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## Tuesday, February 12, 2013

## Chair

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki**

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● (1105)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC)):** I call the meeting to order. I see everyone is here.

We will have each of you present, and there will be questions and answers afterward.

Before I start, I want to alert the committee to a couple of points. One is that we would appreciate receiving suggestions for witnesses from you for our future study by the end of Thursday of this week.

I'd also like to inform you—and there will be a notice going out a little later today—that department officials will be appearing before the committee on Thursday with respect to Mr. Cleary's motion as amended, so keep that in mind.

With that, we will start with our presentations in this first panel. I'm not sure who will present first.

We have Mr. Kent MacDonald, president, from Algonquin College, if you're ready to go. Then we have Mr. David Corson, president of the Algonquin Students' Association. We'll conclude with Brigadier-General Gregory Matte from Helmets to Hardhats.

We'll start with Mr. Kent MacDonald. Go ahead.

**Dr. Kent MacDonald (President, Algonquin College):** Thank you very much.

Can you just confirm my time limit? Is it up to 10 minutes?

**The Chair:** We'd like to have you keep it to five to seven minutes, if you could.

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** Thank you very much for the opportunity to share some of my thoughts with the group. This is certainly an important and timely topic for the Canadian college and polytechnic group. This topic is new, and not just for Canada: we're seeing it in the Richard report in the U.K. and we're seeing it in various states in the United States, so it is timely.

I also had an opportunity to review some of the comments made by previous speakers, so I've decided not to simply repeat those comments. When we look at this very topic, we can look at a number of tactical initiatives that I think governments should be considering, including tax incentives for employers, interprovincial mobility for students, apprenticeship enhancement, grants, and others, yet I would say that most of the answers that you're seeking are probably already available to this committee in other publications, including the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum and the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship.

To prevent some level of redundancy, what I thought I would do is take it to 10,000 feet from a president's perspective. Maybe that could be of some use to the committee.

Certainly, as a lifelong educator and now the president of a college, the question that I put before our faculty, staff, and industry partners whenever I have the opportunity to speak with them is, what does it truly mean to be educated in the 21st century?

The concept of apprenticeship goes back to medieval times, of course, and I think it's time for us to do a complete rethink on how we're doing that education. Depending on how we define apprenticeship, I would also suggest that for the people in this audience, be they educators, lawyers, orthopedic surgeons, or others, you too have had an opportunity for some level of apprenticeship as it has been defined.

I'll limit my comments to four quick points.

Number one is that last summer Bill Bradley, an impressive American senator, described in his book *We Can All Do Better* how there was a time in North America when we could use the analogy of an elevator. We could get on the elevator regardless of where we were in our social status in our communities, and if we worked hard enough and we got a few breaks, we could get off the elevator on maybe the second floor or the third floor, and if we were on the second or third floor, maybe we could get off on the fifth. He would argue that the elevator is broken in this country and in America, and that the one way we can ensure that people still have that social mobility is to find ways to educate more people, to democratize post-secondary education for more people.

However, I would suggest that in this country there is a myth around what it is that we're doing in higher education. I know that it's a provincial jurisdiction, but we need to have a deeper, richer conversation about what impacts higher education can have.

As I look around this room at the demographic, we could probably all think back to the 1970s and 1960s, when a hands-on, applied, trade-oriented education was one that was valued in our community. Somewhere through the 1980s and the 1990s, we started to give less value and less honour to that type of work. The challenge we have before us today as Canadians is to determine how we can bring honour and respect back into that level of work, as opposed to simply graduating with a credential and an education. I would suggest that a number of institutions, in particular those similar to Algonquin College, can play a significant role in that process.

I remember growing up in what once was referred to by *Maclean's* magazine as the poorest and least desirable community in this country to live in: New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. I have the dichotomy of now living in Ottawa but coming from New Glasgow, so to the top-ranked city from the lowest in the country....

I'm convinced that further investment within higher education, particularly in the college sector, will be the path to allow more young people to get into education, yet the challenge we have before us is that an educator like me has spent typically no time on a college campus.

Typically, we have done well enough in high school. We go to university and have an excellent learning experience there, and we go off to teachers' college. Nowhere am I exposed to the opportunities of what a Canadian college does. We are not the same as the American community college system; in fact, there are only six colleges out of the 150-plus in this country that are actually referred to as community colleges.

● (1110)

The question that I think we need to explore is this: how are we going to more deeply influence the influencers—those who determine where their child or their sister or brother may be going? We know fundamentally that the key influencer still is the parent, followed by teachers and guidance counsellors.

I will leave the committee with five points in the time I've been given here.

Using the influence and the power afforded to all of you in your particular roles, we need to have a significant shift in the way we educate educators in this country. The 50 faculties of education need to look differently at how they are preparing their teachers. I would suggest having mandatory internships at a college sector somewhere across the country. There are over 900 campuses. It should be quite easy to do.

The second—other people have already addressed this significantly at the committee—is to eliminate barriers. Many, many barriers exist, and I've given just one example in the materials I have left with the clerk for you to read.

The third one is that we must, as Canadians, break the myth of what constitutes effective higher education today. I would recommend establishing some type of long-term commitment to break the social status that absolutely exists when we talk about colleges and universities in this country. That must start to occur at a very young age. We have broken the myth on smoking. We have broken it around drinking and driving. Today in the country we're celebrating that we can have a conversation around mental health. We need to start to have the conversation about what is effective higher education and start to ask young people what it is they want to do to ensure a positive career.

The fourth one is that we need to shift from measuring our success as educators in terms of how many people we put into the system and start to have a conversation about how many are graduating. There are simply too many people not completing. That includes mostly under-represented groups—people with disabilities, aboriginals, and first-generation types of students.

Finally, I would strongly encourage you to take the time to read—I've left one of these for each of you—even the first three chapters of this book, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*. I think you'll find it enlightening in terms of possibly having some type of shift on how we must all look at education and how we value work in our community today.

Thank you very much.

● (1115)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that presentation and for the suggestions you've made. They're certainly very interesting.

We'll now go to Mr. Corson.

**Mr. David Corson (President, Algonquin College Students' Association):** Good morning, members of the committee. My name is David Corson. I'm the president of the Algonquin Students' Association. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today and to express to you the concerns shared by students and the challenges they have faced.

To start off, this is our mission statement:

The Algonquin Students' Association will “create an environment that inspires a passion for student success”. Our primary focus, therefore, is to integrate campus life with campus academics for success.

However, a student defines his own success.

Historically, at the turn of the previous century, there was a system whereby skilled trades had, as a key component of their advancement, a master piece which showed their competency. In completing the project, they were able to display their skills while gaining personal pride. Since then, for a variety of reasons, there have been substantial changes in the way skilled trades workers are trained in Canada. We believe in some cases this has been an aid in diluting their perceived value.

