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## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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EVIDENCE

**Wednesday, April 14, 2010**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Hedy Fry**



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Wednesday, April 14, 2010

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)):** It being 3:30, I will call the meeting to order and welcome our witnesses.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), this committee is doing a study on increasing the participation of women in non-traditional occupations. We have been hearing many witnesses from many different non-traditional occupations, who have been telling us what those challenges are and ways they recommend we can overcome those challenges.

Today we have four groups: the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association, Engineers Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Women in Mining Canada.

Just for the witnesses' information, there are ten minutes for each group to present. So with four groups, there will be forty minutes of presentations. You may decide among yourselves who will speak during that ten minutes: you can share the time or one person may be the spokesperson. After that, we have questions and answers. During the question period, everyone may be able to participate as you see fit, if you have further information that you need to give us. We are always short of time in getting get through the rounds of questions and answers.

We will start with the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association. We have Ms. Palmer Nelson, the president elect, and Judy Lux, a communications specialist in health policy. From Engineers Canada, we have Marie Carter, the chief operating officer, and Gabriela Del Toro, manager of research and diversity. Then we have the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with Louise LaFrance and Suzanne Babisky. Finally, we have Women in Mining, represented by Mary Ann Mihychuk.

We'll begin with the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association.

**Ms. Palmer Nelson (President-Elect, Canadian Dental Hygienists Association):** Good afternoon.

I am Palmer Nelson, president-elect of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association. This is my colleague, Judy Lux. She's the health policy communication specialist at CDHA.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Dental hygienists are primary oral health care providers, guided by the principles of social justice, who specialize in services related to clinical therapy, oral health education, and health promotion.

The dental hygiene profession is comprised of 95% women and 5% men. Since the inception of the profession in 1947, dental hygienists have primarily been employed in dental offices. However, recent changes in provincial legislation have enabled the majority of dental hygienists in Canada to practise outside of the dental office.

Owning a business was once the domain of men. However, many women are now starting businesses, and dental hygienists are eager to take on this business opportunity.

Due to this new legislation, a growing number of dental hygienists are establishing private businesses. They are making an important contribution to improving access to care, increasing choices for the public, and improving the oral health of all Canadians. These dental hygiene businesswomen are collaborating with a wide range of health professionals, including nurse practitioners, physicians, denturists, dieticians, occupational therapists, and speech language therapists.

The importance of these interprofessional practices cannot be overemphasized given the link between oral health and overall health. Previously we thought that the most devastating effect of periodontal disease, which is what we call gum disease, was tooth loss. Now we are beginning to understand the link between oral diseases and other diseases. Untreated gum disease can have serious consequences. Research has shown a link between gum disease and respiratory disease, heart disease, and pre-term low-weight babies. These babies continue to experience health complications for the rest of their lives, compromising their quality of life and placing a drain on an already drained health care system.

In addition, the research shows that there is a two-way relationship between periodontal disease and diabetes. Uncontrolled diabetes is linked to gum disease and vice versa. If oral health is not well maintained, it complicates the lives of two million Canadians with diabetes.

This health issue has become a hot topic given the new health surveillance data indicating that the number of individuals with diabetes is rapidly growing. Because chronic diseases, dental decay, periodontal disease, and oral cancer are totally preventable, dental hygiene practitioners, working in their own businesses, can directly contribute to the health of Canadians.

Dental hygiene businesses are using new service delivery models that enable them to provide services where clients need them. Businesses are being established in multidisciplinary health clinics and in corporate office settings. Mobile businesses are bringing services to long-term and residential care facilities, remote communities, and housebound clients. Approximately 40% of the new dental hygiene businesses report a significant increase in their senior client population, a vulnerable and high-need population.

Dental hygienists are using their full scope of practice, which was not utilized in a dental office, where the service emphasis was on treatment and not prevention. The majority of these new dental hygiene businesses provide oral health education group sessions for the public as well as other health professionals. This prevention focus is in keeping with the goals established by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Minister of Health.

With adequate health human resource planning, dental hygiene businesses have significant potential to improve oral health outcomes for Canadians. Health human resource planning is a key priority for a number of health care stakeholder groups, including the federal, provincial, and territorial governments.

CDHA recommends two fundamental health human resource planning steps. The first step is to gather reliable data about dental hygiene businesses to accurately inform health human resources and business planning to optimize the existing and future workforce to meet the health care demands of Canadians. There is also a need to conduct a gap analysis of business skills and knowledge, since currently dental hygiene education does not include business development issues.

• (1535)

It can be argued that knowledge of workforce trends such as demographics, retirement patterns, and inflow and outflow of health care providers are important when determining the delivery models best suited to provide care to Canadians.

The second step is to develop information on efficient, cost-effective recommendations, actions, and planning tools for dental hygiene business owners. This step would involve identifying and encouraging the application of a body of best practice service delivery and business models. A plan must also be developed to address the gaps in skills and knowledge.

Steps one and two will allow female-dominated dental hygiene businesses to effectively compete with other oral health businesses by improving productivity, business performance, and responsiveness to clients' needs. It will also help foster the development and implementation of policies of an oral health care system and strategies to address health care system priorities. The data is intended to be used by all levels of government; researchers; stakeholders; advocacy groups; private and public organizations,

including dental hygiene education institutions and dental hygiene professional organizations; and dental hygienists themselves.

Steps one and two directly align with federal priorities set out by Health Canada's health human resource strategy division, including health workforce optimization and practice environment revitalization. CDHA calls on the federal government to support the health human resources planning for dental hygiene businesses and we look forward to working together on these issues.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you. You're the only one presenting, Ms. Nelson, are you?

Thank you very much. That was great, seven minutes. That's fabulous.

The engineers of Canada, Ms. Carter.

**Ms. Marie Carter (Chief Operating Officer, Engineers Canada):** Thank you.

I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to speak with you today and to contribute to your study into increasing the participation of women in non-traditional occupations. My occupation is in fact a traditional occupation, it's just not traditional to have women in it.

It's really nice to be in a room full of such accomplished women. I'm quite accustomed to presenting to rooms full of men in my business.

Engineers Canada is a national organization of the 12 provincial and territorial associations and orders that regulate the profession of engineering in Canada. The regulators license the professional engineers. There are in excess of 160,000 professional engineers now in Canada.

My name is Marie Carter. I'm the chief operating officer at Engineers Canada. I'm also a professional engineer. With me is Gabriela Del Toro. As mentioned earlier, Gabriela is our manager of research and diversity. In our diversity portfolio, women in engineering is quite high on our radar, as is the incorporation of Canada's indigenous population into our profession.

