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Chair

Mr. Ed Komarnicki

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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● (1535)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC)): Good afternoon. I'd like to call the meeting to order.

I want to advise committee members that we have one panel today, so I propose that after the panellists present we have seven minutes per round of questions. We will continue to go straight through, but will break off about 10 or 15 minutes early, depending on questions. There's one remark Ms. Hughes would like to make about committee business, so we'll take that into account and then perhaps adjourn.

I'd like to welcome James Knight, from the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. I gather you'll be presenting first.

Representing Polytechnics Canada we have Nobina Robinson, chief executive officer—welcome—and Ken Doyle, director of policy. Thanks for coming. You'll present next.

Then we'll have, from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, Herb O'Heron, director, and Greg Fergus, director of public affairs. You will be giving a slide presentation, I understand, and we'll have a look at that.

The plan is for each of you to present, and at the conclusion each party will ask questions about your presentations or matters of interest to them.

We'll start with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges and Mr. Knight.

[*Translation*]

Mr. James Knight (President and Chief Executive Officer, Association of Canadian Community Colleges): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your invitation to appear before you today.

[*English*]

We're very pleased to be here, and we commend you for undertaking this study.

The study has two points of focus. The first is fixing the skills gap. The second seems to be about dealing with shortages in areas of low-skilled jobs. Our work and our mandate is to lift people who don't have skills into the skilled category, so I'm going to talk more about the first component of your study and less about the second.

We are the voice of Canada's publicly funded colleges, CEGEPs, university colleges, and polytechnics. We share membership with Polytechnics Canada, represented here today. We have 150 participating institutions, which have a remarkable 1,000 campuses in all parts of Canada.

Canada faces two realities that I think drive this study. The first is that in our knowledge-based economy, the workplace is increasingly laden with technology. As I like to say, in this BlackBerry there is more computing technology than was aboard Apollo 13. It completely stuns me, but I understand it to be true.

Entry-level positions in virtually every sector require sophisticated knowledge of complex systems: 70% of new jobs now require a post-secondary credential. We believe this number will increase toward 80%. Currently our post-secondary achievement rate is 60%, so clearly we have a gap.

The second reality is that Canada has a debilitating demographic deficit. We are a rapidly aging population. I can testify to that personally. An exodus from the labour market of mammoth proportions is under way as millions of baby boomers retire. In 2011 the first baby boomer became 65.

We think of immigration as a solution to our problem. It is a part of the solution, but it is a small part. Even with immigration, Canada's labour market participation rate will drop from somewhere above 60% to the 40% range. I don't want to be specific, but it's an enormous drop in labour market participation. This figure has vast implications.

To some extent, the current shortage in advanced skills has been masked by the slow recovery and growth since the 2008 recession. Nevertheless, industry leaders are expressing profound concern about skills and labour shortages.

Recently *The Globe and Mail* reported that two-thirds of Canadian corporate executives surveyed are having difficulty finding qualified employees. One-third report that the labour shortage is so severe it is preventing their companies from growing as quickly as they otherwise would.

Just two weeks ago, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce released the top ten barriers to competitiveness. It identified Canada's human capital crisis as the highest priority—the highest priority—for 2012.

I can give you some numbers, although you've probably heard many of these. The construction sector is anticipating a need for 325,000 skilled people by 2019. The ICT sector forecasts a need for 106,000 analysts, technicians, and consultants by 2017. The mining industry will need 65,000 operators and primary production managers.

We say—and this is the big statement, I think—that unless something changes, within ten years employers will not find qualified candidates for 1.5 million available jobs across all sectors. It could be somewhat less, it could be somewhat more, but this is a reasonable and scientific number.

Currently almost 2.2 million Canadians between 25 and 64 years of age do not have a high school diploma, and 40% of adults struggle with low literacy. Colleges are very much part of the answer. Colleges provide upgrading programs that will enable adults to gain a high school diploma and transition to post-secondary programs.

● (1540)

Colleges, institutes, polytechnics, and CEGEPs excel at providing accessible, cost-effective post-secondary education and lifelong learning—critically important. They possess a unique ability to nurture the marginalized through to graduation and employment.

Despite the sluggish economy, upwards of 90% of college students find employment within six months of graduation. We are very good at placing our graduates into the economy and into solid jobs.

We are very focused on providing adult upgrading and essential skills development for marginalized learners. We have very strong partnerships with employers to ensure that programs are responsive to the skills requirements of the labour market.

Reading the minutes of your earlier meetings, with their strong focus on labour market data, we agree that there is a need at the national level. We work at that ourselves in community environments by maintaining very tight and close relationships with local employers to forecast needs and meet current demands.

Essential skills development, also referenced in your last meeting, is a very important dimension for placement experiences. It's particularly effective at providing marginalized people with transferable skills for employment. In that process, students see real-world applications to what they are learning. Modest investments in upgrading essentials skills such as document comprehension, critical thinking, and problem solving can yield significant gains in productivity.

Budget 2012 highlighted the importance of linking skills upgrading to the delivery of income assistance for first nations on-reserve students. This model could have broader application.

To give a little more detail on our work with the private sector, college program advisory committees, comprising local employers, develop and update curricula to ensure that college graduates have the leading-edge knowledge and the practical skills required by employers. Strong employer partnerships also enable colleges to provide students with work placements and internships, a key approach to ensuring that graduates are job-ready. As I mentioned, we are very effective at that outcome.

We also do a great deal of applied research. We are primarily an SME economy. In fact, 98% of Canadian enterprises are SMEs, and colleges work closely with them on their applied research needs. I think that's an important college contribution, which the Government of Canada has begun to support.

Increased immigration is part of the solution to the skills challenges. We do play an integral role in supporting the integration of immigrants to the labour market. In fact, our association has a close relationship with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to enable federal skilled workers to meet foreign credential requirements more efficiently through pre-departure orientation and referral services, through the Canadian immigrant integration program. To date we've served 22,000 clients. This is federal skilled workers with their credentials to leave for Canada; before they leave, we have programs to help them hit the ground running and find employment quickly.

These are, in a very highly summarized fashion, the mitigating strategies and the contributions that our institutions can make, but the challenges we face are of very large proportions. What we must do, as a country, to come to grips with these very large issues is reach out to traditionally marginalized populations, including aboriginal peoples, the disabled, poor immigrants, disengaged young men, which is a very important category, and long-term welfare-dependent families, in order to lift them into the economic mainstream through education.

A highly skilled workforce that exploits the talents of every Canadian is our only path to jobs and to a sustainable economy. In other words, the people we need to drive our economy forward already live here, in the main, and we must ensure that they all have the tools to participate in our economy. Those tools are derived through education.

So how do we lift significantly the participation rate in post-secondary education? If I had all of the answers, I would be Solomon. I am not Solomon.

● (1545)

I don't know what the answers are, but I know this problem is of such proportion that we need every order of government, every sector—private sector and civil society. We need an enormous national focus on this problem, without which our economy will lose several ranks in terms of per capita income, and that will happen quickly. The federal government certainly must be an important player at the table.

Mitigating strategies are being adopted. There are changes on immigration, and HRSDC is doing many things, but we must do much more. We must take this challenge on as a grand national enterprise. It's something like taking on the trans-Canadian railway to the Pacific as a national challenge. It's something like engaging in a war, where all assets of society are focused on the same outcome. This is how big our problem is. There have been 1.5 million empty jobs in ten years because we don't have the qualified people.

I wish you every success in learning from other witnesses and dreaming big about what needs to be done, because what needs to be done is huge.

I will leave you with one small thought about one possible remedy. It's a small thought and it somewhat runs against the grain and is perhaps politically unacceptable. Within Canada's social transfer is just under $4 billion for post-secondary education. If the crisis of skills becomes so serious as to blunt the growth of our economy—frankly, it's already happening—the Government of Canada may wish to attach some strings and expect some outcomes from this transfer in the same way we expect certain outcomes with respect to wait times with the health accord. Your government may wish to attach some expectations in terms of provincial, educational, and post-secondary contributions.

I have to tell you that in some jurisdictions, despite the skill shortage, provincial governments are reducing their investment in post-secondary education. This is the last thing that should happen, given our technological sophistication and technological dependency of the workplace, and given our enormous demographic deficit.

I look forward to discussing these issues with you. To initiate a dialogue, we plan to do two things. The first is that we're hosting the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics in Halifax, in May. And in 2013 we plan to launch a national discussion through a big event in Ottawa on these issues.

Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you for some of those thought-provoking comments. We appreciate your presentation.

We'll now move on to Nobina Robinson.

Ms. Nobina Robinson (Chief Executive Officer, Polytechnics Canada): Thank you.

Just to jump off from where Jim was, I think we are all aware that Canada ranks first overall in the OECD on the post-secondary attainment of our population. But credit is seldom given to the fact that this ranking is bolstered by the college sector. Alone, pure university attainment would put Canada at eleventh place in the OECD. So I think the broader college fact is certainly something that both Jim and I want to underline.

Thank you so much for including me here today. I'm joined by Ken Doyle, director of policy at Polytechnics Canada, who is devoting an increasing amount of his time to the understanding of the structural problems faced by apprentice learners—the trades-people.