Since the 1980s societal impressions have devalued skilled trades. This situation has been perpetuated through various media streams. It has played a role in bringing us to a critical shortage of skilled tradespeople. The students' association strongly supports the objective of the awareness and perception study conducted by skilled trades and apprenticeships to turn the current negative perception of skilled trades to one that is more positive and eventually to reposition skilled trades to being a first-choice career option in the minds of Canadian youth and their influencers, such as parents and educators.

The situation for skilled trades has been further challenged by the timing of career choices being presented to students. We support the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum's suggestion that Canada needs to engage its youth in an evaluative process to identify their competencies and match these to the realities of the job market. Awareness efforts are critical. Our experience has been that students are starting as young as grade 5 to make these choices with educators.

We support another objective of the same study: to further encourage employers to create, expand, and sustain career opportunities in the skilled trades for young Canadians. We believe that doing this will also directly improve the percentage of youth who are aware of all of the career opportunities in the skilled trades. In this vein, we see an opportunity for the federal government to further invest in and promote the federal skilled trades program.

As a side note, Algonquin is sending a carpenter to Leipzig, Germany, to represent us in the carpentry skills competition for the world. We take pride in that, but who knows? Has anyone heard of that? This is our point.

Through the challenges at the local, provincial, national, and world stages, we see an amazing opportunity to help change the movie that is playing in society's mind to one that is more positive for the skilled trades. It may not be the Olympics, but maybe it could be.

One of the barriers that prospective apprentices currently face is the multiple layers of administrative bureaucracy. There are four levels.

First is the employer. Prospective apprentices may have challenges securing an employer to train them, and I'll speak on that closer to the end.

Second, colleges do not currently intake apprenticeship applicants. They do for everyone else, and this creates a disconnect when students are contacting the college about start dates.

Then provincially—and I can speak only for Ontario—the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will consult with the student and issue the notification of offer to him or her, instead of the student dealing with a user-friendly Ontario College Application Service process, so we have a two-tiered system. Employment Ontario may also provide up to $1,500 of taxable financial support to apprentices who are not eligible to receive employment insurance benefits once they've applied during in-school training.

The fourth level of bureaucracy is federal. At the federal government level, funding goes through the traditional HRSDC process, where available—see the previous point—with inherent delays when we can already map the student’s prospective path through training.

One recommendation we would like you to consider is to streamline the services. A prospective apprentice with an employer should be able to use an OCAS-type system to apply for apprenticeship training in Ontario with the MTCU, using that provincial model as an example.

● (1120)

The results of this process should be communicated to both the college and the applicant to help form the training bond and also to trigger a connection with the federal government to determine potential funding sources. Two of the federal initiatives that we support as examples are the apprenticeship incentive grant, the AIG, and the apprenticeship completion grant, or ACG, and we see an opportunity for the government to increase funding for both of these initiatives.

Now that we have the prospective apprentice trained, there is a further barrier in the lack of transferability of skills from province to province. In the spirit of the Bologna Accord, we believe there should be national standards for apprentices, like the Red Seal for journeymen, which allow for some, if not all, transferability of skills and education.

Labour mobility has until recently been defined quite narrowly, focusing on mobility post-certification. As a result, the labour mobility and transferability of apprenticeship training are not well understood. These would be best clarified, in our opinion, at a national level.

In closing, we believe that the skilled trades are a key driver to the economic success of Canada. In the tough economic times that we are currently in, employers are facing difficult choices as to whether to keep current staff training or to risk training new apprentices. It can therefore be difficult for the prospective apprentice to secure an employer to sponsor him or her. We believe that the federal government has the capacity to provide incentives to remove this barrier and benefit all Canadians. This removal of barriers, along with the other examples provided in this presentation, will assist those at the front line to be more efficient and to create a system that is more effective and attractive for apprentices in Canada.

I thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that presentation. We certainly appreciate hearing from you, and I'm sure you'll have a lot of questions.

We'll now turn to Mr. Gregory Matte, Brigadier-General.

You have quite an impressive background, and we're looking forward to hearing from you on a slightly different topic and area.

Go ahead.

**BGen (Retired) Gregory Matte (Executive Director, Helmets to Hardhats):** Mr. Chair and committee members, thank you, first of all for your interest in the Helmets to Hardhats Canada program and for your public and financial support—public in the sense that it was the Prime Minister of Canada who actually launched this program 13 months ago in Edmonton, Alberta, with the financial support of a grant of $150,000 through Veterans Affairs Canada.

I thought I'd take the time I have to give a little bit more context, to and explanation of, the program. Hopefully, that will assist you with the questions you may have thereafter.

This program is modelled after the program of the same name in the United States. It has been active for 10 years now. We've simply replicated a lot of their successes here in the constituency of Canada.

It took a number of years to get the program set up in Canada. The reason for that was the governance that we wanted to put in place. This is a not-for-profit organization. It's incorporated under the Canada Corporations Act with a board of governors and bylaws, and we have it set up in such a way that the people who are the stakeholders do not have a majority over the program itself; it's a group of people coming together, including governments at all levels —provincially and federally—and people from the private sector, as well as unions and associations, such that nobody has dominion.

The niche of this program is the fact that we're offering an opportunity for a great career in the building and construction industry to men and women who have served or are currently serving in the Canadian Forces, and it's not just the career opportunity: it's the fact that we offer them the opportunity to become trained, skilled, and licensed within the trades as well. The bottom line for us is that it's not about finding our vets a job; it's about finding our vets a career. We're going to help any one of those who have helped our country, including those who have been injured in the line of duty.

Canadian veterans face three challenges, really, when they leave the Canadian Forces and try to enter into a career in the civilian world.

The first one—and I might be an example of this—is that many people join the military when they are quite young. As a result, when it comes time for them to leave the military, they really do not have the experience of writing a resumé, nor have they actually gone through a difficult job interview. When they joined the military, it was a very receiving audience.

Second, it's very difficult for someone in the military to translate their skills and qualifications into civilian terms that an employer would recognize.

Third, and perhaps most important, is the fact that given the nature of the military culture and the brotherhood of war, it's actually quite difficult for men and women who have served their country in uniform to find a cultural organizational fit that works with them and for them.

The value proposition that I'm putting forward to industry on behalf of all veterans of Canada is as follows: you're talking about a cadre of individuals who are highly dependable, loyal, and flexible. How many people at one moment could be reconstructing a country like Haiti after an earthquake, the next month going off to the Khyber Pass of Afghanistan and dealing with the Taliban to bring freedom and security so that girls can go to school, and then, the following summer, go to deal with the flooding in Manitoba? For all their good work, we then bring them here to Ottawa to serve on staff.

These men and women have the ability to learn. They have the ability to learn because the Canadian Forces is a learning environment. They learn how to learn within a classroom environment and to do distance learning on their own, using computers and using simulators. More importantly, not only do they learn how to learn, but they learn how to teach. Most of the teaching we provide in the Canadian Forces is done by people in uniform. What better way to learn than to teach, and what better way to master it than to share that with others?