As do many of the witnesses you have heard from in the course of your study, the engineering profession recognizes the value that women engineers can bring. We also recognize that there remain challenges to attracting and retaining women into the profession. I'm going to provide you with a bit of the whole numbers picture for what we're talking about.

In spite of having advanced significantly in the last 50 years, women still face barriers to participating fully in the engineering workforce. Currently, approximately 10% of licensed professional engineers are women. If we take a moment to consider the Canadian population as a whole and the fact that more than 50% of our workforce is made up of women, then having a small population of women in the engineering profession demonstrates that it's really still not as diverse and vibrant as it should be and certainly could be. The lack of diversity is now being seen in fewer and fewer professions. We remain one of the last truly male-dominated professions in the country.

There are a number of challenges to engaging women in engineering and to keeping them there, and I'll mention a couple of them. A lack of mentors in the field, an absence of an understanding of what women can offer to engineering and what engineering can offer to women, and old attitudes about both the profession and the place of women in it are just a few of the challenges that we face.

In terms of providing mentors and role models, there's a much smaller pool of potential female candidates to draw from. We continue to go back to just a couple that we have in the country, and we use the same role models again and again. We'd like to increase the pool of potential women engineers and retain them, and in order to do that, I believe, we must change people's understanding about what the profession has to offer as career choices for women. I made that plural—"as career choices"—because engineering is not a single choice. There are a number of choices of engineering fields.

The development of this understanding needs to happen and start at a very young age. A recent study we carried out, called the "Engineering and Technology Labour Market Study", which was sponsored through the federal government, surveyed young women about their attitudes towards math and science and careers in engineering and technology. What we found was that young women tend to equate engineering and technology "with construction work, outdoor work, working in a cubicle"—I don't thank the Dilbert comic strip for that—"relating primarily to computers and machines" rather than interacting with people. That is an enormous part of our field.

Young women tend to have more negative attitudes towards occupations in engineering and technology than to those in health and social sciences. In general, our study shows that they tend to prefer potential careers that are perceived as humanitarian and socially engaging. Those who were interested in engineering were interested in fields that were related to biology or the environment, things they see as being socially relevant.

We also conduct an annual survey of Canada's undergraduate and post-graduate university engineering programs. The research has been showing a gradual decline in the proportion of female undergraduate engineering students.

• (1540)

What happened was that in the wake of the 1989 massacre of 14 women at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal, there was a big push to increase the numbers of women in undergraduate engineering programs. By 2001 we had increased the numbers and over 20% of undergraduate students were women. Since 2001 that number has

declined and is down to about 17%. So it's a significant decline when you consider the small numbers we had to start with.

Interestingly, the proportion of women enrolled in post-graduate programs has grown. I'm excited about this, but it is still a small number. We now have 23% of masters students and about 20% of doctoral students as women. Woo hoo, we're getting there. There's also a higher proportion of women among engineers in training; that is, in the four-year period after an engineer gets her degree and before she becomes a licensed engineer.

So with that higher proportion, we are probably continuing to move slowly moving towards a gender balance among practising professional engineers, although it's a long way off at the rate we're going.

These attitudes and trends for women in engineering demonstrate that we have to do a better job of raising the profile and improving the understanding of what we do, including connecting it in meaningful ways to what future generations of women are looking for in a chosen career. Some of the challenges women continue to face in the workforce are the lack of recognition of women's unique qualities, skill sets, and approaches to doing business, along with the lack of adequate support for family care and non-work responsibilities and, again, the lack of female role models.

We strongly believe that diversity, through the incorporation of women into the engineering profession to make it reflective of Canadian society, enhances our profession and our ability to serve society at large.

Along with undertaking research and collecting data on why women are not as involved in engineering as men, Engineers Canada has been working with our constituent associations through our Women in Engineering Advisory Group, comprised of female representatives of women in engineering groups of all regulators across the country, and our Women in Engineering Task Force, a task force of our board of directors, which has seen this as a really important issue that we need to try to tackle head on.

We've identified some strategies to try to work towards more balance in the profession. Some of the strategies we've worked on to attract and retain women in engineering include raising the profile and improving the image of the profession to enhance young women's understanding of what an engineering career entails. We've been helping women better prepare for the engineering workforce by promoting and facilitating the availability of the existing training programs out there, which may benefit them. We've been promoting information-sharing and mentorship programs that highlight the important role mentors play in attracting and retaining women in engineering. We've also been working with the industry on methods to help improve the retention of female engineers in the workforce, for example, celebrating companies that develop policies and practices to better attract and retain female engineers.

Some of the important things in which we think government can play a role in achieving a more diverse workforce include, where feasible, directing funding to, and working directly with, the professions to educate and inform girls about these non-traditional occupations. I'd be happy to provide you with further examples of that. Government can also play a role in ensuring that the leaders of corporations and professions are providing strategic direction to their organizations on the need for, and the benefits of, a diverse workplace with women at all levels, including senior management. Governments can also influence and work with provincial and territorial governments to ensure that labour codes and practices reflect the need for work-life balance, as demanded by modern family life.

In conclusion, we think there is an important role for women to play in all professions. Our profession is committed to improving opportunities and experiences for women in engineering.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today. I'd be happy to answer questions during the round of questions.

• (1545)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Carter.

Now we go to Louise Lafrance from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

[Translation]

**Superintendent Louise Lafrance (Director, National Recruiting Program, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting the RCMP to appear before you today.

[English]

I am Superintendent Louise Lafrance, director of the national recruiting program of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I joined the RCMP in 1985. Previous to that, I was hired as the first female police officer on a municipal police force in Mont Laurier, Quebec.

With me is Suzanne Babisky, director, executive development and resourcing for the RCMP. She has worked for the RCMP for 30 years.

[Translation]

As you know, we are the largest police force in Canada. We police at the local, provincial, territorial and federal levels and we are active internationally.

[English]

We employ a workforce of extremely diversified occupations: police officers, civilian members, public servants, and special constables, totaling more than 30,000 employees. I am proud to say that the proportion of women in the RCMP has increased steadily in the last ten years. In 2000, female police officers made up 14.3%. Today, we number 20%. Female representation continues to grow with each new troop that graduates from our training academy in Regina.

When I joined the RCMP, I was proud to follow the lead of our courageous female pioneers, but we still had a way to go to feel equal to our male colleagues. As a small example of the differences we experienced, I'll never forget the day I was issued my rather unflattering RCMP red serge uniform. I wore it with pride, even though it consisted of a funny round hat, a skirt, a white turtleneck shirt, a red blazer, RCMP-issued nylons—which perfectly matched my Oxford flats—and a small purse to store my handgun, bullets, and handcuffs.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** The RCMP finally allowed women to convert to boots, breeches, and stetsons for their ceremonial uniforms in 1990. This was an important day for women in the RCMP because it was a sign that our concerns were being heard.

