jobs and new infrastructure. Today marks our first financial close under the Growth Plan, our first investment in Alberta and our first opportunity in agriculture. We are just getting started and look forward to more opportunities to attract new investment to Alberta.

"Just getting started"—isn't that what Natan Obed said? Let us get started helping these communities. Let us not scare these opportunities away. Let us not send them running to the hills, running for other investment opportunities that don't have such a high invest public use and public good as these do.

Devin Dreeschen, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, said upon the closure of the deal:

This is a massive deal for farmers, ranchers and food processors across Alberta. Our province is a leader in Canadian agriculture, and more irrigated acres means more investments, local jobs and the ability to feed a growing global population. Irrigation already contributes up to \$3.6 billion to Alberta's GDP, and this deal will further diversify our economy, which is good news for Albertans and Alberta farm families.

Well, is it ever. In this era of low oil prices, of corporate movements away from petroleum extraction, large corporations even like Suncor and others in the west are making new plans for the future that are not reliant on petroleum. Albertans need new opportunities. The Canada Infrastructure Bank in conjunction with other federal programs can provide those opportunities. It must provide those opportunities.

● (2010)

Catherine McKenna, again, at the close of the deal, said the following in citing the Alberta minister:

The Canada Infrastructure Bank's \$407 million investment in irrigation in Alberta will boost food production, bring long-term sustainability to farmers and create thousands of jobs. The single largest expansion in irrigation in Alberta is moving ahead. Under their new three-year \$10 billion Growth Plan, the Canada Infrastructure Bank is delivering immediate and tangible results for Albertans and for Canadians.

I feel as though my colleagues on the government bench and I will have made the case by now that this motion is foolhardy and works at cross-purposes to the reasons each of us were elected to come to this place to serve our constituents. This motion would frustrate investment in communities at the very moment when it's needed most, at a time of climate crisis, at a time of economic crisis and at a time of an equity and inclusion crisis. These projects must be given every opportunity to proceed and not be damaged or hindered in the opposition's hopes of scoring partisan points in what may be an election year.

I really hope that the opposition members are allowing some of this to sink in. Perhaps even one paragraph of the many that I've shared here tonight might sink in, might get past that their defences, so that you might consider quietly over your coffee tomorrow morning, or as you rest your head on your pillow tonight and try to slow your brain down, the communities that are at stake here and the kind of investment they need.

My friends from Quebec will know that the Governments of Canada and Quebec recently announced a major investment in the Réseau express métropolitain at the Montréal-Trudeau International Airport. Since we're debating a motion that seeks to undermine the ability of the Canada Infrastructure Bank to get new projects built, let's take a look at another recent announcement that may not have happened without the Canada Infrastructure Bank, the commitment to build the new REM, the REM station at the Montréal-Trudeau International Airport.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic has had a completely unprecedented impact on all areas of society, infrastructure projects are going to be crucial to economic recovery. Go back to the Great Depression under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who responded to the depression with the New Deal. Substantial generational investments in community infrastructure are what transform communities, put people back to work and cause economic recovery, all while rebuilding communities for future generations to be able to live happy, prosperous, fulfilled lives in wonderful, functional communities.

These projects are going to create good-paying jobs. They are going to grow the economy. They will improve the daily lives of Quebecers and all Canadians and build a better tomorrow. The construction of the Réseau express métropolitain, the REM station at the Montréal-Trudeau International Airport, will help reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility and connectivity to the airport by offering an environmentally sustainable link between downtown Montreal and the airport.

I'm sure that members of the committee are aware that other world cities are undertaking very similar investments by connecting their airports. The necessity of land consumption tends to be on the outskirts of—

• (2015)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Kusie.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Thank you very much.

I see that it's 15 minutes past the hour. I'm wondering if we will be concluding today on the half-hour or if we will be going past that.

The Chair: That's a great question. I have asked the clerk to give me some indication on how long we can go on for tonight. He is checking with his people, and he will be getting back to me. I can probably give you that answer, hopefully within the next five or 10 minutes.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay, thank you, Chair.

Second, is it your intention to suspend the meeting or to adjourn the meeting?

The Chair: It depends if we're still in debate. If we're still in debate on this amendment, I will be suspending. If we get by this, and we get to a vote, then I'll have the opportunity to adjourn.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: I just want to make it clear that we will not be giving consent to suspend; we wish to adjourn. If my counterparts in the other parties would like to express their thoughts regarding that, they certainly can. I just want to express that we will be looking to adjourn and not suspend when the meeting concludes.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kusie.

Mr. Fillmore, go ahead.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was just talking about the kinds of projects that are at risk with such a reckless motion.

We want Canada to be a competitive country on the global stage. We want our cities to help to lead our economies.

As we know, economic activity and success in our cities help to fund investment in communities across the country. One thing that world cities—Paris, Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and others around the globe—have been focusing on of late is connecting their airports—which, for reasons of land consumption, tend to be on the outskirts, in suburban or exurban areas—by high-speed rail.

This transforms.... All of us on this committee have probably had to drive in from Pearson airport to downtown Toronto on a rainy night on those miserable 12-lane highways. Wouldn't you rather have sat in a nice train and glided silently while you had a nap, reflected on your day's work or read the newspaper? That's what global cities are doing. That's what the REM project, the Réseau express Métropolitain, promises—a kind of environmentally sustainable connection between downtown Montreal and the airport.

Just last month, the Minister of Transport, the Honourable Omar Alghabra; the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, the Honourable Catherine McKenna; the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Quebec lieutenant, the Honourable Pablo Rodriguez; Quebec's Minister of Economy and Innovation, Mr. Pierre Fitzgibbon; Quebec's Minister for Transport and Minister Responsible for the Metropolis and Montreal Region, Ms. Chantal Rouleau; and the chief executive officer of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, Mr. Ehren Cory, together announced a \$500 million financial package to support l'aéroport du Montréal and to enable the construction of the REM station at Montreal-Trudeau International Airport.