I think you would all agree with me that people in the military are team players. This is a valuable quality when you look at what we do here in Canada, particularly in the construction industry. Not only are these people good followers, but they're also great leaders. Furthermore, they're used to dealing in dynamic situations and to multi-tasking. They have all the qualities of leadership within the civilian context.

The Conservative government, I will say, has blessed the Canadian Forces with the reinvigoration of our capitalization of the military, but most people who have spent a number of years in the military have learned to become very resourceful, because we have to look after our equipment and make sure that it operates when we need it most.

Furthermore, despite the business we're in, we're actually very safety conscious, which obviously is important in the construction industry.

Finally, the men and women who have served their country are proven. They have a background that's well documented by their performance reports. They have background security checks, which are very important in certain sectors of the industry, and obviously they have met medical and physical standards.

● (1125)

The program itself is all about matching that talent to the need in the Canadian construction industry. We are a team of four, all former military, and bilingual. We have a very simple system that provides a website where veterans who are interested in being part of this program register along with companies, contractors, and unions that subscribe to the notions of this program. In that way, we now have a matchmaking opportunity. That said, given the transition challenges that military people face, we provide counselling to those individuals to help them with that difficult transition.

We have some challenges in the program, one of which is just getting visibility. Being here today is very helpful for the program.

We ensure priority placements so that veterans come first in line when it comes to apprenticeships within the unions. We deal with every person case by case, because when you're dealing with mental illness or physical disability, you have to understand the context of their circumstances and the few limitations they may have to make sure there's a good fit.

Mr. Chair, that concludes my opening remarks.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that informative presentation. We will open up to questions.

We'll start with Mr. Cleary.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions are for the brigadier-general and are about the Helmets to Hardhats program.

First, I'm looking for the number of veterans who have actually gone through Helmets to Hardhats so far, and their average age. Can you give us some details there?

**BGen (Retired) Gregory Matte:** We can give you preliminary details. The website has been in place only since September 18. With the website we're now able to collect the statistics that you're referring to. As of today, probably upwards of 680 veterans have registered through the website.

The average age is all over the demographics. We have people who have retired from the military after their initial three-year contract, and those could be as young as 20 or 21 years old. We see an awful lot of people who are in their late 20s or early 30s, in part because of the situation with the military at the moment and in part because we have a number of people who are approaching a point in their lives at which it is time to make a transition.

What I mean by that, for instance, is that in the military people are eligible for a pension after 20 years of service. That has been changed in the last 10 years. That said, it's an important decision point for someone who has achieved 20 years of service. They now have guaranteed revenue that will allow them to facilitate a transition into a new career.

Then we have other folks who are at the end of their careers. They could be in their late 40s or early 50s. In fact, I was just talking to one fellow yesterday who's been retired for a number of years. He's in his late 50s. I won't give you his name, but he is on an apprenticeship out in Edmonton, having moved there from the province of Prince Edward Island.

● (1130)

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** Brigadier-General, you mentioned veterans with mental illness and physical disability. Of the 680 veterans who have registered on the website, how many would have mental illness? I would assume that this would be as a result of their trauma from whatever situations they've served in. How many of these veterans would have mental illness or physical disability?

**BGen (Retired) Gregory Matte:** I wouldn't have a quantifiable number, because I don't want to track that data in case our website is hacked. We know what happened with Veterans Affairs Canada a year and a half ago. I don't want that to happen with the website we have. We've taken extraordinary measures for security reasons.

That said, we limit the amount of information we collect. Every case has its own circumstances. If someone self-identifies to me as having a mental illness, I then explore that with them without going into great detail, because I'm not a medical doctor. I just want to know what triggers those problems, how they are managing them right now, and where they would be comfortable working.

I can give an analogy. We had an individual who was hired as a boilermaker. He had worked on the M777 howitzer over in one of the forward operating bases in Afghanistan. He had shell shock.

Boilers make a lot of noise. The tools that they work with are very heavy. He wanted to do that, but he was transparent with the union that he joined and with the people who were on his course about having that mental challenge. The first day there was a loud noise in the classroom, and of course he froze, but the people around him, first of all, respected his service, and second of all were aware of his limited challenge—and it's only a limited one—and they were highly empathetic. They helped him through that brief moment, and since then he's done very well. He's continued with his apprenticeship with great success.

All that is to say that we deal with every individual's circumstances on a case-by-case basis within their own unique construct.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** Brigadier General, you mentioned a particular challenge with visibility and how this program has been ongoing in the States for about a decade, although not so long here, obviously.

In what ways can you address the visibility aspect to make this program better known across the country?

**BGen (Retired) Gregory Matte:** That's a very thoughtful question. I thank you for asking it.

I really have four key audiences that I'm dealing with in the first year, and we're only about eight months into the first year since I've been part of the program.

The first audience, obviously, is the military community itself, but they're broken up into three groups: the regular force component, meaning those who are full-time; the reserves and all the different militia units across Canada from coast to coast to coast; and then the retired veterans.

The second community are the unions that are part of this program, the international unions, the AFL-CIO, and going to the local level and the union lodge level and dealing with the business manager—basically the guy or the woman in charge of that union—to make sure they fully understand the value proposition and are fully on board to make sure that these vets get priority placement.

The third group are the contractors and employers across Canada in the building and construction industry. We make them aware of this fantastic opportunity. Obviously there's workforce development embedded in what we're doing, but they get it.

Then finally it's dealing with the colleges and the provinces that are part of the apprenticeship approval process all across this great country. In that case, I am dealing with 13 constituencies.

Those are the four audiences that I'm trying to get visibility with.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** You work with—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Cleary. Your time is up.

We'll move to Mr. Daniel.

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

Thank you, witnesses, for being here.

I'm going to switch to the colleges to begin with. There were two themes that came out in both introductory notes, and that was how you break into changing the mindset of people to actually get people to go into apprenticeships. I'm going to ask you a personal question: have you talked to your children about going into one of the trades?

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** I have. I have four children and I've spoken to the youngest one.

I was a teacher here in Ottawa, out in Orleans, at St. Matthew High School, and in that role never once did I have a conversation with students about what they wanted to do. In my mind, having gone through a university system, my conversation was more self-reflective of "That's a university student and that's a college student." That's the type of conversation that has to shift.

Certainly, my wife—who's also an educator—and I have been able to do that, but it's deep-rooted, and there are biases in terms of how we portray these opportunities in the media with the words that we use to describe the work and the mimicking that we use for some of the professions. I think, because of the deep-rootedness, that it will take some time to change.

● (1135)

**Mr. David Corson:** I'll just say that my grandmother was a master weaver and I was a textile chemist. I got to dye the work my grandmother made, so I'm a little biased to the trades.