I brought a couple of items to show you afterwards if you want to look at them, just for fun.

About five years ago, the late former commissioner Maurice Nadon told me a story from May 1974, when he announced the RCMP would be accepting applications from women to become regular members. It created quite a stir at the time. The first group of 32 females arrived at the RCMP training academy in September 1974. He said that these poor women must have felt as if they were under a microscope. He recalled that the biggest concerns of the day were what would the females wear and what would happen when one of them got pregnant? He also noted, though, it did not take long for us to see how important they were. And, as he smiled at me, he said, I knew all along that we needed women in this organization. He was so proud to be the person who made it happen.

•(1550)

[Translation]

These women along with all the other females that followed continued to evolve within the organization. It amazes me that these dates are not that long ago. In 1981, the first female was promoted to corporal and that same year a woman joined the Musical Ride for the first time. In 1987, the first woman was posted overseas and, three years later, the first woman became the head of a detachment. The organization commissioned our first female officers in 1992, and a female was appointed assistant commissioner for the first time in 1998. And certainly a proud moment for all of us was in 2007, when Beverly Busson was appointed as the first female commissioner.

[English]

The hiring of women in Canada and all of these firsts not only had a significant impact on the RCMP and other police forces, but also contributed to the changing role of women in the workplace. Very important milestones continue to be reached and will continue for years to come. In September 2009, the RCMP celebrated 35 years of women in policing.

Given this history and the inroads we've achieved, the RCMP—and certainly not I—do not consider policing as a non-traditional career choice for women. In recruiting, we feel that attracting women to the policing career is the same as attracting men. Police work is not for everyone. It is not a nine-to-five job. You will work shifts and odd hours. You will miss family events and have to work during the holidays. And you will definitely be subjected to difficult situations. However, for those seeking a job unlike any other, policing is very attractive and appealing work. Regardless of gender, policing takes a certain type of personality. We are fortunate that the RCMP has been able to attract great women and men across Canada.

There are many misconceptions about what it means to become a police officer and we want to ensure that these misconceptions are debunked, and that everyone is making an informed choice as to whether or not policing is for them. We do this by having our recruiting teams across Canada continue to hold women-only career events, and showcasing recruiting images that highlight female police officers at work. Recruiters report that the largest concerns raised by potential female applicants are work-life balance, competitive salaries, mobility, and exposure to traumatic situations.

Police work is physically demanding, and therefore it is extremely important to achieve and maintain a high level of fitness. Our training program is designed to prepare all cadets for the demands of policing. Our female members, including myself, who volunteer to speak to recruits, are our best ambassadors. A one-on-one conversation with a member of the RCMP is often the most powerful influence for these young women.

[Translation]

My strongest example of this is my own 19-year-old daughter who wants to join. She is just completing a two-year police foundations college course.

As a young female, measuring five feet two inches, and weighing 110 pounds, my daughter knows she is capable and competent to be a strong police officer. She knows she can be successful at reaching her full potential in the RCMP as she has watched me, and she has

watched my husband, who is also a police officer, raise three children together, all while having exciting careers.

All of our national advertising campaigns feature women performing a variety of policing duties in many different scenarios. We showcase that joining the RCMP provides a “career nowhere near ordinary”.

•(1555)

[English]

Other successful initiatives include the National Women's Advisory Committee, which allows the concerns of women to be heard and respected.

The committee has completed surveys at the regional and divisional levels, polling employees about the issues that are top of mind for them. Initial results indicate that women are looking for more leadership training opportunities and access to mentors at all levels of the organization. This information is invaluable in developing programs for women that will be helpful and address their concerns.

Also, by 2016, the Conference Board of Canada estimates that Canada could be short about one million workers due to an aging population and declining birth rates. This means that it is crucial we remain competitive with other police forces in order to attract new recruits and retain our existing officers.

[Translation]

The RCMP provides a variety of benefits aimed at encouraging a healthy work-life balance for our employees such as parental leave, care and nurturing leave or part-time opportunities. These programs are open and used by all employees.

[English]

Also, the current non-commissioned officer promotion process was introduced in 2006 and is a competency-based tool. The tool brings more qualified candidates to the table, as larger pools of people now qualify to apply for promotions. Candidates are able to apply based on their acquired competencies rather than their years of experience, regardless of gender.

Despite our success in attracting women, the RCMP is aware that it must continue to improve when it comes to attracting, retaining, and promoting women. We are taking a proactive approach to promote diversity within our programs at the executive and officer levels. The RCMP is committed to offer diverse opportunities for women.

[Translation]

More importantly, our organization has made it a top priority to continue to develop initiatives, policies and benefits that encourage women to consider employment with Canada's national police force.

Thank you.

[English]

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

And now we'll go to Women in Mining Canada. Mary Mihychuk.

**Ms. Mary Ann Mihychuk (President, Women in Mining Canada):** Thank you very much.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon. I'm going to be talking about enhancing the role and participation of women in the non-traditional occupations in extraction and exploration, often combined and known as mining.

Women in Mining is an organization that was created in 2009, focused on advancing the interests of women in the minerals exploration and mining sector. In collaboration with our provincial branches, which have recently expanded very quickly—Newfoundland, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and B.C.—we support grassroots initiatives in the realm of personal and professional development, while providing a national voice within the global minerals and mining community. Our membership consists of both men and women, actually twice as many men as women, and there are very progressive men out there as well.

What I want to talk to you today primarily about is a research study that we just concluded, called *Ramp-Up*. In the summer of 2009, WIM conducted a national research project primarily with the understanding that there seemed to be two voices in our industry. Employers did not see a specific problem, and women were expressing frustration and a great deal of problems. So the first part of understanding how to come to a solution is to recognize that indeed we have a challenge.

That is what *Ramp-Up* has done. It provides us a baseline and a clearer picture on the status of women in the minerals exploration and mining industry. We surveyed women in the industry, academia, employers, and employees.

The study surveyed 2,040 participants, and we know from MiHR, the Mining Industry Human Resources Council, that Canada and the mineral industry will be facing a human resources crisis, estimated to be 60,000 workers by 2017. Of this total, potentially 900 positions annually are likely to be filled by post-secondary graduates and immigration. An increasing number of jobs left by the growing skill shortage in the industry could be filled by women.