If anyone didn't catch those names, I'm happy to repeat them, Mr. Chair.

The construction of the REM station, an estimated \$600 million project, will be led by l'aéroport du Montréal, with financial contributions from the following organizations. Transport Canada is investing up to \$100 million in funding as part of a program to support large airports, as announced in the fall economic statement of November 2020. The Government of Quebec, through Investissement Québec, is providing a loan of up to \$100 million to l'aéroport du Montréal. The Canada Infrastructure Bank is providing a loan of up to \$300 million to build on its previous \$1.3 billion investment in the REM. L'aéroport du Montréal is providing up to \$100 million in addition to reimbursing the loans granted by the Canada Infrastructure Bank and the Quebec government.

The Montreal-Trudeau International Airport plays a significant role in Montreal's economy and in the lives of Montrealers. The station at this airport has been a cornerstone of the REM vision since the project's inception. I'm sure every member of this committee and others who are listening have flown into Trudeau airport, and have found their way to various points in Montreal via that airport. We would also have wished to avoid the white-knuckle ride in a private automobile on the expressway during rush hour.

This project will allow seamless connectivity between the airport and Montreal's transit system. It will benefit the greater metropolitan region by improving mobility and connectivity, and it will contribute to Quebec's and the rest of Canada's efforts to address the threat of climate change.

We haven't heard what the Honourable Omar Alghabra has to say yet about these kinds of investments. He's the Minister of Transport in this government, who said:

As Canada looks ahead to economic recovery, transportation and tourism will be vital while we build back better. Our government clearly stated its commitment to ensuring that critical infrastructure projects at Canadian airports was a priority. The funding announced today will ensure that Montrealers and all Canadians benefit from an efficient and green connectivity to the Montréal-Trudeau International Airport.

● (2020)

Catherine McKenna is back and here's what she had to say about REM:

[This] announcement that the new Réseau express métropolitain station at [Pierre Elliot Trudeau] will be able to go ahead with support from the federal government, the province, and a \$300 million investment from the Canada Infrastructure Bank demonstrates our commitment to this critical Montreal project and to the importance of integrating the airport to the broader...transit system.

We look forward to continued investments in public transit in Quebec that reduce congestion, create jobs and economic growth, tackle climate change and improve the lives of Quebecers.

Pablo Rodriguez—you may recognize that name; he's the leader of the government in the House of Commons and the Quebec lieutenant—said:

Today, through the collaboration between the governments of Canada and, Quebec, and the Canada Infrastructure Bank, we are announcing that the Réseau express métropolitain station will be built at the Montréal-Trudeau International Airport. Just as we have been doing from the beginning, we will continue to work with Quebec and our partners to support Quebecers.

Monsieur Pierre Fitzgibbon, Minister of Economy and Innovation for the Province of Quebec, said:

The agreement between the governments of Quebec and Canada, and the...Infrastructure Bank [of Canada], is the realization of a strategic project for Montreal and will make it possible for the Montreal-Trudeau International Airport to rely on modern infrastructures. I believe that all Montrealers, Quebecers and travellers are looking forward to using the new REM station at this airport, which is in fact a window on all of Quebec.

Ms. Chantal Rouleau, Minister for Transport and Minister Responsible for the Metropolis and the Montréal Region, had this to say:

In the context of the pandemic, which had a major impact on airports, the contribution of the Government of Quebec and the other financial partners, is essential. Montréal, just like any other big city, should have its own intermodal mass transit network. This station and the rest of the REM roll-out clearly represents the strong links of public transportation system in the greater Montréal region. This is why we believe that a direct access to the passenger terminal through the REM, and therefore the construction of this station, is [critical].

I want to just finish off here with two final testimonials. One, not surprisingly, is from Mr. Ehren Cory, the chief executive officer of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, who said about this project:

The [CIB] is proud to be a key investor in the REM project, and to contribute in a bigger way to connect Montréal's citizens to their airport. Montréal, and Quebec, have ambitious plans for green and sustainable infrastructure and the Canada Infrastructure Bank looks forward to being a key partner in transit and more. The opportunity is to accelerate projects that both support economic growth and protect the environment. Together, we can have real impact in building net-zero communities and sustainable, world-class cities.

Key in what he said there—and you heard it—is that the bank “looks forward to being a key partner in transit” projects like this “and more.” Well, I hope that it gets the chance to be a key partner. I hope that it does not have its knees cut out from under it by this thoughtless motion.

I'm going to close with a quote from Monsieur Philippe Rainville, president and chief executive officer of Aéroports de Montréal, who said:

By responding to the request for loan financing, the Canada Infrastructure Bank and the Québec government - along with the Canadian government through its generous direct contribution - have demonstrated exceptional solidarity in this matter. We can now finally say that the REM will be coming to Montréal-Trudeau International Airport. Their financial contribution was essential for the construction of our station. For Aéroports de Montréal, it was unimaginable to pass up on a project that will provide a reliable and sustainable public transit option serving the Montréal-Trudeau International Airport, as is the case of all major cities around the world. The airport station is highly strategic for the REM network since it will not only enhance Montréal's competitiveness but also ensure the attractiveness of the airport for passengers and employees in the community. The REM project is also a structuring project that will benefit the entire Quebec community.

● (2025)

Mr. Chair, I can't wait to ride on that link from Pierre Elliott Trudeau to downtown Montreal.

I will leave my remarks there.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fillmore.

Next on the list, we have Mr. Scheer.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to simply move that the committee be now adjourned.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Scheer.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6, nays 5)

The Chair: Thank you, members.

We will now adjourn.

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