Both of your studies with respect to high-demand occupations and barriers to filling low-skilled jobs are most timely. Your hearings have given you the bad news: new Canadian graduates will face challenging labour market conditions for several more years.

You have repeatedly questioned witnesses about the terrible paradox that is caused by the bad news: skill shortages are occurring at a time when the employer community and key industrial sectors are lamenting the lack of talent supply. There are actually two kinds of learners caught in this paradox: the traditional youth at risk, who are currently not enrolled in any education or training, and the poorly integrated new entrant to the workforce who might be under-employed, is unable to pursue career ambitions, and is overqualified for the proverbial McJobs that are available.

My statement today will focus on your specific concerns about how to improve labour market information and how to increase labour mobility. Let me signal very quickly that my presentation will focus on some solutions to these questions—namely, the need to mobilize existing talent supply and demand data among all stakeholders, to re-examine our apprenticeship model for its structural flaws in its logic, and to understand that undergraduate education is also delivered by non-university sectors. Simpler transfers and transitions between higher-education institutions will increase the supply of highly qualified skilled professionals for high-demand occupations.

Our recommendations today stem from the experience of the publicly funded nine colleges, institutes of technology, and polytechnics that are members of Polytechnics Canada. As Jim has noted, we share some members in common, but not all.

Essentially a subset of the well-known community college or non-university sector, our members are located in key economic regions in Canada, and indeed in some of the areas where we are seeing the highest labour shortages. Our model of education is essentially learning by doing. We offer advanced applied education in diverse fields—technical, business, health, and trades—which involve a strong component of digital skills and science, technology, engineering, and math learning, or STEM learning.

As nine large institutes of technology, digital skills are pervasive across all of our programs, be they computer programming, business administration, or even early childhood education. This is taught at the state of practice and is always relevant to what industry needs, no matter what year of study in the program. Jim has talked about the real-world nature of this kind of learning. It's designed in partnership with employers, from the curriculum design to the co-op, internship, and work placement aspects of it.

All our members offer a full range of credentials, from apprenticeship to diplomas to four-year undergraduate degrees and post-diploma or post-graduate certificates. Let me share with you some recently verified numbers that explain the size and scope of polytechnic education in Canada, which are not well known.

Our nine members alone have 182,000 full-time students, 53,000 part-time students, and 86 stand-alone four-year bachelor degrees graduating over 2,000 degree holders for the workforce each year. Over 32,000 apprentice students and 84% of all our graduates were employed within six months of graduation regardless of the program of study.

Let me emphasize one new trend in that data set: 45% of our students have completed prior post-secondary education. In fact, 13% have come from university with a degree to complete a one-year targeted certificate to get a job.

● (1550)

We must acknowledge that there is a difference between university and college training in general: university graduates are hoping to get jobs; college learners expect to get jobs. As large providers of trades training, we want the committee to recognize that Canadian apprentices are working toward a career in a skilled trade, not just a job.

The college system is seeing a growing number of registered apprentices who already hold a bachelor's degree or another post-secondary credential. Pursuing a registered apprenticeship is the skilled trades equivalent of pursuing graduate or doctoral studies, and should be championed by the federal government.

That apprenticeship model requires 80% of training on the job and 20% in the classroom. One important distinction to make is that as soon as those apprentices sets foot on our campuses, our institutions consider them students, like any other post-secondary student. This has led to the growth of hybrid programs that equip them with mandated in-class training but also additional credentials such as a diploma or certificate related to business administration.

Since all apprentices are treated, for tax purposes, as employees rather than students, there is little to no accessible financial support for these learners during their training. This burden has a significant impact on mature apprentices over the age of 25, who have constant and entrenched financial obligations, such as rent and vehicle payments or pre-existing loans, making it difficult for them to leave work to come back to the classroom and often forcing them to stop short of getting their ticket.

Our first specific recommendation for the committee's consideration is that all stakeholders need to collaborate to mobilize their supply-and-demand data. Let me expand. As you are well aware from the HRSDC presentation you had, labour market data in Canada is woefully inadequate, out of date, and methodologically flawed. All Canadian colleges, as publicly funded entities, track their enrolment, pathways, graduations, and outcomes, to name only a few metrics.

Governments should enable colleges to mobilize their publicly available data to all stakeholders, be they employers, high school teachers, guidance counsellors, or parents. Good national and local labour market data systems will improve the performance of high school guidance counsellors to better assist students in making education and career choices with regard to the right math and science courses needed for post-secondary success. You would do well as a committee to look back on the many recommendations of the federal advisory panel on labour market information from May 2009.

Secondly, employers too have responsibilities. Employer demand for talent is not being adequately aggregated and shared at the national or local level. More employers need to understand the dynamism of the college sector in response to their needs. In addition, employers need to avoid credential creep: why ask for an undergraduate degree when a specialized three-year diploma would do?

Third, students of the skilled trades should be treated as integral to Canada's knowledge economy and the talent needs of Canadian industry. We encourage the government to treat apprentices as learners—not as employees—and to make available the financial supports that other post-secondary students can access. Doing so would be a first step to reformulating our understanding of professional vocational training, as the Europeans have done. Abandon the false distinction between "vocational training" and the "knowledge worker"; you can be a “knowledge worker” even with vocational training.

Fourth, treat all undergraduates equitably with regard to the industry-facing internship programs funded by the federal granting councils. I know that you have heard from Industry Canada and NSERC about the suite of supports available from the granting council industrial internship programs to all university learners. To date, college undergraduates are excluded from this. At the very least, the granting councils should open up their undergraduate industrial internships and summer employment programs to college students and graduates in order to level the playing field and increase the talent pool industry can select from.

● (1555)

Finally, in the absence of any formal credit recognition body or mechanism, artificial barriers are allowed to remain in place, forcing students to redo learning they've already acquired in different jurisdictions at great expense to themselves, to taxpayers, and to the Canadian economy. We need to hold the post-secondary sector accountable for credit recognition in order to enable student mobility. Doing so is a shared responsibility and a national challenge.

I look forward to discussing this further with you.

The Chair: Thank you very much for those passionate and direct remarks, comments, and recommendations. Certainly I think you've touched on some points that are relevant to what we are considering. Thank you very much for that.

Now we're going to move to the presentation by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

I understand that you will be doing a slide presentation as well. We're in your hands to go forward with that presentation. I might add that we've gone beyond some of our time limitations simply because the subject matter is of considerable interest and importance.

Go ahead.

Mr. Herb O'Heron (Director, Research and Policy Analysis Division, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My name is Herb O'Heron. I'm the director of research and policy analysis at the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. I'm jointed today by Greg Fergus. He's the director of public affairs at AUCC.

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. I will skip through some of the material that repeats a little of what my colleagues have said. I think it's really important that we do share information on trends in employment and in enrolment across our institutions. For many years AUCC—and what has been part of my role at AUCC—has been producing that kind of information and, through websites, has been making it very public for guidance counsellors.

I've put a series of brochures on the table at the back. There is a data clip for you that has all of this kind of information. The data clip contains the publication we produce, on a triennial basis, that shows trends and includes very detailed labour market and enrolment information for universities. We have been doing all we can to make sure that students, parents, and all Canadians have access to reliable information on enrolment trends across Canada, labour market trends, and employment characteristics of our graduates.

It is also very important, as Nobina has noted, to recognize that we already have the world's highest participation rate. In fact, the community college system in Canada is the largest post-secondary system in the world—far larger than that of many other countries. It's much larger in Canada, in proportional terms, than it is in the U.S. It is the university sector that is much smaller, perhaps in contradiction with how we hear that everybody should go to university.

In fact, when I look at the data trends for the number of people who have completed university and college degrees, about 30% of our population aged 25 to 34 have a university degree; about 37% of the population aged 24 to 35 have a college or a trade degree; about 25% of Canadians aged 25 to 34 have only a high-school diploma; and 7% have not completed high school. So there is a lot more room to grow.

We already have a lot of graduates. Jim was at a meeting last week in Vancouver, where we had a very formal discussion among presidents of universities and colleges about ways in which we can create better pathways, easier pathways, more flexible pathways, and streamlined pathways for university and college graduates and students to move between institutions so that we can meet the needs of the economy.

Why have we seen the kind of growth we have seen across our enrolment trends, whether it's for universities or colleges? In fact, there are more apprentices in Canada now. The number has doubled in the last decade. The number of college students has never been higher, and there has been a 50% growth in enrolment demand.

Those trends exist because of signals coming from our employers. There is a great deal of enrolment growth and a great deal of change taking place across Canada. As you look at these trends, you'll see a decline in the number of people who have high school or less employed in our economy. There has been some growth in the number of people with trade certificates—it's about 31%. The number of people employed who have university or college degrees has doubled since 1990.

Those are the signals that are going out to students and families about where the jobs are, where employment growth is, and where they and their children should go when they are looking at the kinds of education that are in demand in our economy.

The next slide really points to the types of jobs that are out there. These are professional and management occupations, and this shows the kind of growth that's taken place in those jobs for university and college graduates over the last 20 years. There have been 1.4 million new jobs for university graduates in professional and management occupations. There are another 600,000 administrative and technical support jobs for university graduates.