The wages in our sector are very attractive. Average weekly wages are \$1,347 per week, which is 33%, 35%, 42%, and 44% higher than construction, finance, manufacturing, or the forestry industries. It's an extremely well-paid sector. Furthermore, wage discrepancies between male and female employees still range from 22% in the coal industry to 43% in the mining support sector, according to the Conference Board of Canada and StatsCan.

Traditionally, mining has been a male-centric profession. A female working on mine sites was taboo, considered bad luck. Breaking the code on the old boys' network was unheard of, and laws were introduced in the late 19th century prohibiting companies from hiring women. Many of those were unchanged until the 1970s.

Yet while representation of women in mining and exploration in Canada has increased, I would suggest at a glacial pace from less than 11% in 1996 to over 14% today, their representation is significantly lower than in the overall workforce at 47.4%.

Our key challenge is that we have two voices, two views. Numerous barriers were identified by two thirds of the women, but only by one third of the employers. One third of educators and fewer than 30% of employers believe that working conditions need to be addressed. In fact, with the exception of the need for flexible work arrangements, employers were more likely to report that there were no barriers, that no barriers existed, than to identify a single challenging working condition. By contrast, two thirds of past and current female employees believe that some working conditions in the sector need to be addressed for women to succeed.

• (1600)

Working conditions that pose challenges are flexible work arrangements and the workplace culture. As one female employee observed, "For an industry that can cope with the vagaries of metal prices and supply and demand through advanced schedule optimization, it seems we should be better able to cope with more variability in the workforce".

Assumptions hold women back. Several female employees surveyed said that supervisors, as a matter of course, do not offer site experiences to women who have children or to women who they believe plan to have a family. It is assumed that field work will conflict with a mother's caring responsibilities and will eventually lead employees to search for alternative employment. Work-life challenges are also an increasingly growing issue for single fathers who are primary caregivers.

Also, the survey noted that supervisory roles in the field are currently occupied almost exclusively by men. This creates two problems. First, female workers do not have any women on the frontline of leadership whom they can speak to or mentor under. Second, these field roles are viewed as essential experiences for developing into more senior roles.

Don't make assumptions. Give women the same opportunities, just allow them a little bit of notice so they can take care of what they need to. They're prepared, willing, and able to take the most difficult positions the industry can offer.

On the subject of getting to the top, Anglo American's chief executive officer, Cynthia Carroll, may be an excellent example of a woman advancing to the very top, but few women ever reach that level. *Ramp-Up* found that both employees and employers agreed that advancement through the leadership strata is clearly difficult for female employees. Senior management and executive roles pose the largest barriers, closely followed by the CEO position, middle management, and supervisory positions.

Concerning our next generation, the under-representation of women in mining and exploration is also an outcome of the educational pathways women select for post-secondary education and training. We do have women in geology. I was recently at the University of Manitoba as a guest lecturer, and the audience was 40% women. How it is that they represent less than 15% of the workforce is a question we must address. There is no doubt, as this study indicates, that women looking at career choices are not picking this excellent field. They are not choosing this. A lack of knowledge, we believe, is holding many back. Of 100 female students polled in the study, only 10 were aware of the mining industry at all, and only five of those intended to seek jobs in the sector.

We want to dissolve the gender gap. One size will not fit all. We must enhance recruitment, retention, and advancement of women. The study evokes an integrated approach to strengthening policy to dissolve the gender gap so that we can move well ahead of the 14%.

We are suggesting that immediate measures be taken: awareness and promotion, mentorship, awareness training, and critical-mass strategies. Hiring one woman into a field crew of 20 or 200 does not make a positive setting in which that woman can break those barriers.

We also suggest re-evaluation of talent and potential, greater flexibility, award achievement recognition, and analysis of pay practices. Make this issue a priority at the meeting of mines ministers coming up this summer and on the agendas of all departments that deal with the minerals industry.

We also encourage regular reporting initiatives, such as the GRI, the Global Reporting Initiative, that ask for diversity and gender reporting for all companies.

We are facing a labour shortage. We know that women are excellent communicators. We can meet the needs of a skill shortage and be excellent ambassadors for a modern, safe industry while obtaining our industry's social license going forward.

Thank you for your time, and I appreciate being able to speak to you.

• (1605)

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

Now we will move to the questions, and we'll begin with the Liberals and Anita Neville.

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** It's for seven minutes, and I must inform everyone that the seven minutes includes questions and answers.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Thank you all very much for being here today. We've certainly had a diversity of presentations. I think they will be very helpful to us.

I'll start by focusing on Ms. Carter and Ms. Mihychuk. Ms. Mihychuk, you referred to education; Ms. Carter, you did not speak about education.

I know anecdotally that young women going into engineering schools frequently feel unsupported and frequently choose to leave, often in tears. I realize they're different communities, but from both

of your perspectives, what can be done before you even get to the recruitment stage to maintain women's interest and attract women's interest in your fields?

**Ms. Marie Carter:** We've actually done quite a bit of work on this through our Women in Engineering work. One of the things that we've identified as a big problem is exactly what you've talked about, which is the culture of the faculties of the engineering programs in schools. It starts with frosh week. We've all heard the stories about the Lady Godiva thing at Queen's, and there are numerous things across the country.

There's the National Council of Deans of Engineering and Applied Science, and we've brought this issue to their attention. They're having discussions on how they can try to work within the culture of the engineering schools towards shifting it to being more collaborative and more inclusive towards the girls' culture. We now have three deans of engineering who are women, which is a huge percentage, and we're now looking at having more role models. We're slowly getting more women as engineering professors, and that's going to help the whole culture, because they notice these things and the way the treatment happens.

It's something that's on our radar. We're slowly working with them and trying to promote.... We're looking at developing a program that we can pilot with one university. Being in Ottawa, we're working with Claude Laguë at Ottawa U to pilot a program to see if we can actually have a demonstrated shift in the culture at a school that will allow them to attract more women and retain them.

• (1610)

**Ms. Mary Ann Mihychuk:** Thank you, Ms. Neville. It's a pleasure seeing you again from Manitoba. We shared some time together on the Winnipeg school board.

I believe that perhaps we felt we'd made significant inroads with women in science, and perhaps we've backed off on some of those programs. I think that's a mistake. We need to continue to bring in mentors, fund those programs, and be more forthcoming with that. We also need to look at our K-12 curriculum and enhance the science and earth science portion, which in many school divisions has been diluted or eliminated.

Geology and mining should be reinvigorated. There is a program by the PDAC called Mining Matters. It's 100% industry-funded and provides teacher-based curriculum to K-12 curriculum units, which the teachers then present to the classroom, so you don't have industry representatives right in the classroom and that whole issue. In fact, teachers are then given materials that they can use as hands-on instruction. That has been very successful in Ontario. I would recommend advancing and supporting that program across the country as an initiative that would be useful.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Thank you.