My daughter is in pre-health. She's decided that she wants to be a doctor, and her reason is that she has a neurological disease is committed that she's going to find the cure for it. I've never dissuaded her from that, but I always did make sure that she knew that she could have any trade she wanted. However, I am biased.

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** How do we actually tackle this issue of educating parents in terms of what can be done with apprenticeship programs?

**Mr. David Corson:** When I was doing the research, I was shocked at how well the trades are paid. As well, there is a demand for them, as I heard from a newspaper article that someone had clipped today. I think that this is the sort of thing that will do it. You let people know what is available.

I'm going into Internet security at the moment. I'm being retrained, because my industries are gone. There's no sense being a dyer any more; there are no textiles to dye in Canada, so let's move on. Will there be a need for Internet security in 20 years? Probably. Will there be a need for IT? Maybe not the same. However, there will be a need for skilled trades. I don't think we're preparing people, but that is in fact something you can go into and have a 20-year, 25-year, or 30-year career in.

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** Dr. King from Queen's University led a double-cohort study in Ontario that produced four different reports. His work showed that colleges like Algonquin were always focused on recruiting students in grades 10, 11, and 12. What became clear from Dr. King's studies was that these students are making these decisions significantly earlier than we ever thought.

Once a grade 10 student said he or she was going to Queen's, if you asked them in grade 11 where they were going, they would say they were going to Queen's. In grade 12 they would say that they told us last year they were going to Queen's. It was only when Queen's said that they were not coming to Queen's that they had to recalibrate where they wanted to go.

The efforts of some colleges are aimed at younger students, but the question is who influences young people. Dr. King's reports also clearly showed it was the parents. Media are there, guidance counsellors are fifth or sixth on the list, and teachers are there, but it's fundamentally the parents.

From our perspective we've even started to get into elementary schools, trying to have people think of these careers in a different way.

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** Here is a question to all of you: what do we do to improve the yields of apprenticeships? In other words, we're finding or hearing from various witnesses that there's a large dropout in the apprenticeship program. I'm not sure what it is in Helmets to Hardhats. Can you comment on any of those?

**The Chair:** We'll conclude with those responses.

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** I'd be happy to begin.

In my view, these students are under the same pressures as other students. A number of barriers keep them from completing their studies.

The biggest one, I would say, is students being underprepared. It goes well beyond just being academically unprepared. If you look at who is going into these professions, you see that many of them are first generation, so they have never had a mother or father who has influenced them, and that's a real issue. They are underprepared financially, so they can't sustain their studies. They are under-prepared socially, so when they go into these classrooms, they quite simply just don't feel as if that's where they should be. They should be out on the job site.

There's a plethora of research around student success and retention. At Algonquin we have tried to apply those same practices to our apprenticeship programs. We have seen a measurable increase in our programs; retention went from 62% to 64% over the last two years. The target of the Ontario government is 70%.

Therefore, it's getting to students at a younger age, ensuring they are academically prepared, and making sure they are wrapped with services. I could also say in the 1950s, 5% of us went to post-secondary education, and around the time of the Montreal Olympics it was about 20%. That number is now reaching 70%. Although we don't bell-curve, we clearly know that people are participating now who have never participated before, and with those students come a series of things that prevent them from being successful.

When we look at the academic nature of what we're doing, we also have to have a conversation around the required student support services, some of which the retired Brigadier-General mentioned, and about helping these students through to completion.

● (1140)

**The Chair:** Does anyone else wish to make a comment?

Go ahead, Mr. Corson, and we'll then move to Mr. Matte.

**Mr. David Corson:** In brief, first of all, right now one apprentice can be placed with one journeyman. That means half the class doesn't go to the next step. They take the apprenticeship training, the federal government pays for that apprenticeship training, and then they are not allowed to continue the apprenticeship training because they can't find a monitor. That's a big barrier.

We think that at a ratio of 3:1, you would be able to take the class you have paid for and get into the next step of the technical training. That is a big thing.

The other thing is that some students have to drop out because of financial need. Again, the current HRSDC model means some students are waiting eight weeks, and they are primarily young families. A young family having to wait eight weeks for money is going to drop out. They are at high risk.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Matte, go ahead.

**BGen (Retired) Gregory Matte:** I think it's a very important question. I can only offer an answer in the context of this program here. I would say that for military people who commit to an apprenticeship, based on my knowledge of people in the military who have gone into the trades, the success rate is pretty well 100%.

There are economic factors that can dissuade them from continuing to completion. For instance, when they have to go back into the school for a period of four, six, or eight weeks, quite often there's a delay in employment insurance. For someone in their late 20s or early 30s who has a mortgage, car payments, or a spouse who may not be working and may have young children, that's a long time without revenue, and this becomes a barrier, so they accept the fact that with two years of training they can earn a certain amount, and they just carry on from there.

The other thing that's probably worth highlighting are the barriers to entry to apprenticeship. This is converse to your question, but it is nonetheless important, because it touches on the whole notion of workforce development.

I find it interesting that here in Canada, where we have such a requirement for skilled trades, we often look beyond Canada. At the same time, the companies that say they have a need do not necessarily contribute in an equal way to workforce development; in other words, they do not support apprenticeships. This in itself becomes a barrier to entry and can exacerbate the situation for someone who is one, two, three, four years into an apprenticeship and is suddenly laid off. This person may have to wait six months before the next gig that will allow him to complete the hours needed for a licence.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that.

We will now move to Mr. Rousseau.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP):** My first question is for Mr. Matte.

You said that Canadian veterans are constantly learning. So these people must have a large variety of talents and must be flexible in the labour market.

Would you agree that these resources are currently underestimated and underemployed in the labour market?

**BGen (Retired) Gregory Matte:** I completely agree. That is why the program exists. Many people in Canada do not recognize all of the assets that military personnel bring to the labour market. Part of the problem is that people in human resources only look for key words on a résumé. If they don't see what they are looking for, they move on. That happens a lot.

That is why, in this program, I decided to work around the people in human resources. I speak to company presidents and key players in the market who can appreciate the benefits of investing in people who were, or still are, in the military. They may be in the reserves, for example. It will be very profitable in the long run.

● (1145)

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Yet in human resources and labour relations courses, these people are lauded for their value and merits. But they are discriminated against in the labour market. They are overlooked because, as you said, bureaucracy prevails. The selection process must move quickly and evaluating people takes time. But these people could contribute a lot to today's society.

**BGen (Retired) Gregory Matte:** The term “discrimination” is a bit strong. I would not say that it is active discrimination. It is just that military personnel are automatically eliminated over the course of the process. As I said, those who are higher up in a company see the value of military personnel. They are involved. I am seeing that people in charge of large companies are competing with one another to hire military personnel. To me, that proves that they see the value in it.

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Perfect. Thank you.

I would now like to speak with Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Corson.

This morning it was brought to our attention that a study about labour relations and human resources, not the first of its kind, revealed that over the next 15 to 20 years, five to seven million Canadians will withdraw from the labour market. I do not need to go into detail about the devastating effects that will have on our economy, particularly the job market.