When we look at the changes in employment growth for college graduates, we see with the doubling of the number of jobs all kinds of job growth for college graduates in the areas of technical and clerical support, trades, and manufacturing occupations. There is huge growth.

● (1600)

What we see in other occupations is a tremendous decline in the proportion and the number of jobs for those who have high school or less. Those people are leaving the labour market. They're aging their way out of the labour market and being replaced by a cadre of graduates, and highly educated and skilled graduates, both from universities and from colleges.

We know these are good jobs. We know these are good jobs because the income levels of the graduates continue to rise. When we look at the income levels of—

● (1605)

The Chair: I'm going to interrupt you for a moment. I've been advised that both screens are in English. One was meant to be in French and one in English. Are you able to—

Mr. Herb O'Heron: Oh, I'm sorry. It was supposed to be in French. I can switch it. I can do that right away.

The Chair: If you can switch them, I think we'll be good to go.

Mr. Herb O'Heron: I'll just let you know that all of this kind of information is available for each province as well.

Now we're back to where we were.

The Chair: That's excellent. Carry on.

Mr. Herb O'Heron: I'm sorry about that.

When we look at the income levels and the fact that incomes rise with education, age, and experience in the labour market, we can see that the income levels for those with college and trade certificates are well above those with high school certificates for people of all ages. The income levels for those with university degrees are also higher and continuing to rise over time. There's a kind of matching here of labour market growth.

We've seen a huge growth in the number of people with university and college degrees, and the fact that the income premium for those graduates continues to grow shows, as Nobina mentioned, that it's not McJobs that these people are going into.

The match between the labour market supply and the labour market demand that we've seen over the last 20 years has kept things in relative balance. We've seen the premium continue to hold steady or continue to rise.

However, as Jim noted, the future is a lot different when we look at the trends that are taking place. Take the doubling of our population 65 plus and compare that to the change in the potential labour market growth—the population of those 25 to 64 growing by about 8% in the next few years and then levelling out. What do we have to do? We don't have enough people within that 25- to 64-year-old group. We need to make sure that those who are in that group have as much access to post-secondary education as possible. With education, employment rates rise. With employment rates, income levels rise as well.

So what can we do? One of the things that's most important, as we look forward, is how to not only increase access to post-secondary education but also make sure that the quality of the educational experience is as strong as possible. That way, the graduates we do have can contribute to the kind of growth and the kind of additional needs that an aging population will place on our economy and on our society.

Where will the jobs be in the next 20 years? I can't truthfully predict, as your former witnesses before this committee also told you, exactly where the jobs will be in 20 years' time, in which occupations. Many of those occupations don't exist today.

I can tell you that universities develop students, personally and professionally, so that they can adapt to changing labour market needs and changing labour market demands. It's amazing when you look at an occupation like computer programmers. About 40% of people with bachelor's degrees who are doing computer programming have a computer science degree. About 23% come from various engineering disciplines. Another 10% come from business programs. The rest come from English and geography and a whole host of other disciplines.

Why? Because they can adapt and learn on the job. They can learn at Nobina's institution and at universities, taking certificates in computer science and other areas, because they're adaptable, because they're lifelong learners. That's the kind of graduate we need to meet shifting labour market demands and occupational profiles that we cannot begin to project 20 years out.

We can look at the skill requirements of the total labour market, but within specific occupations we have a much more difficult time. This is why universities are doing all they can to enhance the quality of the undergraduate experience. A high-quality learning experience produces more engaged and productive students who, upon graduation, are going to become our next generation of lawyers, doctors, managers, scientists, social workers, leaders, and innovators. That's the kind of graduate we're looking for into the future.

Our members have developed, through their academic plans, ways to integrate their academic programs with the local community and with the private sector. Well over half of our institutions have links with the private sector and private sector advisers to update their curricula, to help institutions set enrolment targets, and to help them devise the kinds of programs that will be beneficial for their students in the decades ahead.

Universities are also working with the private sector to create far more co-op experiences. Through experiences with the private sector, communities, volunteer organizations, practicums, co-ops, internships, and field placements, students can connect their learning —they're learning while they're learning—with private sector and community-based employers.

● (1610)

It's really important that universities develop these things. Right now, about four in ten students have that kind of opportunity by the time they graduate. We're working with employers to make sure we can do more of that in the future.

What other kinds of things can we do here, as a committee, as we move forward? What are the things to think about in addition to what others have talked about?

Well, Canada lacks on-the-job training. Our employers don't train in the same way that other countries do, and certainly not with the same number of hours they provide in on-the-job training to their employees.

We have a lot to learn from what others are doing. PSE institutions across Canada are really quite prepared to work with employers to make sure that those kinds of on-the-job training and that kind of cooperative experience with our students is one way to increase the interaction between post-secondary institutions and the needs of the labour market.

We need to increase the participation of under-represented groups, especially aboriginal Canadians. There are about 460,000 aboriginal Canadians under the age of 20 right now. That group is a prime market. Their high school completion rates are less than half that of the rest of the population. Their university completion rates are less than a third of those of the rest of the population. There are a lot of ways to improve and increase the labour force participation rate and the university participation rates of our aboriginal Canadians, so that they too can contribute to and participate in the kinds of jobs the future holds.

Third, we need to provide more hands-on training for our students. All PSE institutions are trying to connect their students with local companies. As was mentioned earlier, about 98% of our companies are small and medium-sized enterprises that are looking for and need the kind of support that would allow them to benefit from having a university or college graduate in their place of work.

Finally, there is a lot more we can do to improve the transmission of labour market information. We have all kinds of it. We need to make sure that what we do have is as reliable as possible and that we can build on what we have and in fact share it.

I have so much labour market information that I can't begin to share with you; I can tell you the occupational profile of every type of graduate, such as social science graduates, and what occupation they work in. We need to get that kind of information out there so that employers and students see that the career paths for students in a whole array of disciplines—university or college—lead to solid career paths down the line.

I'll leave it there. I look forward to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that presentation. Much of what you say reinforces some of the things that we intuitively know, but it's good to hear or to hear again.

We'll start the round with Monsieur Patry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Patry (Jonquière—Alma, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Knight, you said earlier that the postsecondary achievement rate for youth is 60%, meaning that 40% are unsuccessful.

The population is aging, but we also have to think about people who are losing their jobs. I will be speaking about Quebec, because I do not know what is going on elsewhere in Canada. There is tremendous job loss in Quebec. However, some 40- or 45-year-olds are able to continue working for another 10, 12, 15 years.

What are we doing for those people? What are we doing to help those young people who quit school or who have problems studying at the postsecondary level, so that they can learn a good trade and earn a living?

What are we doing for aboriginal people? It is all well and good to give out money, but before we resort to using immigration—I have nothing against immigrants—it would be preferable to look after ourselves first. What are we doing to help those people, in tangible terms?

● (1615)

[*English*]

Mr. James Knight: Thank you for the question.

Youth unemployment is a terrible problem in Canada—you've cited some statistics—especially among young men. Women are doing much better. They are more present in post-secondary institutions, especially in universities. We do have an issue with young men.

I used a phrase in my presentation referencing disaffected young men. There are many remedies available. There are upgrading programs. There are essential skills programs, as I mentioned, but they mitigate the problem only to some degree. I wish I had some magic answer to this problem. It seems to be an attitudinal issue. It seems to be fairly recent—in fact, in the past decade—and I cannot really explain why except to say that there are some remedies. My remarks focused at the very high level.

We have done some remarkable things with social marketing in this country. We have more or less ended drunk driving—not entirely, but we have hugely affected the incidents of drinking and driving. We have done remarkable things about smoking; there have been national campaigns. We have done reasonably well in fitness with the ParticipAction program.

What have we done and what are we saying to young people, especially young men, about the importance of education? Where do you see that on television? You don't see it at all. It's not something we're investing in. We can influence opinions and attitudes, and we can increase the participation of young men, but we have to engage in effective social marketing activities, and we're not doing it at all, as far as I can see.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Patry: Would it be possible to develop some other type of training, sir? Not all of these young people who are experiencing problems at school are capable of becoming notaries or lawyers, they cannot all go to university or CEGEP. That is not for everyone. Some must learn a basic trade.

As was mentioned earlier, many of these people get on-the-job training in the plants. In the place where I used to work, they even installed equipment that was more modern and sophisticated. So CEGEP professors were hired and brought into the plant. It took six months to learn the job. It was a technician's job and they knew how to do it too.

Would it be possible to do a similar thing and develop skills along those lines, to reach out to the people who are experiencing difficulties and teach them the trade, so that they can work and contribute to society?

[*English*]

Mr. James Knight: Let me respond in a somewhat different way this time. I did reference the fact that some provinces are reducing their investment in post-secondary education, which I think is inappropriate at this time.

Also, we do have great regional disparities. In Quebec, in Montreal many of the CEGEPs are virtually at capacity. They're full. If you go to the Gaspésie and to Lac Saint-Jean, you will find capacity availability, but where it's needed, unfortunately, it doesn't exist. I'm not targeting Quebec here. The same is true of the institutions in Toronto. They are operating at capacity.

I remember visiting Red River College in Winnipeg when I first entered this sector. In talking with the president, I asked how things were and what were his issues. He said, “We have capacity problems”. At that time, four years ago, if you wanted to become a carpenter in Manitoba, you probably had to wait four years to get into a program.