I have lots of questions, but this question is to the RCMP.

You identified 20% as good. I was chatting with an officer who is involved in human resource recruitment, and that officer told me about their challenge in meeting the goal of seven recruits a week. That was what they identified. I don't know whether that's true across the country or not.

Are there targeted initiatives to recruit women? I know that recruitment in and of itself is not easy these days. Do you have a goal? Twenty percent is progress, but it strikes me as a long way to go.

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** Yes, we do have initiatives. Right now our goal in the recruiting program is to go to 25%—this is our goal for this year—and to have 25% of the recruits that are sent to that goal being 25% of the representation that's going to go per troop. And when I say per troop it's not necessarily per troop; it could be over the one-year period, 25% in those troops will be women.

It's not realistic to think we can jump very high in those numbers. As I said in my opening remarks, we are steadily going up and up. And by having targets and initiatives, by having people in the communities and having mentors in the communities, we are increasing the number of women coming to the organization.

We have to realize we need ten applicants to have a successful applicant going to Regina. Our process is quite difficult, and it's the same ratio for men and women.

We do have increasing the number of women as a priority in recruiting.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Thank you.

Do I have any more time?

**The Chair:** You have a quarter of a second. I'm sorry.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** I can't do it in a quarter of a second.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** For the Bloc Québécois, Madame Demers.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mesdames, thank you for being here today. I'm really fascinated by what you've managed to do despite the difficulties you encounter.

There are women here who work in various areas but who face situations that are very similar. For example, I know there were harassment incidents at the RCMP until Ms. Busson arrived. We

often heard about them, but no longer. So I assume that's been resolved.

In the mining industry as well, I know there have been a lot of harassment incidents and that it's hard for women, just as it is in the construction industry. I don't know how it is for engineers. One assumes that, as the men are more educated, there would be less harassment. I wonder whether that's true or false.

I would also like to tell you, Ms. Mihychuk, that I would have liked to be able to meet you two months ago because, at that time, we met with Canadian mine owners. If we had known what you're telling us today, we could have brought pressure to bear to move things along. What you're doing will help us enormously in doing our job better. I would like to know what your biggest problems are as women because there still aren't enough of you in your respective occupations.

Furthermore, Ms. Nelson and Ms. Lux, I was fascinated by the fact you are engaged in prevention. Unfortunately, that's not yet being done in Quebec. I would like to know a little more on that subject.

With that, I'll let you speak.

• (1615)

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** To answer your first question, which concerned harassment within the RCMP, which you no longer hear about, I must point out that, over the years, we have introduced a lot of processes, and have done so for a number of years now.

Today, when cadets arrive at Depot Division as part of our recruitment program, and at the RCMP School in Regina, they take programs designed to inform them, whether they are men or women, on what harassment is because some people don't necessarily know what that represents.

Our processes are very rigorous. If someone is a victim of harassment, whoever he or she may be, that person has access to a number of processes. People file formal complaints and we investigate. People are reprimanded for what they have done.

However, I can say with a high degree of conviction that the problems of sexual harassment against women have vastly declined. These cases are now very rare. On the other hand, there are cases of harassment for work performance reasons. People feel harassed, and that's the kind of complaint we have been receiving recently.

[English]

**Ms. Marie Carter:** The challenges that we have in the engineering world vary to some degree from one particular engineering discipline to the next because they're different work environments from one engineering discipline to the next. As an example, in biomedical and environmental engineering fields there are huge numbers of women. The challenges are fewer in those areas because there is a large diversity of people there.

In the areas, for example, of computer engineering, electrical engineering—my personal background, though not any more, is transportation engineering—it's still largely men in those industries. The industries vary, so you'll have a lot of women in government, because in government there are systems in place and protection in place and equity is far more.... What's the word I'm looking for? You can see it; it's right there. It gets reported on. It doesn't necessarily in private industry, so it's difficult to try to quantify what the challenges may be.

Anecdotally, we've heard about a number of challenges. They largely relate to work-life balance, and we're hearing those same challenges now from the new generation of people working, where the men are just as interested in work-life balance as are the women. The biggest challenge for us, really, is in management styles. We need to get more women into the senior levels. The management styles that women have are quite different from the management styles that men have. Women tend to be collaborative; men tend to be hierarchical. I'm painting with a broad brush.

• (1620)

**The Chair:** Excuse me, but we have two more minutes and two more people waiting to answer. I will just give you a warning of the time.

**Ms. Mary Ann Mihychuk:** In the exploration and mining industry, I think direct harassment is probably less a reality today. There was a perception when I started as a geologist in 1977 that if a woman went into a remote field camp with a team of men, there could be a riot. There would be unacceptable behaviour. I've been in this business 33 years. You put a woman into a mining camp, it actually calms things down, makes it a more pleasant, reasonable kind of place. It's like the program *Survivor*. If you put eight strangers into the bush for three months with no way out, it's a challenge to everyone, but it doesn't mean we all turn into maniacs.

There's this perception and it's holding us back in a lot of ways. I think we have to open our minds. Women can do various physically challenging positions. We've proven that we can do it. I think that's the biggest barrier, changing perceptions, as you know, and it's about being more flexible. If an aboriginal woman wants to work in a mining company, then we need to be sensitive to her challenges as well.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We're out of time, but I will allow Ms. Nelson to answer these questions.

**Ms. Palmer Nelson:** I'll be brief.

The greatest obstacle to dental hygienists would be moving from the auxiliary role within dentistry to a professional role. We're seeing that. Also, we need more business knowledge, more management knowledge in our curriculum in the education of dental hygienists to be professionals, not auxiliaries.

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

And now we go to the Conservatives, Ms. Brown.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, ladies, for being here today.

I have questions for all of you but I'm not going to get to them all. I'm going to start with Ms. Nelson, particularly because for three years I was on the board. I was a public appointment to the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario and sat as the vice-president for the dental hygienists college. I knew nothing about the profession before I went there, but it was certainly enlightening. I was part of the advocacy that brought in the legislation in Ontario to allow self-initiation. So I am intimately conversant with the issue.

I was a strong advocate to see business courses in there. I'm a business person, so I know the need for all of that to happen within the curriculum. Can you give us any idea of how many of the dental hygienists who now have the opportunity to self-initiate have gone into business for themselves? Can you give us any idea of what the percentages are?