What are your thoughts on the situation and what do you think about a real strategy that would not only have an impact but that would also encourage youth to consider trades that do not have enough workers? How could apprenticeship programs help make this type of strategy succeed?

[*English*]

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** In my comments, I referred to the myth that exists in higher education, and it's real. There are many reports. This is not just a Canadian problem; it's an American and European problem. Individuals are underemployed there too.

Rick Miner talks about jobs without people and people without jobs. We have hundreds of thousands of employers who are looking for trained workers, yet we have hundreds of thousands of young people without the right skills. That's where we need to have a more honest conversation about how we're going to have young people understand what the purpose of higher education is.

In North America we have been debating the purpose of higher education for 400 years, since 1636, but when you speak to students and ask why they want to go to college or university, it's very clear: they want to go to gain the skills and knowledge to get a job. That's where we're falling short.

Right now up to 30% of students at Algonquin College have spent time in a university. It's good for us. I would describe many of our programs as graduate schools of the 21st century. We're getting these highly educated people coming back and needing to have skills to actually align with the workforce.

From a government point of view and the point of view of the taxpayers who underwrite most of that education, that's a multi-million-dollar issue in the country. We're having young people not only duplicate their courses, but the opportunity cost of having to do those courses over and over is a loss of human talent.

I would suggest, as I said earlier, getting to young people and having a different kind of conversation, and I would suggest from a college perspective that we continue to provide programs that are highly in line with industry sector needs.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Rousseau. You're time is up.

Someone else may wish to make a comment. You're certainly welcome to.

**Mr. David Corson:** With 25 years' work experience in manufacturing in Canada, I can tell you that it's a really bad idea to take training in manufacturing in Canada. We need to provide for people to understand the reality of tomorrow.

With 25 years of experience, I've come back to Algonquin College as a recycled student to get the skills that I need for an industry that has demand and appears to be growing. There was no one out there who could easily tell me what that was. I had to find it. At 48 now, I think I'm really good at doing that, but I had to dig. Our 18- and 19-year-olds are not necessarily as capable. In my experience as president of them, they need help. We need to rethink how we do that.

Again, I think it comes down in some cases to the grade 5 level, where we can start that education with parents, and educators, and the students.

● (1150)

**The Chair:** Mr. MacDonald, go ahead.

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to follow up with a military piece.

I think the former Chief of the Defence Staff was wise, and his team was wise, when he started to look at this disconnect between the excellent training that our military members have and not having civilian credentials.

Today if you go to Algonquin College, you will see men and women in uniform studying with us. The military have said these are the types of training that do not have to be delivered by the military but can be delivered by public institutions. These are things such as chef training, automotive training, GIS training.

We're preparing highly qualified people by using public infrastructure. At the same time, these students are graduating with civilian credentials. In our view it's a nice match. When they do leave the military, they will have a credential so that when people are looking at their curricula vitae, they'll be able to recognize that certification of previous learning.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll move to Mr. McColeman.

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for being here today to help us with our assignment of what the federal government might do to promote apprenticeship and streamline it.

Having been involved since I was elected in 2008 with many of the universities in Canada through our post-secondary education caucus and travelling around the country, I'm noticing that there is a shift going on, definitely a shift, from the silo thinking of universities and institutions to an opening up in understanding the skill sets graduates need as they leave their education, as they achieve their degree or their diploma.

I'm wondering in Algonquin's case, Mr. MacDonald, whether or not you are aligning it all with any other universities or post-secondary institutions to do things in a concurrent way to assess that there is value in an undergraduate liberal arts degree, which it seems our generation had put as paramount when we tell our kids, “Go get an education”.

In my case, my three kids had to go to a community college to do exactly what you said, which was to become employable. They had their liberal arts degrees, but they weren't employable.

The situation today is that I think post-secondary is recognizing this. I think they're getting it in some ways, perhaps not fast enough for some of us. They're facing a lot of barriers, particularly in their own faculties in academia, who don't philosophically agree with that direction. What are your experiences at Algonquin?

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** They have not been positive. I think Ottawa's key differentiator is the quality of having four outstanding academic institutions: Ottawa U, Carleton, La Cité Collégiale, and Algonquin. To your colleague to your left, unlike this province, Alberta has made a significant difference in the recognition of previous learning among academic institutions. British Columbia is way ahead of Ontario. In this province, we are laggards in this regard. We are not doing a good enough job of recognizing previous learning. It has had a major impact on our students. It has a major impact when we have thousands of jobs needing to be filled.

When we look around the world at the Bologna Accord and the equivalent to that process in Europe, in Southeast Asia, and in Latin America, not only institutions but also countries are recognizing previous learning and credentials and allowing for the easy transference across not only institutions but country to country.

In Ontario it is shameful that we have not been able to figure this out. Again, from a student point of view and from the point of view of loss of talent, opportunity costs, and all of those things, it's significant. From a public taxpayer point of view, it is a major economic issue, I believe, for the province.

● (1155)

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** I'm going to speculate. Might this be a generational issue to have to work through, a culture that was established that removed tech programs from elementary education, that removed tech programs from high school? The high school I went to shut down the whole wing with all the trades training because the curriculum developers at the provincial level determined that we didn't need students who would be inclined to be in the trades to actually enter the trades. They wanted them to end up with a university liberal arts degree. Now you have those people who came through that culture—my generation, frankly—who believe that and think that.

I just want to make another point and have you close out with your comments on this.

You made a very perceptive observation. You said something that I think takes a little bit of bravery to say, something that I've thought for some time, and that is how we educate the educators.

In my generation, the easy way out, after our university degree, was to say to my roommates, “Well, what are you doing next year?”

“I don't know. What are you doing?”

“I don't know; we're graduating with liberal arts degrees. I'll just stay in school. I'll become a teacher.”

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Lots of jobs there, eh?

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** I could just stay in school. I'd still have two months off and still have all that. The determination to be a teacher was nothing more than a default position to the point of least resistance.

Frankly, a lot of my friends who became teachers had no aptitude to do it—it was just to stay in school— so when you mentioned sending teachers, the educators, out on mandatory apprentices, that hit a chord with me. Getting out in the real world and understanding what's happening in the real world, in the private world, is something that I have thought for a long time is necessary to educate people who become our teachers.

I know I've taken up a lot of time with my talking here, but Chair, could you can offer me some latitude to have Mr. MacDonald respond to that comment?

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** You've raised a number of points, several of which I hinted at earlier, and I only wish I had a little more time.

The book, which I hope you do read, gets at that. This is a phenomenon. How we value specific work has resonated into the cuts we've made in our district school boards, and that includes removing most trades-related training at an early age.

The irony in all of that, I would argue, is that the chance of that type of work being outsourced to other places around the world—be it the way we fix our cars or build our buildings or construct our roads and infrastructure—is not going to happen.