I don't want to be seen as criticizing provinces for this, but as a country, despite our remarkably high statistics, those statistics are not high enough, given our demographic problems. Really, if we want to solve these problems, we have to provide the spaces and opportunities where students are in place.

My staff just handed me some notes about this. At Algonquin College in the fall of 2011 there were 1,010 applications for practical nursing positions. There were 126 available positions. This is an occupation where you can get employment tomorrow, yet approximately only one in nine was able to get in. These are qualified students, by the way; they're not the ones who didn't qualify. In medical radiation technology, which is another very important field with a huge demand, there were 781 applications for 25 seats.

So we have a capacity issue. We're under-investing. That's a big message for you to think about.

● (1620)

The Chair: Ms. Robinson, did you want to make a comment there?

Ms. Nobina Robinson: I would make some additional points outside of what Jim said but including what Jim said.

You, sir, were talking about the proverbial high school dropout. There's also the traditional term, “youth at risk”. There's a new acronym I would like to introduce to the committee, and it's called NEET: not employed and not in education or training. This is a new HRSDC word.

The fact is that colleges, including CEGEPs, are able to respond to those needs. That's not our bread and butter, but we can certainly do it. Those solutions have to be place-based and in the community, so community organizations play a big role.

Last week we heard about YMCA programs, mentorship, job shadowing, and showing the student or the dropout what they could do. I'll give you one specific example from out in Vancouver. There are the same challenges in many urban areas.

We have in the inner-city schools in Vancouver high dropout rates —drug-related dropouts, families, etc.—and BCIT is using rehabilitated people who'd previously had exposure to the Hells Angels to go into those high schools and say, “Come for six weeks and shadow us. Look at the kinds of things you could do.” It's called the trades discovery program, and we are getting huge success rates. No one is funding BCIT for that, not the provincial government and not the federal government. They're doing that because it is their commitment to increasing access to post-secondary.

There are myriad stories like that around the country. We need to harness that for what it says. There is good work being done.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Robinson.

Your time is up, Monsieur Patry. You can perhaps pick it up on the second round, if you have more to go, but we're well over the seven minutes.

We'll go to Mr. McColeman.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I want to extend my personal thanks to all of you for being here.

This is a very useful session. I've met some of you in the past through our Conservative post-secondary caucus and in our travels across the country. We've been right across the country now and have visited probably somewhere north of 30 post-secondary institutions, including many colleges, polytechnics, and universities.

Our last journey took us to Alberta, and we ended up at Olds College to start. Then we went on to Red Deer College and visited at the University of Alberta. What's unique and what I want to get comments on from all the members here is the recognition of what I think Mr. Knight was talking about and what I think was referred to by Mr. O'Heron, and that is the need for all levels of post-secondary to be working together to create those pathways and those pathway careers that haven't traditionally existed.

Let's call it what it has been. Institutions have operated in somewhat of a silo mentality in a lot of ways, and I think breaking down those barriers is one of the most encouraging things. Every time we have done these one-day tours across the country, we have come away actually very optimistic, very buoyed by the fact that the changes are happening. I compliment you all for working together on those.

Mr. Knight, you talked about us having the resources in this country and needing to do outreach to those who are marginalized and such. I think there are creative ways in which institutions working together can do this job through redeploying resources they might have been using for other things. In my view, there doesn't necessarily need to be all new funding to solve the problems or to create the new generation of institution that looks at those who are marginalized and opens its arms to them and says, “Come in and be educated and be transformed and be all those things that education can help you be”.

I want to focus on Olds College. While having a population of only about 8,000, Olds, Alberta, is unique in the way it embraces post-secondary education right from the time the student starts kindergarten. On its campus now it has incorporated its high school. When a new high school needed to be built, it was built on the Olds College campus.

With regard to the barrier to bringing in public sector money, Olds has created a theatre funded by the community. You probably know about Olds College. When I returned from Olds College, I thought, yes, that works in a community of 8,000.

How do we take the learning and the take-aways from that and apply them to breaking the barriers down? When I go to Red Deer, I see a lot of the things you've talked about, such as working with private sector and having initiatives to get out and actually do the research for the private sector SMEs that can't afford to do it. There are many good things happening across this country. It's a very exciting time, and I'm sure you're noticing that.

Given that frame of reference, what do you see as some of the things that can do that? Let's face it: the challenge will be finding new money at both the provincial and the federal level. How can we look at existing resources, redeploy them, break down barriers, and let the kids who are going into grade 9 in their community see and feel what it means to go beyond grade 12? It used to be grade 13 in my province until they did away with it a couple of years ago. What a great motivation for them to be there and for the community college to be interacting with them.

● (1625)

How do we do these things? I think educators and the post-secondary presidents and their management teams, their whole teams, are working on these things. We are breaking down those barriers.

Taking those thoughts, I'll throw it over to you now and ask for your views on how we can continue to keep this momentum going.

The Chair: I think you provoked a lot of interest with the preamble to that question.

I'm not sure who wants to start. Perhaps all of you may have a comment.

Mr. James Knight: I know Olds College, and I know its president very well. The college has shown great leadership and great imagination.

You mentioned Red Deer College, and I would say the same for it.

I'll cite another example. They have a program to train elder-care workers, and they have the seniors residence on the campus. I mean, that's brilliant.

There are all sorts of tremendous innovations. I have the greatest respect for these institutions and the people who lead them.

I would say that Alberta is among the true leaders. It's been very well resourced and financed. In other jurisdictions they haven't been so resourced or financed and have had more challenges.

I'll cite one more example. The most exciting innovation that I can remember that really touched me was on my first visit to Red River College in Manitoba. I was with the president, and there were all these semi-trailers in the parking lot. When I mentioned that I saw that they had a program in trucking, I was told, no, they didn't have a program in trucking: “Those semi-trailers, Jim, are mobile classrooms. We truck them up to northern Canada, right up into the Indian reserves, and when they unfold we have a shop.” So this instructional capacity reached out to young aboriginal people who might be interested in the various resource industries under way in northern Manitoba—hydroelectric, forestry, mining, whatever it might be. They taught those right on site.

Believe me, I'm very excited by many of the innovations. We get together and we share them and we visit. We have presidents visiting other institutions. We bring faculty leaders together, and we have training programs for them. These ideas are shared.

I'm still worried, though, about our issues of demographics and the penetration of technology. What we're doing we have to magnify. I think that's my basic point. We have some wonderful experience to share in Canada.

By the way, we're working more closely than ever with universities on the pathways opportunity, but we really have to work hard, because our challenges are big.

That's my prime message: this is really an important area, our demographics are debilitating and disastrous, and we have to manage it better.

● (1630)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Knight.

Your time is up, but I think Nobina Robinson....

Please be relatively short in your response. I know you'll have more you want to say, but perhaps you can pick it up in the other rounds.

Ms. Nobina Robinson: What I wanted to come back to....

You picked Alberta. Post-secondary is a provincial jurisdiction, as you very well know. Alberta calls it a “web” of credentials, not a ladder. We have hierarchical thinking in most of this country: BA, MA, PhD. We call it a web, with any point of entry, any point of exit. You can get two-plus-two programs. You can do dual credit. You can do it in Ontario too. That's a creative model, with high school and college graduation.

Third, to answer your question on the creative ways to go, every single college program has an industry-based representative on the program advisory committee. Why aren't we harnessing what those guys know about the industry demand for a national story?

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Are we moving on now to Madame Perreault or Monsieur Patry? Madame Perreault? Okay.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP): Good afternoon and thank you for coming.

I would like to continue along the lines of the previous comments. Reference was made earlier to youth and aboriginal people. I am of course going to talk about the disabled. You will understand that this cause is particularly dear to my heart.

I believe that one way to resolve these labour shortages would be to improve the education of certain under-represented groups, including the disabled.

Are there currently any programs that would improve access to postsecondary studies for people with some type of disability?

[*English*]

Mr. Herb O'Heron: Many programs exist in provinces to do that. Ontario has fairly strong support, or had fairly strong support, for programs to help to provide additional support where additional support was needed. There are institutions themselves putting in all kinds of programs to help and encourage students who are disabled to gain access to their programs.

So yes, there are good examples of them. The challenge is in scaling the programs up so that the resources are there to encourage more students to gain the prerequisites, almost, to get through and to gain the skills and complete the kinds of programs that are needed to get into colleges and universities, and so that we can help them once they gain access to the kinds of programs—not just academic support programs but all kinds of support programs—that will help them gain their way through school.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Manon Perreault: This is a terrible thing to say but I find that most of the disabled people I have met who now hold a well paid job often studied before being diagnosed with a disease or before having an accident. They were able to continue and pursue an interesting career.

But I am talking about a young person who suffers an accident, who has never had a career and who is trying to continue. I am wondering whether or not the current integration programs, be they at the provincial or federal level, really meet the needs of those individuals. And, if so, there must be some results somewhere that we can read.

[*English*]

Mr. Herb O'Heron: As I said, there are some programs in Ontario. I cannot point you to the particular one you're after, but we can do that afterwards if you want.