**Ms. Palmer Nelson:** They are based on provincial figures. We still have P.E.I., Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Quebec that are not able to self-initiate. So of the provinces that are, there is now a total of 214 businesses, and they range anywhere from mobile services to working contractually with institutions to storefront retail operations that are solely owned by dental hygienists. So 214: that's a huge increase just within a year period of time. We have a dedicated person at Canadian Dental Hygienists Association to deal with independent practice issues, and we're seeing expanded information coming across to CDHA in that realm because there isn't a lot of information and knowledge out there.

I'm from Newfoundland and Labrador, and I've practised for 20 years with a dentist. I've worked with governments to try to become self-regulating. We are working on an umbrella legislation. But I am moving to Nova Scotia, and I'm very happy about that because I'm able to put forward a business plan that I've developed and have my own business in Nova Scotia because the legislation allows me to do that. But I've looked towards entrepreneurial agencies that help support women outside of the realm of dental hygiene, just women in general in terms of business.

• (1625)

**Ms. Lois Brown:** You said that 5% of dental hygienists are male. Are there any statistics on whether or not the men are going into business on their own?

**Ms. Palmer Nelson:** You mean the men dental hygienists?

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Men dental hygienists, yes.

**Ms. Palmer Nelson:** I wouldn't have that for you, but I could get that.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** It would be very interesting to know.

**Ms. Judy Lux (Communications Specialist, Health Policy, Canadian Dental Hygienists Association):** I could report on that. If I can just give the percentage, about 1% of the dental hygiene population are going into business for themselves. At the present time there is only one man.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** That's very interesting. So any other information or follow-up on that I think would be very interesting for the committee.

Ms. Lafrance, I really appreciated the detail that you provided in your opening comments. In particular is this one paragraph where you talked about "attracting women to the policing career is the same as attracting men". Can you talk about the things that are attractive to both genders in policing? Do you see any difference between what women are looking for and what men are looking for? I guess what I'm getting to is that this is a choice and people are making choices, but what are the attractions?

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** If you ask any member of the RCMP or any police person out there, we are all attracted to the fact that we will be helping the community. If you ask anybody, they will all answer that. Every recruit will say that as well. We want to help our community and be involved in our community. What is exciting is that it is not a nine to five job. You never know what you're getting into. You start your day and you don't know what's going to happen that day, and everything you do is challenging and exciting, and at the end of the day you feel like you have accomplished something.

Yes, male applicants are more attracted to the toys, to the emergency response team, the tactical team; any cars or guns that we can show, they are going to be more interested in that. Women are interested in the field of investigation or forensics. The beauty of the RCMP is that you can do all of that. You can choose the path you want to follow and take courses according to what you wish to do.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Has it made it more attractive? I had a conversation with the commanding officer at Wainwright last year about the attraction. They are looking at the same core group of people, who are looking at a military or paramilitary career. Have we made it more attractive in recruiting in general, now that the government has allowed for RCMP cadets to be paid while they are at depot?

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** That certainly helped. People who go to depot receive a \$500 allowance per week, and that has helped us increase our numbers, because let's say a mother of three wants to go to depot. Having no income would make it very difficult. This allowance allows these people to be able to move forward, certainly.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** A very quick question to Ms. Carter, if I may. You talked about curriculum and the need for introducing girls at a younger age. Would you think that technology courses at the secondary level at school would be helpful to encourage young women to choose a career in engineering?

**Ms. Marie Carter:** Absolutely. I think we really need to figure out what it is that's steering girls away from maths and sciences in high school. Is it because it's perceived as boring? Perhaps if they had a technology program, hands on, it would be a lot more exciting.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Physics and drafting were my favourite secondary school subjects.

**Ms. Marie Carter:** Me too, but my guidance counsellor thought I should be a psychologist, and those who know me understand that it would have been a bad choice.

**The Chair:** You have ten seconds.

**Ms. Lois Brown:** I'll leave that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** For the NDP, Ms. Mathysen.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much for being here. This has been a fascinating presentation, and I think we've gleaned more information than we need in order to write a good report. So I thank you for all of that.

I wanted to start with a general question for everyone. It comes from a report that is more than 20 years old. It's *More Than Just Numbers*. One of the things I think is the most disconcerting is that despite the fact this is a 20-year-old report, I think it still rings true. Basically the report says that governments have an important role to play in applying a diversity or gender lens to sectoral strategies, human resources development programs, procurement policies, communications, tax policies, etc. In addition, it said that policies related to parental leave, elder care, and child care all have a huge effect on the working conditions for women.

I'd like to throw pay equity into that mix, although it may not always apply. I was struck by the fact that Ms. Mihychuk talked about the discrepancy in pay. I'm wondering if you could comment on all of those things, the child care, the elder care, the pay equity piece in terms of making it possible for women to be all that they can be and enter those traditionally male jobs.

• (1630)

**Ms. Marie Carter:** The only reason I wanted to start is that one of the comments I'd like to make is that the province of Quebec has really led the way with having programs in place that help women. They led the way on maternity leave. They're leading the way now on child care, and I would hazard to guess they will likely lead the way on elder care. All of those things are working towards making two-income families a lot more sustainable.

As I mentioned earlier, we're finding that the guys who are going into the field are having the same difficulties as the women are. When we look at the demographics and the fact that our population is aging, the issues of elder care and who looks after those people as they get older and the fact that there needs to be flexibility and the ability for one or the other of either the child or the parent or whoever the caregiver is to provide that.... Certainly Quebec does lead the way on these things. I think the other provinces would do well to follow that example fairly quickly.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** And the federal government has a role in terms of leading that.

**Ms. Marie Carter:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Are there any other comments in that regard?

**Ms. Mary Ann Mihychuk:** From my perspective, the report indicated that it is about more than numbers, that there's a certain level of employment strategies that have to be taken, and that leadership has to be provided. Until industry recognizes that it's a problem, they're not really prepared to take steps to address it. That was one of the issues, and we're working with that. As a person with my own company and working in the mineral industry, I can say we always go back to the basics. Well, this is no longer an issue. So you have to go and present that.

Leadership from government would definitely be helpful, as would some flexibility. You can look at good business models. For instance, commercial tourist fishing camps have always engaged first nations women and men, I think, in a fairly successful model. They allow the whole family to come into a remote bush camp. I have always said that if you looked at it, exploration is not much different from a fishing camp. In fact, if we allowed families to bring their children.... Many of us would have to have our own nannies, but I think this also applies to men. It's really about being flexible, about looking at different ways.

If we're going to be working in Nunavut, or in the far north, or in some remote area, then be sensitive. Don't expect individuals to be away from their families for three, four, or five months at a time. It's just not going to work by today's standards, particularly for women.