I'm a teacher. I've been a life-long educator, and it's a noble profession. In fact, Lee Iacocca said that in a rational world, the best of us would be educators and the rest of us would have to settle for something less.

That's the importance I put on it, but it does require us to think differently again as educators, to shift the conversation from what we're so focused on—what I'm teaching, what my curriculum is—as opposed to what the purpose of education is. When we can shift that conversation away from what I'm teaching to what the students are learning, we would start to grapple with things like the timeliness of how we put people through apprenticeship.

My very last comment, Mr. Chair, is that we have been encumbered by the idea that education needs to be time-placed and place-based. You can only reach a certain point when you sit there for 8 weeks or 15 weeks or four years, as opposed to looking at what has been learned in that time.

The idea of a student being able to demonstrate that they've learned the outcomes in eight weeks as opposed to three years would be a novel outcome. We're financed on how many students are in those seats for how long. It's not in our interest to get them out the door any faster.

Again, it's complex, and I wish I had more time.

Let me conclude with this: all of you hold an honorary role in this country. I've a very political mother in Nova Scotia. It was certainly an honour for me to share the fact that I was coming to meet with some of you today. Your work is important.

Thank you very much.

● (1200)

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

We'll conclude with Mr. Cuzner's remarks and questions.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I thank all three witnesses for being here today. It's great that your mother keeps you on your toes there, Kent.

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** Cape Breton really does that.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** That's right.

I have a question for each of you, though.

Mr. Matte, I think the deliberate steps that you've taken to make sure that the governance is in place and that this thing has the foundation before moving forward is prudent and wise.

I was a little surprised, and I should have these statistics and I don't. The commitment from the government is over what period of time and for how much, and who are the other funders for this program?

**BGen (Retired) Gregory Matte:** The commitment from the Government of Canada has ended. It was a $150,000 one-year grant. I'm just in the process of writing a letter to Minister Blaney to thank him for his contribution.

That said, the financial aspect is only one aspect of it. The profile that the Government of Canada has brought to this project is immeasurable. I know the Prime Minister is personally committed to this by the fact that he was the one who introduced this to the Canadian consciousness 13 months ago. I understand he will do this again in an upcoming event that I won't explain here in this forum.

That said, the Government of Canada has made its contribution. The Government in Alberta and Premier Redford, as well as Dalton McGuinty when he was Premier of Ontario, both committed a $150,000 one-time grant. We have another province on the cusp of making a contribution as well.

From private industry, TransCanada Pipelines has contributed $1 million that's sequenced over five years. It's $200,000 a year over five years. We have associations like the General Presidents' Maintenance Committee, which has also committed $800,000 sequenced over four years. We have individual international unions, which are the cornerstone of this project, like the boilermakers and the steamfitters and others, that have also contributed money to this project.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** They've contributed expertise too.

**BGen (Retired) Gregory Matte:** Yes. You've had Dr. Blakely here testifying before you in the past. He is the national head of the Building and Construction Trades Department here in Ottawa. His department has also contributed a substantial amount of money.

We have other companies now coming to me offering money that we cannot accept, because they do not meet our requirements with regard to what we have put in place by way of a career as opposed to a job.

I hope that answers your question.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Excellent. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Kent, we have talked about the barriers, and I know that there are some bilateral agreements. We see the transferability of Red Seal once people are accredited at the Red Seal level. What's been consistent is everybody's concern around transferring apprenticeships and studying in one place and not having those credentials recognized in other places.

You've identified that there are some bilaterals. Newfoundland and Alberta have one in place. I believe there's one in place too with Nova Scotia. Where does that conversation take place? Is it between institutions? Do Algonquin and NAIT have that conversation? Is it at the provincial departments of labour? Is there a role for the federal government to play in bringing that conversation and allowing that conversation to take place?

That's the first question.

The other one is just off of what Phil was saying as well. The most successful entrepreneurs in Cape Breton are all tradesmen. They're electricians, carpenters, and even teamsters and mechanics who have gone on to have successful careers as entrepreneurs, and they really drive the economy in Cape Breton.

Is there a component within some of the trades to offer introduction to business as well, because many of the tradespeople go on to do business?

Those are two completely different questions, but I'll just throw them out.

● (1205)

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** The first one is a complex one.

We start with the employers bringing forward their need for the Red Seal. I think there are about 55 in the country now. We need that to occur, and then it spreads out through the governments and through the training institutions. There is some level of irony there, because it starts by defining the common outcomes that we want at a Red Seal level, but the further away we get from that decision as we roll it out through the provinces, the more the curriculum then begins to change.

I had a conversation with our coordinator and chair of apprentices. I asked what the implications would be if I came here today and said we wanted to increase Red Seal trades to 50% by 2015 or so, although I'm not doing that. He had real difficulty with it because of exactly the points that you're raising about having industry and governments and curriculum and institutions. Whereas apprenticeships used to be a bond between the apprentice and the employer, we have complicated that by adding a bond between the delivery agent and the government sectors as well. Having the four of those makes it more difficult.

According to the expert advice that I've received, there needs to be a conversation with the employer to get agreement there, and then it needs to be rolled out.

Could you just repeat your second question, Mr. Cuzner?

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** It was on the entrepreneurial aspect and partnerships.

**Dr. Kent MacDonald:** We have tried to embed business-type learning outcomes where we can. At the college we have looked at doing that within all of our programs—apprenticeship and regular programming—because even if you don't go through the apprenticeship—if you're in our chef program, our electrical program, and others—those are entrepreneurial types of things that are incredibly important in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that.

Your time is certainly up, Mr. Cuzner.

We appreciate the information you've given us and some of the suggestions on where we go.

With respect to the *Shop Class as Soulcraft* book, of course it's in English only. If we have unanimous consent, we could have these books distributed. If I don't hear any objection, the clerk, I understand, has a number of these books to distribute and will do that.

With that, we'll take a five-minute break and we'll start with the next panel after that.

Thank you.

● (1205)

(Pause)

● (1210)

**The Chair:** We'll bring the meeting back to order.

Just to give you some idea of what we're going to do, we'll have each of you share a little bit about yourself then we'll open it up to questions and answers, but before we do that, we have a point of order.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** It is more a point of clarification than a point of order.

Are the officials in on Thursday for two hours?

**The Chair:** Yes. We have drafting instructions on the agenda as well, but I would put that at the tail end. We may have to move that over to the next meeting, so we will give the two hours to the witnesses if there's a continuation of questions by the various members.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thanks for that.

Mr. Thorson, you've appeared before the committee before, and maybe we'll have you share a bit and frame some of the areas for us for questioning.

We certainly appreciate hearing from young apprentices on what it is you do. We have Kayla O'Brien, who is an apprentice in the sheet metal area. We're interested in hearing from you for sure.

We'll start with Mr. Thorson. Go ahead.

● (1215)

**Mr. Shaun Thorson (Chief Executive Officer, Skills Canada):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, committee, for having us here today.