Mr. James Knight: Thank you for the question. It's a very important one, because in fact the employment success of disabled persons is very low. The numbers are not good at all. In fact, they're something of an embarrassment.

But I do know, as my colleague has suggested, of particular institutions, and all jurisdictions are working on this issue. I have been to institutions that have gone the extra mile and have remarkable facilities for disabled learners, including foot-operated typewriters and all sorts of devices that I never would have imagined. I can tell you about the detail of that and where you can find that.

Another problem is the reluctance of employers to employ disabled people. That is another issue. If we are graduating more disabled learners, we must work on the employment side. We must educate employers to the benefits of disabled workers. I think it's an area that needs considerable focus.

● (1635)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Manon Perreault: You are referring to technological aids. I am not talking about technological aids, because I know that today we have a whole range of devices like that. Obviously, I feel that we should perhaps be approaching employers to encourage them to at least give those people a chance.

On another topic, are there any programs that would broaden the range of postsecondary studies available to disabled individuals? Is there anything available now that would help them secure a position in a well paid profession, instead of having to always work for a minimum or very low wage?

At present, most of these people end up working in associations for the disabled. So they do not have an opportunity to be reintegrated into normal society.

[*English*]

Ms. Nobina Robinson: The only thing I can say is that there is an HRSDC-funded program that you should ask them about. It's called Skills Link. It specifically targets the under-represented population, the one that might be also unemployed. In the literature I've read about Skills Link, I think they do target people with disabilities. It's a funded national program. I think your question should probably go there in terms of getting access.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Manon Perreault: I have one last quick question.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead. Mr. Patry may be running out of time, but you do have time to go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Manon Perreault: That means that somebody who wants to study at college or university cannot get information directly from his or her institution about various programs. That means that these people must really get the information from a variety of places in order to find out about the interesting programs.

[*English*]

Ms. Nobina Robinson: I would think that all post-secondary institutions are agnostic as to whether the person is disabled. They're looking at the entry-level requirements for each program.

If you're talking about the person who hasn't even been able to get to post-secondary and needs the supports for that, I suggest that there are other federal and provincial support programs that help people complete their learning.

The Chair: Mr. O'Heron, you have 30 seconds.

Mr. Herb O'Heron: Just very quickly, I'll note that the directory of Canadian universities does point handicapped students to the kinds of programs that exist at Canadian universities. There is a web-based source at AUCC that will help to at least point students to potential programs and potential support mechanisms that are found on our campuses.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Manon Perreault: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll now move on to Mr. Mayes.

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

For my colleague who brought up the issues around disabilities and training, the budget that has just been tabled has $30 million in there for what we call the opportunities fund for disabled people. You should be voting for the budget to support that, because it's a good initiative.

I'd like to direct my first question to Mr. Knight. The knowledge infrastructure program that we did in the stimulus...that was an effort to stimulate the economy but also to help with capacity issues around universities and colleges. I know that the colleges in the Okanagan Valley took advantage of it.

The local campus in the community where I live expanded their capacity for their skills training. One of the other things the Okanagan College has is mobile units for welding or carpentry. It's working really well. They're helping to take a bigger variety of opportunities to the various areas in the Okanagan Valley. That is one thing. Could you talk about other initiatives that can be taken to move from the college out into the communities, and to the more remote communities, especially first nations communities?

The other initiative they took in B.C. was to move part of the University of British Columbia campus to the Okanagan and take some of the disciplines out of that and move them into an area that is maybe more focused on agriculture. Is that anything that the universities would be looking at to try to increase the capacity?

Also, in speaking with the medical association about some of the challenges for people who go to university to learn how to be a doctor.... They get in the city, get caught up in that lifestyle, and want to stay in the city, but we need doctors in rural Canada. I know there's a pilot project—I think it's out of the University of Toronto—in which they've set up a campus where they can do their training away from the university. I think that's a very positive thing. Are there any other initiatives that have been undertaken to take that training and those opportunities out into the more rural areas?

Mr. Knight.

● (1640)

Mr. James Knight: I just want to acknowledge, Mr. Mayes, that the knowledge infrastructure program for colleges and institutes was marvellous. We were able to catch up with a lot of deferred maintenance and indeed expand the capacity of the system. We've expressed our gratitude for that program many times.

Perhaps I should broaden the discussion a bit to the fastest-growing delivery component of the college education experience, and that is distance learning. This offers remarkable opportunities and is expanding exponentially; it's getting at the notion of creative ways to solve our problems that are not unduly costly. Distance education is growing very quickly.

On the college side, with some of the practical applications and the physical applications required, there are certain limitations. Nevertheless, some institutions.... I've mentioned Algonquin College. Algonquin College—among others—is putting a huge emphasis on distance education, which is a way to use resources economically and to deliver education where it is required. You may not be able to get a single parent to come to an institution, but they may be able to participate online. That is an important need.

Ensuring that all of Canada has access to high-speed Internet would be a tremendous contribution to distance education.

Mr. Colin Mayes: Would any other witnesses like to speak on that issue or on what I asked about?

Mr. Herb O'Heron: Yes.

Again, “Open Doors, Open Knowledg” was something that universities pulled together in the fall to thank government for the knowledge infrastructure program and the tremendous resources they provided to universities and colleges across Canada to build increased capacity in research facilities on our campuses. With $1.3 billion, it really resulted in $3.2 billion in new infrastructure on university campuses across Canada. Again, we're very thankful for that kind of program.

You asked whether universities are going to other communities. There is now a program in Thunder Bay for medical doctors. There's a program at the University of Northern British Columbia, and medicine is being taught in other communities in the north as a result of those new programs. In fact, we're modelling those programs in Canada on programs in places like Australia, where they've had tremendous success in taking similar kinds of medical programs, for which enrolment and degrees have to be constrained because so many students want to get into them, but there isn't a capacity for society to provide all of those opportunities. There can't be as many doctors as students who want opportunities to get into those professions, but we do need doctors and nurses and health professionals and teachers to work in communities around the world. So yes, indeed, we are looking at a couple of models in Canada right now to try to do some of that.

Bringing students onto campus and taking programs to students are other really important things. When we look at the kinds of differences in aboriginal populations across Canada, it's not really a surprise, then, that in western Canada we have some very innovative programs looking at how to bring, attract, retain, and support aboriginal Canadians on our campuses, and also to support them in their communities. So whether you look at the University of Victoria's programs and the suite of programs they put together to support aboriginal Canadians and really increase the graduation rates of those students, or you look at universities in Manitoba or Saskatchewan, all of those institutions are putting together very interesting programs.

Again, it's a matter of finding what's working best in each community, because each community is a little different from the others. It is a matter of finding what works, what works when, and what works how, and then replicating it where it's really useful to do so. I think those kinds of programs, whether for aboriginal Canadians or other under-represented student groups, are really the kinds of models that we're looking to replicate across the country.

● (1645)

The Chair: Your time is up. We've extended it by two minutes.

We'll move to Mr. Cuzner.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Thanks very much.

Thank you all.

It's good to see Greg again.

I have only five minutes, and I have a bunch of questions, so if you could—

The Chair: You have seven minutes.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: I have seven? Geez, button your shirt, Mr. Chairman—your heart's going to fall out.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: That's very generous.

The Chair: Yes, I'm really liberal in my time today.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Still, if we could keep the answers fairly concise, I'd appreciate it.

Mr. Knight, I thought you hit right on it when you were talking about the number of applications that are received in a particular course versus the number you're able to accommodate. So there is the capacity aspect of it. I want you to share with the committee—not now, but I want you to think about it and give us a concise answer on it—what role the federal government plays in building that capacity.

Ms. Robinson and Mr. O'Heron, you mentioned the labour market information. As much as HRSDC takes a great deal of pride in the information it provides, witness after witness has said it's mushy; it's generic; it doesn't really help a whole lot. Do you believe that HRSDC should be out of the business or that they should just do a better job of providing the information? Maybe I can get your comments on that now.

Ms. Nobina Robinson: I don't think HRSDC should be out of the business. The question is how to help them with a very reduced budget. Let's not put HRSDC totally front and centre. Statistics Canada is also at play here.

So how do we do things with greatly reduced spending in the labour market information? I'm no LMI expert. I refer you to a compendium of ideas that you have from Don Drummond and Rick Miner. In May of 2009 this government created that panel, the advisory panel on labour market information. What I will say is that in a context of tremendous cost containment, every one of us publicly funded institutions can produce the data for HRSDC. But because the provinces own our data, we have never put it up for a national purpose.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: So there has to be a mechanism in there ensuring that data.

Ms. Nobina Robinson: Absolutely. I'm told by HRSDC officials that the "Working in Canada" portal is going to do exactly this, but how, if we are not connected to 95 universities and 152 community colleges, polytechnics, and institutes? We can work together on this.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: And you feel that the direction given in the 2009 report, that from that panel report—

Ms. Nobina Robinson: It is exhaustive and it will cost. That is probably one of the reasons why much of the 2009 report has not been actioned, because every one of those surveys costs money. So the question is, as I think Herb is saying, with the vast amount of data that AUCC has, each and every one of the colleges has to satisfy their provincial masters—how many students, how many graduations? Why are we not putting this all harnessed together into a national accessible database?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Okay, that's great.