Sending some of those messages to our industry brothers and sisters would be useful. It would show leadership and provide us with a third look, another look, and say that this is what we expect in our society, in modern Canada. That would be very useful.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** That's very interesting. The response back might be that it's expensive or difficult. Yet we're hearing over and over again that when the workplace is satisfactory and people feel good, productivity is remarkably and exponentially improved. So I hope that message does get through.

• (1635)

**The Chair:** You have one minute and thirty seconds.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Oh, dear. I don't know what to say, Madam Chair. I have so many questions.

I'll direct one to Superintendent Lafrance. I was quite taken with how former commissioner Maurice Nadon described the need for women in the RCMP. You talked about the interests of women, the

investigative interests being different from having toys and from what the boys like. How has the culture changed in the RCMP? I assume it's changed for the better, that there's a better delivery of police services and a sense of pride in the work. Could you describe that briefly?

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** Absolutely. I can really relate to what Mary Ann was talking about earlier, because at first people said if we're going to have women, that means we can't do this, this, or this, or there would be an environment in which people would think that because women were around, the world as we knew it before would change.

Bringing women along in police cars—and this has often been reported, and the partners I have worked with have reported this—did defuse a lot of situations that could have ended up as fight situations. Having a woman in the car makes the situation turn in a positive way, because I believe women communicate a bit better than men do and are able to defuse, as opposed to being aggressive to start with. When I was listening to Mary Ann, I thought, this is really close to policing.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

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

Now we're going to a five-minute round, and I will begin with the Liberals. Michelle Simson.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm going to keep my questions brief because I'm down to five minutes. I am going to restrict my questions to Ms. Lafrance, because I see the RCMP as being perhaps the biggest opportunity as an employer for women, because we've heard recently that there's going to be a crunch, and that there's a huge hiring blitz going on. It would seem to me that this would be a better opportunity for women.

You mentioned in your opening remarks that in 2000, 14.3% of the RCMP—I'm assuming you're referring to just the regular members like constables—

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** Yes.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Okay. It's up to 20%. It seems to me, though—because we got some briefing notes—that between 2004 and 2009 it slowed down. Those are the statistics we got from the Library of Parliament. The increase was 3.3% between 2000 and 2004, and only 2.3% between 2004 and 2009. I find that interesting. That means it's slowing down. Either you're not getting as many applicants or they're leaving.

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** No. What happened is that we did go into a large recruiting drive with the RCMP. We needed to fill about 1,800 positions per year for about three years. We did complement our workforce with men. We needed to increase the number of members, period. A lot of people were retiring, we had new contracts, and so on.

All of that happened at the same time, and we—

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** So it did slow a bit, because you had to get them on board fairly quickly.

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** We needed to increase our workforce.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Okay.

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** It went down to 18.3% on average over those years.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Now, I have several friends who are with the RCMP. I'm very proud of the force, but there's no question in my mind that there was a rather substantial harassment issue when it came to women. Part of that was about reporting the harassment.

Typically, if you're a constable, who would you report that to?

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** Typically.... It depends on who is harassing you, obviously.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Let's just say it's another constable. To go up the food chain, as it were, who would you report it to? The next...?

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** If they report to a corporal, they would report it to their corporal, who has the duty to report.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** You have 3,570 corporals in the force. How many of those are women?

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** I can look that up and tell you; my brain refuses to remember numbers now.

•(1640)

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Actually, the organizational structure is quite good on the website.

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** I have it here: we have 811 corporals.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Who are women?

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** Yes.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Okay. So 811 corporals.

I understood, though, that the problem was that women were very reluctant to go up the chain of command to report harassment. There's been a real push on for a police association to be formed for the RCMP so that there's some sort of blanket coverage, so that you're not relying on one man or one corporal, so that you do have some comfort level.

Would that be an enhancement, do you think, to attracting more women?

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** Well, we do have a harassment coordinator, as well, to whom a person can go if they don't feel comfortable—

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** But the association is something that I know the force has been looking at, particularly the females.

Do you think this would be an enhancement, though, when you're recruiting, so that they wouldn't feel they had just one person to go to?

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** If they feel that they can voice their concerns without being harassed?

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Without retribution, yes.

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** Well, definitely, any tool or any system in place would increase the confidence of women. But I can tell you that it is not an issue at the present time. People do report it.

**The Chair:** You have thirty seconds.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** So you say that they are being reported, and....

Actually, I don't have any more questions. I just wanted to ask about the association.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Ms. Wong, please.

**Mrs. Alice Wong (Richmond, CPC):** Thank you very much, ladies, for coming to this committee.

I have only five minutes, so I will focus on something that I noted when I visited a group of women professionals from overseas, mainly from mainland China. One of the challenges they told me about was that they were engineers in China, but when they came over to Canada it was difficult for them to get their credentials recognized. With our changing demographics, we will be seeing more and more newcomers with well-trained backgrounds, and yet, because of language barriers and different regulating bodies, they will not be able to go into their own professions.

I'd like to ask especially the engineers about that, because I think your association might be doing something along that line. Am I right to assume that?

**Ms. Marie Carter:** Oh, yes, we've done a tremendous amount. We've had huge support from the federal government, from HRSDC. We started a big project in 2002, "From Consideration to Integration". What we've been able to achieve with our regulators, our constituent associations, has been a much more streamlined assessment process so that people get responses very quickly on where they may need to enhance some of their qualifications.

Currently almost 30% of professional engineers in Canada are trained offshore. It's quite a significant number. There's no difference between the men and the women who come from offshore. It's actually kind of nice to see how many women are trained in other countries as engineers who do come to Canada and seek licensure.

The one thing you did mention was the language issue. It is a requirement to be able to communicate in English or French in Canada to be in any of the regulated professions. Certainly communication skills in English or French are key, absolutely.

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** That applies to other professions as well.

Hygienists, for example.... I know some of the overseas-trained dentists end up going into the hygiene profession. Again, it's their regulating body helping overseas-trained related professionals go into that industry, women, poor men, you know.

**Ms. Palmer Nelson:** I believe so, but I can't comment on that. I don't have the information on that.

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** Would you think it would be nice to have more women, regardless of their ethnic background, go into your profession?

**Ms. Palmer Nelson:** Most definitely. A large number of dental hygienists are graduating in Ontario now, so there's movement throughout the provinces. In terms of regulations, you have to work for the regulatory bodies. It has more to do with the scope of practice in our profession. There's obviously the language and other barriers, but it's more the scope of practice and what you can do in the different provinces to know whether or not you can practise in those provinces.

I know a number of foreign-trained dentists enter through Newfoundland and Labrador and work as dental hygienists first to get their licence to practise dentistry.

• (1645)

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** So that is a stepping stone.