I won't take up a lot of time. As the chair has mentioned, I have been at the committee before, but just to give you a very quick overview of my role, I'm the CEO with Skills/Compétences Canada. We are an organization that promotes trades and technological education for young people across the country.

We do that through organizing experiential opportunities. One of our most popular is through a competition format that enables youth from across the country in up to 45 different occupational areas to test their skills against other youth from other parts of the country. We do that in a way that is very conducive for media, public, and students from surrounding schools to get a better appreciation of the complexity involved in skilled trades and technology careers.

In addition to that experience, which is focused on those students who are participating in the competitions, we offer Try-A-Trade and technology activities that allow students to try those occupations at a very basic level to get some understanding of what's involved with those occupations.

Today we have a number of apprentices and one journeyperson joining me. A couple of these people, Nathan and Kayla, have participated in our Skills Canada competitions in the past, so they can give you some perspective on what's involved with that. A couple of other apprentices who are currently going through the system are also here.

We're looking forward to the questions that you have for them.

**The Chair:** Starting with Nathan, maybe you could introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about yourself, and then we'll move on to Kayla.

**Mr. Nathan Banke (Journeyman, Automotive Service Technician Program, Skills Canada):** I'll try to make this quick.

My name is Nathan Banke. I am a journeyperson as an automotive service technician—a car mechanic, if you will. I went through an apprenticeship system. I started off with the Ontario youth apprenticeship system. I did one of those early apprenticeships, and went through the rest of the apprenticeship system as a regular apprentice. I completed that and became a journeyperson in 2007.

During that time I competed in Skills Canada at various levels—provincially, nationally, and on a world scale. After that I continued working as a mechanic, but through Skills Canada I ended up working for another company. I met the owner of a different company, where we design and build training equipment for schools. In my current role, I'm the director of business development at a company that provides training equipment to schools across Canada, the United States, and around the world.

In the last three or four years I have travelled—driven and flown—across Canada. I have visited high schools and colleges in every single province—I haven't been to the Northwest Territories—and I've seen the apprenticeship systems in various provinces. I've sat on articulation committees for different provinces and for different apprenticeship systems. I have experience with the B.C. system, Alberta's, and a little bit in Quebec as well, where the company is based.

On a personal level, my brother has gone through an apprenticeship in the last couple of years. He just finished his licence this past year, and I have many friends who are still in apprenticeship to this day.

That is a little bit of information.

Thanks.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Éric.

**Mr. Éric Duquette (Student, Plumbing, La Cité Collégiale):** My name is Éric Duquette. I'm from Ottawa. I'm currently a level 2 plumber, a fifth-year apprentice, and I'm currently attending La Cité Collégiale in Orleans.

**Mr. Steven Church (Student, Automotive Service Technician (Apprenticeship), Algonquin College):** I am Steven Church. I am currently an automotive service technician apprentice, doing my level 3 at Algonquin College right now. I've been an apprentice for approximately four years. Before that I was in the Canadian Forces, and I'm still currently a serving reservist member.

**The Chair:** All right.

Go ahead, Kayla.

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien (Student, Sheet Metal Worker (Apprenticeship), Algonquin College):** My name is Kayla O'Brien. I am currently attending my advanced level, or level 3, at Algonquin College for sheet metal worker, or tin banger.

I love my trade. I don't really know what to say. I do everything from ductwork to roofing. I can do the finicky little pails and everything. I was third generation and I didn't like university; it turns out that this is where I want to go, and I love it.

● (1220)

**The Chair:** Thank you for that introduction.

We'll now open up to questions and we'll start with Mr. Sullivan.

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Thank you.

Welcome.

Is it difficult for you to find the apprenticeships while you're in school, to find employers? Is that a difficult part of the job, or are there lots of placements, and therefore going from being in school to being an apprentice is not difficult? Is it difficult?

**The Chair:** Kayla, we'll start with you. I think you want to make a comment, and then we'll work our way through.

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** In most apprenticeships you have to have a job before you become an apprentice or go to school.

I am fortunate in that I work in a family business, so my job is typically secure, or I can hope.

I know that if you're a union member, at least within my trade, your job is pretty well secure while you're in school. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities mandates that the job is secure while you are in school, and you're not to lose that position.

It may be difficult to start out initially, but once you are an apprentice it shouldn't be that hard. You can jump from company to company.

**Mr. Mike Sullivan:** You're all now apprentices, but was it difficult to get that spot?

**The Chair:** Does anyone else wish to comment?

**Mr. Éric Duquette:** It was difficult for me due to the ratio of 3:1. It's hard to find employers who can carry a certain number of plumbers as apprentices, so that's one challenge that I did find, for sure.

**The Chair:** Nathan, do you have a comment?

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** There are a couple of different challenges there. In a way it's the chicken-and-egg paradox. First, if you're doing a regular apprenticeship program you have to get the job first, but how do you get the job if you're not an apprentice? In certain trades that's going to be easier than in others, but for the most part you have to start off as a bit of a go-getter to get the job first, and then sign up as an apprentice with the ministry, and then continue on.

In a lot of trades there are alternative programs through which you can take a pre-apprenticeship course at a college or even sometimes a high school to give you the base-level skills to get your foot in the door to get that basic job. Otherwise, how are you supposed to sign up for an apprenticeship if you can't get a job and you can't sign up as an apprentice if you don't have a job? There is that.

Also, as you just said, there are ratios, and depending—I'm not sure of the numbers, but it depends on the trade—there are different ratios. If you're at a garage with mechanics and you can only have one apprentice per technician, that gets pretty expensive if you have to have a licensed technician for every apprentice. That's something the employers always have to consider.

**Mr. Mike Sullivan:** The other thing we've heard over and over again is that EI is not easy, and that delays in processing and difficulties with EI make the connections between the periods of school and the periods on the job much more difficult. Has that been your experience as well?

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** I haven't worked since December 21. I am currently fighting to get my EI. I have no money.

I've heard that if you're related to your employer, they will give you a bit more grief. "Grief" is probably the wrong word, but it seems the CRA needs to look into it to make sure I'm not getting a back-handed apprenticeship. They were questioning me as to whether I was really working the full hours.

Regardless, no one else in my program.... There are currently almost 40 of us in advanced sheet metal right now at Algonquin; everyone is getting paid yesterday, and we're in our sixth week. We have guys who had to take out loans or beg loans from their parents to try to pay their bills. It can be kind of painful.

**Mr. Steven Church:** Yes, I agree.

For me, this year is a perfect example. In my previous two years, at my first level it took about one month for me to receive EI benefits. Last year it was surprisingly quick. I was receiving benefits by about my third week in school. This year I still haven't received any benefits.

I got off the phone with EI this morning, actually, because I got a message saying they hadn't received my record of employment, even though I hand-delivered it on January 18.

I've heard other horror stories from other apprentices who told me they never received EI benefits at all during their level 2.