Do you have a quick comment on that?

Mr. Herb O'Heron: Sure. In fact, we have been putting that kind of data out on enrolments, and in very detailed ways out into the public, and in many ways for many years. And we certainly share with universities so that they can assess where there's a need or a niche that's not being filled. So there's an awful lot of sharing that is possible.

Every occupational system that's been developed is always looking a little bit backwards, so it's very, very hard to look forward. You need to take the kinds of data that do exist, keep adjusting them, and keep them fluid.

I think it is really important to say that we can pick 100 or 150 occupations—100 or 150 disciplines—and match them up now. We can do it right now, and I can do it off this computer and show it to you right now for universities and colleges across this country. So I think there are lots of ways to do that. Much of it is going to be at an aggregate rather than back to the individual, especially in—

● (1650)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: But it's just striking me strange that HRSDC isn't accessing the information that's out there.

Mr. Herb O'Heron: It's really from them. It's just a matter of displaying what it is they're showing, what it is that the census of Canada shows on those fronts.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Okay, that's great.

Could we get Mr. Knight's comments on the point you were making there?

Mr. James Knight: I concur with my colleage Ms. Robinson that there is much that we're doing and there is much more that we can do. It is difficult to drill down to a local environment, though. I mean, people are—

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: No, I'd like your comments just on the capacity thing, the role the federal government would play in developing the capacity.

Mr. James Knight: Well, as I mentioned, there is something called the Canada social transfer, and embedded within that is a considerable amount for post-secondary education, $3.8 billion with an annual increment. It was announced and renewed in December.

I just want to know if there would be an appetite at some point. I suggest there might be an appetite at some point for attaching some strings to that in the same way that there are outcome expectations for the Canada social transfer.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Okay.

Ms. Robinson, in your information you say there are 34,000 apprentices but that the completion rate isn't great.

Ms. Nobina Robinson: Right.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: What's the problem with the completion rate? Where are the barriers with the completion rate? The completion rate is about 10%, isn't it?

Ms. Nobina Robinson: Some data show 7%, but if you will permit me, and in the interest of time, we'll ask the expert, Ken Doyle.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Yes, I always have time for an Irishman.

Mr. Ken Doyle(Director, Policy, Polytechnics Canada): Thank you.

One of the major impediments is just the data itself. It's simply not available. There are no coherent data on what the actual completion rate is, and nobody is able to explain how many apprentices are enrolled at what level in what programs across the country. And because an apprenticeship is a relationship of the apprentice with the employer and the government, there are incentives for the apprentice to stay in at the beginning, but nothing to help them through, so financial obligations come up.

For employers, there's a risk of having the apprentice poached when they become a journey-person, so there's not a lot of incentive to keep them on and have them get their ticket, for risk of having them poached by another employer.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: These are people who have shown an interest, have taken the initial steps and that kind of stuff, but who have only about a 10% or 7% completion rate. We have to find out what those barriers are.

Do I still have time?

The Chair: You have about four seconds. You may want to ask a question if you're going to....

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Yes, short questions, short answers.

Right now people who take trades training are eligible to receive EI. Going to university, you're not eligible to receive EI. May I have your comments on that? Should it be available to people who go to university?

Mr. Ken Doyle: Yes. I believe the threshold for accessing a student loan or financial support for a college or university student is 12 weeks of a program. Most apprenticeship programs for the in-class training are only eight weeks, so they are given the option of going on EI, but that amount of money doesn't meet the financial obligations they've accrued over the year. The income drop-off and the lag to get the EI cheque are strong impediments for them to drop out and remain unskilled.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: But it goes beyond trades training too. It goes into other diploma programs that are able to receive EI benefits.

Mr. Ken Doyle: And giving the apprentice the option of either EI or a student loan would be a fine compromise.

The Chair: We've had an elongated four seconds, but we'll move to Mr. Daniel.

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, gentlemen, ladies.

Just following on the apprenticeship thing, I come from the U.K., and the U.K. apprenticeship programs are quite long. They're three or four years. They're paid apprenticeships. Does that compare with anything we do here in terms of apprenticeships?

Mr. Ken Doyle: Yes. Our apprenticeships are paid, so 80% of the training is done on the job, paid, and then 20% is go back to the classroom and learn to get to your next level.

I've recently read a study that compared 20 different variables of all the European countries and their apprenticeship training systems. What was quite remarkable was that the average age of an apprentice in Europe is around 17, whereas in Canada it's 28. So they clearly value apprenticeship and the skilled trades at a higher level earlier on, and they're available for more occupations than in Canada.

I think it even comes down to the nomenclature. In Canada apprentices who get their ticket are known as journey-persons, whereas in Europe they're considered master craftsmen. An analogy to hockey would be a journeyman hockey player is a third-line player—ten different teams, ten different seasons—whereas a master player is on the cover of a video game, and children want to buy his jersey.

So even something as simple as that might improve our completion rates in Canada and have parents and students appreciate the value of the skilled trades.

● (1655)

Mr. Joe Daniel: How long is the actual apprenticeship training program?

Mr. Ken Doyle: The 52 Red Seal programs vary between two and four years, and most take four to six years to complete.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Mr. O'Heron, you spoke passionately about all the data you've collected, etc. What is stopping you from publishing all that?

Mr. Herb O'Heron: We do publish it. We do put out all these kinds of studies. A lot of data is available.

The kinds of information we have in the documents that are on the disks are shared with the public. They're online, so we do make this as available as possible to the public.

Mr. Joe Daniel: So the complaint is nobody is looking at it.

Mr. Herb O'Heron: No, it wasn't my complaint at this stage. What I'm saying is we try to put it in accessible forms. A document that is 80 or 100 pages long, which you need for an analytical study of these things, is not accessible to the normal high school student.

Part of the reason we put out these one-page brochures or two-page front-and-back brochures is to put the information in a much more concise, more user-friendly format, so guidance counsellors and others.... We have orders from guidance counsellors for hundreds and hundreds of the “Value of a Degree” brochure, to look at some very concise information and a source to go to, to get more if you need it.

Part of what we're trying to do as universities is say that this is a role we can play. We can try to take the data that is available, as good or bad as it is, and make sure that it's as accessible to different forms of the public as possible.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Turning to your slides, the second slide shows the increase in the volume of degrees, etc., but it shows that the trade certificates haven't increased much or proportionally. Can you talk a bit about why that may be? From what we're hearing in this committee from the mining sector in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and places like that, a huge number of trade skills are needed for them to complete all their work.

Mr. Herb O'Heron: One of the things we've done in this publication, or in the series of slides that are available to you, is do the same kinds of slides by province. So you can see that while there are employment increases for tradespeople in Alberta, and a little more in Alberta than in most other provinces, the rate of growth for people with university and college degrees is far more rapid.

The Alberta economy is creating jobs for everyone. It's a very hot economy. If you look across and if you look at either the proportional change or even the change in numbers of people, that's why these data are important. It's not just jobs for tradespeople. There are jobs for them. As my colleagues would say, in looking at the data it gives us the numbers of people who got the jobs, not the number of people who would have had jobs if there had been more of them. So that's a bit of a concern.

But when I look at the data underneath that and look at wage rates and the other people who are then filling those jobs, I don't see the kind of dire statistic that we hear about around shortages in some of the occupations, so I'm trying to understand some of that data myself.

Mr. Joe Daniel: How do the institutions you represent help connect these students with potential employers? My question is for everybody.

Mr. Herb O'Heron: To start, part of this is really through the kinds of co-op and internship programs we have. As I mentioned at the outset, most of our programs have community and labour market advisers and private sector international advisers on the curriculum. So we're already connected, whether it's with the high-tech sector or other sectors, and can ask what the needs in the economy are. What are the needs in the local area? What needs are not being met? There's a lot of interplay between them at an institutional level.

What we do at a national level is work with groups of employers to identify needs at a broader level so that we can share that kind of information.

● (1700)

Mr. James Knight: I'd like to add a comment from our sector. I mentioned applied research partnerships with small and medium enterprises. One of the most exciting things I did last year was go to the Algonquin College applied research day. I saw all these employer-student relationships and the things they'd done together. It was very powerful. Those relationships end up very often in employment. That's another dimension, in addition to the comments here.

I want to say a word, if I might, about your comment on the slow rise in trades training and certificates. I don't think we market it well. I think our language is all wrong. It's class-based. Parents don't want their kids to become tradespersons. They want them to become professionals.

We need to look very carefully at our bizarre, ancient, antiquated language. I think Mrs. Robinson made these comments. I've been working very hard to find new words for our institutions to use in this area. Some have begun to do it, but I have to say that pushback from the unions, for example, is quite strong, which mystifies me.

We need new language. A master craftsman is a very different thing from a skilled tradesperson or a journeyman, whatever the hell that is.

Thank you.

The Chair: Your time is up. You've made very interesting points, for sure.

We'll move to Ms. Hughes.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Well, since you're still on the apprenticeship piece, I'll touch base on that.

Mr. O'Heron, you talked about the lack of on-the-job training. I'm looking here at a press release from the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. They did a press release on pieces of the budget, and one of the things they talked about was the direct support for skills development in the workplace and in Canada's college and apprenticeship systems. They are recognizing that as well.