I know there have been efforts in recruiting more men and women with ethnic backgrounds into the RCMP, again because of the demographics. Do you notice any women going into the RCMP from an ethnic background?

**Supt Louise Lafrance:** We do. I don't have those numbers here, but we do have many women who have ethnic backgrounds.

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** I understand that very often we are seen portraying women as the victims, or as the underdog, or as people who suffer, but with such a nice bunch of successful women in front of us, do you think the media would also need to work on the perception of women in these so-called non-traditional professions? There are so many benefits to bring into the professions, a positive image of encouraging women. Otherwise, if you always talk about harassment and lack of this, lack of that, that discourages women.

**Ms. Marie Carter:** Absolutely. The more media that's focused on people like Julie Payette, for example, as a successful engineer encourages girls and women to go into the professions. Any positive image is always good.

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** That's the answer.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Now we go to the Bloc Québécois. Madame Beaudin.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much all of you for being here. You are extremely inspirational. This even makes me want to be 20 again and to choose another career. I didn't even know I could work in the mining industry, and that seems very interesting. I think that making yourself known, meeting women and making what you do known, as you are doing today, is a good way to proceed.

You know, in my constituency, there is an organization called Options non traditionnelles, whose mandate and practices are to establish contacts with people in the community, in the primary and secondary schools, in the community agencies, by finding models like you in the community. In that way, young women can see them again on other occasions, recognize them and, consequently, recognize themselves in them.

I think that meeting young people, talking about your occupation and being seen can definitely be one of the solutions. What we see in our lives are teachers who are often women, school teachers and nurses. We very rarely meet women engineers or police officers in our lives or even in the media. Lastly, women police officers are now increasingly involved in the communities, which can change things.

I think one of the major problems is work-life balance. You're right in saying that it isn't because there are women in a male environment that things change as quickly as we would like. You who have experienced everything you can experience with regard to work-life balance, what measures would you put in place, now that you are experiencing it and know it, if you had any to suggest?

I know this isn't easy even in our occupation as members of Parliament. The Bloc québécois has put in place procedures for enabling women—and men, of course, fathers—to be with their children during the children's break week.

What measures would make young women want to go into this kind of occupation? In spite of everything, these are occupations that are well paid and offer quite good working conditions. What measures would encourage young women to want to go into these occupations with a passion for this kind of work? It takes that too.

Yes, I think that women who work in these occupations have to be present in the community. However, what work-life balance measures would you suggest?

[English]

**Ms. Marie Carter:** It's an interesting question, because the one thing we recently asked all of the licensed engineers in the country was what they see as the future for women engineers. We asked that question to give us an idea about the present, because what they see as the future is usually different from the present. Surprisingly, the whole issue of how women deal with these sorts of things, balancing their career and being passionate about it while still being able to have a family, wasn't as much at the forefront. They seemed to be managing, to a large degree, to handle that somehow.

Certainly our direct experience with women engineers and those I know is that they're choosing to leave the consulting engineering industry, for example, as I did. I spent a couple of months figuring out what people do with evenings and weekends when I finished working in the consulting industry, because it was a long time since I had those times off.

So in order to cope, women are making career choices and they're delaying the advancement of their careers to have a family. So any kinds of supports that would allow them to continue progress in their careers, rather than delaying them, would be beneficial.

•(1650)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Josée Beaudin:** What is the average age, for example, among the group of women engineers?

[English]

**Ms. Marie Carter:** Well, the age is actually young now. People of my age are less than 10% in the engineering field. The growing percentage is of those who are about 30 years old now. That's where our wave is coming from: they are about 30 years old. They're having kids.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Josée Beaudin:** We have far too little time to hear from you. I'm sorry; it's frustrating.

[English]

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

The NDP member has left, so we now go to the Conservatives and Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Good afternoon, mesdames. It's great to hear from women who have such fascinating careers. It was also news to me that we could work in the mines. I must admit it's quite tempting. These are things that we have little or no knowledge of, often as a result of education.

To go back to what someone said a little earlier, it's often said that girls or young girls and mathematics or technology... I have two daughters, 20 and 21, and they aren't very attracted because they don't think this is prestigious enough. We often get the impression that it's a mountain, and we don't always make these occupations attractive. We women like things with more emotion. For us, figures don't tell us a lot about emotions. They speak to our heads.

We talked about image. I'm really concerned about that because I realize, when I speak with my daughters' group of girls and their friends, that they often have a biased image of women who carry on non-traditional occupations. The image that those kinds of women often project is that of tomboys, and yet a lot of women in those occupations can be in uniforms in mines and be very well dressed and in high heels five minutes later.

How do we go about selling these occupations to young girls? We're talking about the generation following us, and we see how fascinating it can be to carry on a non-traditional occupation. How

can we educate our young girls across Canada so that these occupations become attractive to them?

[English]

**Ms. Mary Ann Mihychuk:** I often try to translate how the career can attract anybody. I recently spoke to a grade five class and asked them, who wants to travel around the world and make an enormous amount of money and find a diamond mine? Every kid in the class had their hand up; they wanted to travel, see the world, and have a fabulous career. That's mining today.

Women are better communicators. We work with a lot of scientists. They could use improvement; let's just put it that way. Women have that skill set. Gaining a social license for Canadian companies, which is Bill C-300... We are the best in the world, and there's always room for improvement. Often it's a question of our ability to communicate how we're safe and clean and sophisticated in a mining industry, and that voice coming from a woman can be often much more powerful than the traditional methods that we've used may be.

There are many jobs—financial, being CEO, being that communicator, going to the darkest jungles of Africa—and a mining project changes their world, and for the most part in a positive way, bringing wealth, development, schools, medicines. We can be very proud of our industry, and I think there are many different jobs that are of great interest to women. We just need some help getting on TV spots, getting the media to be interested. They want to hear about disasters; they want to hear about mistakes. That's inherent in how the media works.

That's where government comes in. You have programs, you have educational institutions, you have NRCan. We need to use those tools to be able to present the industry—engineering, mining, the RCMP—in a way that we understand it: wonderful, well-paying, successful, and opening the doors to the world.

•(1655)

**The Chair:** You have thirty seconds.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** So we have to change the image we have. You talked about the media, and it's true that the media sell an often negative image of everything; it's sensationalism. If we could project this image of women, it would also vastly change the perception that society has because it's often incorrect. It's not just the government. Within society itself, women have to do something together to make the image change.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, that's the end, Sylvie. Thank you.

I want to thank the witnesses for coming. It was a very interesting session. You represent a very wide range of occupations that are interesting.

We have to move on now to some business of the committee, so we will suspend for a minute and then we will go in camera.

[Proceedings continue in camera]







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