Ms. Robinson, you've also talked about this. I'm just trying to get a sense of it, because even in my riding of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing.... I just met with a gentleman a few weeks ago. He went to school three times after he lost his job, and every time, he was asked if he had experience, whether the job was driving a truck.... I can't remember the other two he did, but they were big enough. He had gone back to school to relearn, and people were asking for experience, which he didn't have.

Some of the people who do take on apprentices are telling us that once they have them in training, it's hard to let them go finish school, because the businesses are in dire need of workers. Could you talk about that a bit and about what you could find as a solution? There used to be a time when there were a lot of apprenticeships, but they haven't been as frequent.

Ms. Nobina Robinson: With your permission, I might ask for Mr. Doyle's help. At the end of the day, when you say apprenticeship in Canada, you're talking about 52 red seal trades, such as, for example, pipefitters and machinists of some kind. There should be that model of learning for most of the needs of industry.

If you look at Germany, you can be an apprentice banker. We have reserved this model of learning for the elites in this country. Doctors and surgeons get the residency approach, but we haven't done that across the board for all the technical, vocational, and professional learning. That, I think, is the bigger philosophical piece. The “earn while you learn” model is not there across our post-secondary system. It is in very specific, narrow issues in apprenticeship.

Now I'll ask Ken Doyleto address some other aspects of the apprenticeship issue, including something that's flawed in the data.

Mr. Ken Doyle: On your specific question about how somebody with no background in the trade would be hired on by an employer to begin the apprenticeship process, Conestoga College in Kitchener—Waterloo has a fantastic program that takes high school students and gives them a first year of training—sort of theoretical background—in a trade. It equips them with the fundamental skills to try to find employers to take them on as apprentices. That helps get through the level-one, level-two part of it. The employers like it because they get apprentices with at least some foundational simulated workplace training to get those hours in to get to the next level, and so forth. They've found that quite productive.

● (1705)

Mrs. Carol Hughes: I want to go with that, because there are some students and people out there who don't have the literacy skills. I have met with a few organizations. I met with the Excellence in Literacy Foundation this week. The whole thing is that not everybody has that capacity, yet they can fill jobs where there are skills shortages because they're more hands-on people.

I wonder if you can maybe elaborate on that or give us your ideas on what to do. Obviously there are people falling through the cracks, so what can we do to help them move forward?

Mr. Ken Doyle: Every college in the country offers a variety of essential literacy skills upgrading programs, but there's one very interesting initiative of the SAIT Polytechnic in Calgary. They know that all the students have smartphones, iPads, and BlackBerries. As part of the trades training for those students—I believe it's in the heavy equipment technician program—they teach the lesson module and it's filmed at the same time. Then it's turned into a little YouTube video that the students can refer to on their bus ride to the classroom, and what not, whenever they need a refresher. They always have that. So it's complementary to textbook and theoretical teaching, but it's actually on their devices in the video. It helps reinforce all they've learned through the actual in-class training.

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Thank you.

If you feel like jumping in, just raise your hand.

You talked about labour market information. We had other witnesses who questioned the COPS information, because it basically indicates there are not a lot of shortages in certain areas. But it's not really regional, because there may be a regional deficiency in one area, but it kind of balances the other one.

I wonder how you actually use your labour market information and where you get it from. How do you work with large resource or manufacturing companies to plan for multi-year projects with long timelines, such as shipbuilding that will last decades, and some skilled trades are retiring while the project is still going on? In my area there's the Ring of Fire that's coming forward.

Do you work with sector councils to determine the job needs of the future? Could you elaborate on that? What could we do better in order to decipher that? I know you've touched base on some of that.

The Chair: There is a lot in there, but go ahead.

Mr. Herb O'Heron: As programs like new shipbuilding come up, and as we work with the aerospace industry or others, there's a constant dialogue. We brought people in from Pratt & Whitney to speak with MPs back in January. Pratt & Whitney has relationships with 30 or more institutions right across the country. They talk about the kinds of skills they need and the kind of research they rely on universities to do so they can do their thing. There is a great deal of sharing of information across those larger kinds of institutions—whether it's shipbuilding, aerospace, or others—around what the future needs will be for their industries to thrive in a more competitive world. So there's an awful lot of dialogue that goes on between individual universities and groups of institutions.

I see a lot more consortia of institutions where not just one or two universities can help the aerospace industry; they need 30 institutions working together on different aspects to solve the problems of the future. It's that kind of sharing and interaction between institutions at both the local and regional areas that's so important for us right now.

Mrs. Carol Hughes: So—

The Chair: Excuse me; your time is up.

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Mrs. Robinson wants to just jump in there. Sorry.

The Chair: Okay, go ahead.

Ms. Nobina Robinson: You asked about the sector council program. All the colleges have ways to connect with the more adept sector councils—you've heard from some of them, like ECO Canada, BioTalent, and ICTC. We try to connect the employers we have with the sector councils.

Now, of course that program has been massively reduced and there is a need to rethink how we do this, because sectors change and there are new and emerging sectors in the country. But as I mentioned earlier, every single college program has two employers overseeing the program, as required by the province. So can't we harness those companies, those employers, to talk to us about their demand-side data?

● (1710)

The Chair: Mr. O'Heron, did you have a point you wanted to make on that as well? No? You're fine.

Mr. Knight, go ahead.

Mr. James Knight: The Ring of Fire has been mentioned, and I just wanted to say that we're working very hard with colleges in the north and aboriginal leaders to try to identify some programs that would support aboriginal learners in that area for the Ring of Fire opportunities.

The Chair: All right, definitely your time is up.

We'd like to get back to Madame Blanchette-Lamothe in a bit.

Mr. Butt, would you like to go? You're next on the list.

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much, everyone, for being here today.

It seems to me we have a couple of challenges here. The first challenge we have is how we get high school graduates to consider going into post-secondary education and training for these jobs that we know are more prevalent in the future economy. Mr. Knight had mentioned this earlier. Let's not call it trades; let's come up with some new, sexy name, but something to push people into that because we know those are the jobs of the future.

So we have one group of people who are recent graduates from high school we're trying to move in. As I see it, the second group we have—and I'd like each of you to comment on this and whether or not you think there is any difference or whether we treat them the same—are the people who come into my office every so often, who had one career, who were working somewhere for ten years. Now they no longer are able to work in that area because the business has shut down, the economy has changed. They may have been highly trained in a certain area, but unless they have to pick up the whole family and move to Alberta, they want to keep working in Mississauga, where I am from, but they're no longer able to work in that area. So how do we re-educate them? How do we get them back into a program that would allow them to utilize some of the skills they already have or perhaps augment or improve what they have so that they can move into working in another company in Mississauga that is desperate for highly skilled workers? And I've met with those employers too.

Do you see a difference in approach between high school graduates versus second-career or retraining opportunities with people who are older and already have experience in the workforce? Is there a role for the federal government to play more so than it's doing now in those areas, while obviously still respecting our friends in the provinces?

Whoever wants to go first, go right ahead.

Mr. James Knight: Thank you for the question.

In Ontario there has been a specific program. You actually mentioned it: Second Career Ontario I believe is the name of it. The province instituted it to help the transition of people formerly employed in manufacturing. There is major displacement. And there have been some very interesting successes and outcomes. But clearly we're not dealing with high school graduates. The approach to high school graduates will be quite different. These may be people in their thirties and forties, with families, with responsibilities that high school graduates might not have. So the approach to them must be very different and the support systems and tools that you use for them must be very different.

This program has had some success in Ontario, and there are some wonderful stories about transitions from manufacturing to many other careers. But the scale is fairly significant, and I have to admit we haven't managed to take care of all of it.

The Chair: Ms. Robinson, is there any point you'd like to make?

Ms. Nobina Robinson: Second Career of course was somewhat supported through the federal government and the stimulus funding. Yes, it was delivered in Ontario, by Ontario, but it was through that kind of support. So there is a role for the federal government.

I want to caution around the term “re-educate”. One of the things we need to talk about is every learner has a prior set of acquired skills and talents and we have to find ways of measuring that. Our ways of measuring prior learning are probably in need of upgrade. There are things like entrepreneurship skills that someone would have acquired that could be translated with a certain amount of additive learning. Either we walk the talk on lifelong learning or we don't, but I wouldn't want to call it “re-educate”. That's the first thing.

Yes, there's a difference between how you treat high school leavers and how you treat those who have to retool their career.

Let me talk about the high school leavers and some of the issues we're finding. It's all very well when you persuade them and say, “Go join an apprentice program, because you will make good money as a plumber or a gas pipefitter or a Hydro One worker”. But what we're finding also is society has changed. Previously, these professions had families where the father was the auto-shop owner and the kid grew up having worked on car engines, or the father was a carpenter and the kid had built houses on his summers off. Now we find that the big challenge to get that high school student through the first year of post-secondary is to understand how hard it is. Often that high school student has been misadvised and has taken the easier math, but now wants to be an animation designer and fails first-year math. The amount of remedial math work that we're having to do to get kids through technology programs needs to be talked about.

Has this necessarily got to be funded by the federal government directly? No. But when you give the money to the provincial government to deliver post-secondary education, hold them accountable for these outcomes. That's what Jim was saying.

● (1715)

Mr. Brad Butt: Do you want to comment as well, Mr. O'Heron?

Mr. Herb O'Heron: It's a little bit different with regard to the kinds of occupations and the kinds of skills of university graduates. I mean, look at the job changes that have taken place in our economy. In the economic downturn, there were about 450,000 jobs lost for those who do not have any post-secondary education. There were about 78,000 increased jobs for those with college. There were about 6,000 fewer jobs for people with trades, and there were about 300,000 more jobs for university graduates. They were all in the kind of occupational profile that I pointed to before.

Part of what a university education does is it provides the learner with lifelong learning skills to be adaptable themselves. Many of them have those skills, and that's why we see people in computer programming jobs who have English degrees. That's why we see students adapt and change. It's why we see engineers who are doing things far outside the field of engineering.

An awful lot of adapting and change takes place, and it's not just for university graduates. In the picture that one can draw with some of these data, it is really important to understand the kind of shifting going on in the labour market.

I agree with my colleague that lifelong learning is really important. No country has it right yet, especially for the 45-year-old who has changed jobs and now has that additional expense to go through and a very short career thereafter to benefit from that expense.

So it's a real challenge in every economy. We've been talking about it for the 35 years or so that I've been involved in this field. I've seen France and other countries talk about *éducation à vie* and not really be successful at finding new ways. As I think the demographic data that I had up earlier showed, we have to find ways of dealing with that. We cannot, as Jim pointed out, meet future labour market needs if we only rely on the growth in education of the youth cohorts. We have a big challenge there, and we need to make sure that we're using every opportunity to exploit the kinds of educational backgrounds they've had in the past.

Mr. Brad Butt: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Butt.

We'll move to Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe.

You don't need to use up the seven minutes—it will be the last round—but you're welcome to it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Thank you.

We often talk about our fears in the face of the aging population and the labour shortage that we will be dealing with in the next few years. I was very interested in the fact that today you presented concrete measures to deal with this labour shortage. For example, you mentioned community initiatives for getting people back into the job market, the importance of access to education, tools and programs for students with learning and behavioural difficulties as well as programs designed for people with disabilities and aboriginal people.

You talked about innovative and best practices in colleges and universities. You may wish to add to that.

Given all of these measures that you have implemented to deal with labour shortages, what challenges do colleges and universities have to face? What resources could help colleges and universities in implementing more measures like those?

Could the federal government play a role and support the colleges and universities, through initiatives, programs or innovative practices, in seeking out these people who are already in Canada and who would like to get into another field or the labour market?

[*English*]

Mr. Herb O'Heron: Especially in relation to aboriginal Canadians, there are all kinds of pilot programs that universities themselves are funding to try to attract and retain and support students through to graduation. They're doing that, as my colleague mentioned before, on their own dime, if you want, reallocating from other resources.

Some of these programs are finding amazing things, absolutely amazing things, and amazing ways to do it—less expensive ways than they had in the past, but still in ways that are costly and especially difficult to scale up. One can take a program and provide it for 50 or 100 students and really be successful, but how do you scale that up to 1,000 students at your own institution and to other institutions?

I think the federal government can support some of those kinds of programs, the pilots that are necessary, to make sure we're doing the right things across the country, to support them to scale up for aboriginal Canadians in the future, and to support the ones that work in the particular situations in which they work.

So I think there is a role for the federal government, especially in that area.

● (1720)

Ms. Nobina Robinson: You asked what kinds of challenges there are. I'll give you a real-life challenge.

In Kitchener—Waterloo, our Canadian Silicon Valley, anchored by RIM, we have Conestoga College producing IT degrees, right? You always think that the University of Waterloo produces them, but Conestoga does as well.

But you have small and mid-sized IT firms offshoring those jobs to Bangalore. What has gone wrong? Did they not know that there were 2,000 students up the road at Conestoga or even at Waterloo? Is it the wage issue? I think these challenges need to be talked about.

But from a federal government point of view, would better labour market data—timely, granular, and local labour market data on the availability of the talent, the nature of the credentials, and the vast array of two-year diplomas, degrees, and graduate degrees—not have helped that company to not offshore those jobs? I think that is a challenge. What is the federal government role? As I said in my opening statement, mobilize the existing data on the demand side and the supply side.

Also, as I think as you have heard in the course of today, there is a range of success stories, individual and local community success stories. We all want to say that we're doing a great job. Well, why isn't there a compendium for us to go to so we can say that if they are doing it out at Red River College, maybe it applies in Nova Scotia? Where do you go to get that? That is a national role that can be funded. After all, the taxpayer has paid for all of these successes to come together.

Thank you very much.

Mr. James Knight: Certainly one federal responsibility, which I hope will be addressed following the budget, is the K-to-12 education on reserve, which has been disastrously underfunded. About two-thirds of the amount the provinces provide has been provided to on-reserve aboriginal K-to-12 learners. I was very pleased to see some progress there, but we must make sure that it comes to full fruition.

Thank you.

Mr. Herb O'Heron: I think another thing is a small program in the last budget and in previous budgets around internship programs and the ways in which we can promote employment for recent graduates, especially the kind of employment they can get in small and medium-sized companies so they can bring their expertise directly into the company through an internship or an employment experience. It's something that we have proposed for a long time.

It's about the ways in which we change the NRC. As the NRC changes, it creates opportunities for PhD and master's students—for all kinds of students—to go through that kind of lab experience where there's a great deal of connection between the company and the students while they're in school. It's the work while you learn model. That would really help, and it does exist in other countries.

Other countries are following what's called the Fraunhofer model in Germany. Whether it's the U.K., Finland, or other countries that are following that model, they are finding success with creating internship, co-op, and work experiences for new graduates and students as they're going through these programs, to really help. That's where the federal government can play a role in Canada: around those kinds of experiences.

Ms. Nobina Robinson: My colleague Mr. O'Heron is referring to the work of the R and D review panel. I was a member of that panel. I'm very surprised and pleased to see how many of our recommendations were acted on by the government.

What I will do, though, in my day job, the one that pays the mortgage, is say that any effort—any—to include internships must include college students. The budget announcement of last week is for graduate students only. I think we have to not narrowcast the talent needs. We have to not filter human capital and treat it as some sort of escalating pyramid. We have to build human capital at all points of the talent supply.

Colleges are responding to employer needs. We have flexible programs. We have one-year programs right up to four-year programs. Those people cannot be left out of the research and innovation agenda. That is a common cause we have with ACCC.

● (1725)

The Chair: Thank you very much. The seven minutes are up.

We went through essentially the full two hours without a break. We have covered a lot of ground. Some very pertinent suggestions raised some very interesting questions for our consideration. There were some thought-provoking suggestions as well.

We certainly appreciate having you here before us. We will certainly take your comments into consideration. Thank you very much.

I would ask the members to hold back for one question that Ms. Hughes has.

You are welcome to leave. Thank you.

Mr. Herb O'Heron: There is some information along the wall there, and if you want it, it's also on the desk. If you need any other kind of information, let me know.

The Chair: We'll certainly be sure to take you up on that.

We have a question from Ms. Hughes.

We'll just wait for a couple of minutes.

● (Pause) ●

The Chair: Could our members make their way back to the table in order for us to conclude? I certainly appreciate the visiting that is going on, but we have a short question we want to deal with and then we can adjourn.

This is a subject that has created quite a lot of interest, I can see, and that's good.

Ms. Hughes, I understand you had one question. Perhaps you wanted to put it to the parliamentary secretary, if we could have the attention of the parliamentary secretary.

● (1730)

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Yes, I only have one very quick question. What is the possibility and when can we anticipate having the ministers come before committee? Could we get them on separate days?

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour): Are we in camera or not?

The Chair: We're not in camera. I don't propose to go in camera. It's a question posed to the parliamentary secretary, so maybe just a response in terms of having a look at—

Ms. Kellie Leitch: I've asked the minister's office for a response. I'm still waiting on it. As you may have noticed, Minister Finley has not been in the House for the last two weeks, so we're just waiting on a response from the minister's office. I have made the request.

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Okay, perfect.

The Chair: When you have that information, maybe you can share that with us.

Mrs. Carol Hughes: This will be the Minister of Labour as well?

Ms. Kellie Leitch: Yes, we've asked both. They would come, probably, together in tandem representing the department together.

The Chair: All right.

Is everybody okay with that? There is time for that to happen and we just want to be sure it does happen.

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Just to reiterate, the preference would be to try to get them on different days, so that we can have more time with them.

Ms. Kellie Leitch: I think the way the department would probably approach it is, depending upon the timeframe, that one would come for one half, and one would come for the other half.

To be quite frank, I don't think we'll end up spending two hours with the Minister of Labour.

The Chair: Mr. Cuzner, you have a point?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: We'd like to see them separately as well. I'm saying "we".

A voice: The royal we.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Yes.

We'd like to see them separately. We think there's an opportunity to have a televised hearing, so if we could do that, if we could accommodate a televised hearing with the ministers, that would be good.

The Chair: Your request is noted. I know that we have had.... In my recollection, we've generally had both together for these meetings, but we'll see what the response brings and we'll go from there.

With that, we'll adjourn.

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