From the time you leave your employer to the time you start school, there is a huge gap or a huge waiting period until you receive your benefits. People have bills to pay. We're not allowed to work part time to supplement that, because we're supposed to be collecting EI benefits. If we're not collecting EI benefits or not receiving them, we have no money, so it's definitely a challenge.

● (1225)

**The Chair:** Is there anyone else? No? All right.

Mr. Sullivan, your time is up, so we'll move to Mr. Butt.

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Thank you very much, all of you, for being here. Congratulations for what you're doing. My daughters are 13 and 9, so I haven't had the conversation with them yet, but I certainly will be.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** That was the one about the birds and the bees.

**Mr. Brad Butt:** I haven't had that one either, Rodger. I'm leaving that up to the wife. I'm not handling that one.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Brad Butt:** One of the things that I find interesting about the whole apprenticeship thing is there seems to be what I would call two different types. We have people who are coming right out of high school and are getting into these programs, and then we also have what I would call second-career-type apprenticeships. In this type people who may have worked in a different field or who've been in an industry that is downsizing, because that's the way the market is going, are retraining through the apprenticeship program for a job that may be totally unrelated to what they were doing before.

Are any of you in that particular situation? You're all fairly young, so was this a career choice that you made right out of secondary school, or were you doing something else and then something drove you to decide that it wasn't going to work out or that you'd rather do something different, and now you've decided to enrol and participate in an apprenticeship program?

**Mr. Steven Church:** I might have mentioned briefly that I was actually a Canadian Forces soldier beforehand. I'm still a serving reservist member, but I'm 30 years old right now and still apprenticing, trying to finish it up, so I'm definitely in that category.

I've served in the military for about nine years. I left because being a mechanic was something that I always wanted to do throughout high school, but so was the military. I left the military because it was a bit of a wake-up call overseas that it was time to do something so that I could actually raise a family, so I made that sacrifice to change careers.

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** I was straight out of high school. I started my apprenticeship program at Algonquin College in level 1. I was 16 years old, still technically a high school student, and that was through a youth apprenticeship program. There are those youth apprenticeship programs across Canada, various iterations of them, depending on the province. I'm kind of the polar opposite. At 16 years old I started my apprenticeship and followed through with that; by the time I was 20, I had my licence and was out working in the field.

Now I'm no longer working as a mechanic. I haven't been for the last couple of years, but all the training and all the experience—I'm still working in the same field, in the same domain—and everything that I do now in my job relates to the apprenticeship and relates to schools, and everything with that.

I don't know if you have more questions on the experience.

**Mr. Brad Butt:** Maybe I'll just ask you, then, Nathan, because we're hearing this disconnect about the advice by teachers, by guidance counsellors, by others in high school that these opportunities are not being promoted very well to people who are in grade 10, 11, 12 as an option for them to look at.

How did you get hooked on going the apprenticeship route, rather than going where I think most parents tend to tell their kids, which is to university to get a B.A. in something, because that's what everybody does and you have to do it. Who pushed you, or who helped you? How did you find out about apprenticeship as an option for you, rather than going the route that we constantly hear most others are tending to do, which is “You have to go to university, you have to go to university”?

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** Before explaining my circumstances for that, I just want to say that in my job right now, a lot of times I've given presentations to college teachers. Next month I'm going to be presenting to about 50 college teachers. I'm talking to hundreds of college teachers throughout the course of the year, and everywhere I go, no matter where it is—Canada, the United States, any province, any city, any town—all the teachers I talk to are saying that the students they are getting lack the basic skills. If you go back five, 10, 15 years with these kids who are coming in, the guidance counsellors are pushing them in for typically the wrong reasons, but they're also lacking basic skills because our base-level culture has changed.

They don't have the father, the uncle, the aunt, the grandfather in the family, someone doing a manual trade, a skilled trade. Who cares what it is? If you've got uncle Tony working on a chimney duct or something, and you're there holding the hammer or holding something working with him, you get the base-level touch and feel of holding a screwdriver, a hammer, or whatever. A lot of these kids now are completely lacking that experience.

You can look at what is happening in the high schools. When they're taking away the high school shop programs or trades programs, you've got nothing. They don't know how to hold a screwdriver or a hammer. They don't know what a wrench is, and now the guidance counsellors are pushing the kids who aren't academic into a program and essentially babysitting them and trying to give them the base-level skills just to be able to function with tactile things with their hands. That's what I'm seeing across the country, in provinces all over the place and across the United States.

To get back to your first question, I was like Steve. When I was in high school, I asked myself if I wanted to go to university. Yes. Did I have any money? No. University was going cost a lot of money that I didn't have. Did I want to go to the military? Yes, but at 16 years of age I didn't want to make a commitment to do something like the Royal Military College in Kingston or join the services and make a long-term commitment. You cant make a decision like that at 16 years of age, or at least I couldn't.

For me it was to do some calculations, some basic math. If I went to university, I was going to end up four years later with a whole bunch of debt, even if I worked my ass off, or I could go into the apprenticeship system. At the time I could get into the Ontario youth apprenticeship system, which let you leave high school early, get a job, make money while working that job, and have those hours—say, 30 hours a week at a shop or whatever. You're making money, you're getting high school co-op credits, and you're getting apprenticeship hours. The government was paying for the level 1 apprenticeship. All of a sudden, financially it just made sense to do an apprenticeship.

At that time, there weren't the incentives they're giving out in Ontario right now. When my brother did his apprenticeship, he got the $1,000 at each level, and then the $2,000 at the end or whatever. I never had that, but the incentives are there. Going to school only costs $400-$500 for your level, compared to the thousands and thousands of dollars your friends are paying. In the meantime you're working and making money.

It's a financial incentive. That's what got me in there.

● (1230)

**The Chair:** Thank you for that, Nathan.

Kayla, did you have comment you wanted to make?

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** I'm on a middle ground. I wasn't fully trained for a another trade or for anything. I went to the University of Ottawa for two years, and I hated every minute I was there, so I went another route and shopped around, working wherever it was. I recently discovered that my dad giving me the job offer was an attempt to scare me back into university, but I tried it and I liked it. It backfired. It was six of one, half dozen of the other.

I have to agree that there's a big problem with the secondary education system and the stigma that lies between colleges and universities. For example, when I said to my boyfriend's cousin, “Oh, you got into college”, his mother just jumped all over me saying, “No, he got into university.”

It's a post-secondary program. I graduated from high school in 2005, and the stigma I understand is still there to this day, eight years later: smart kids go to university, stupid kids go to college. If I were to show any of you the math that I have to do, or the science.... I could teach you the physics of air. I know that. I can design a duct system. Stupid people can't do that.

There's a lot in every trade that everybody needs to do. There are people who need a lot of help math-wise, science-wise, English-wise, or with everything. We learn differently or we excel in different fields, but these stigmas override that. It really does need to be addressed, because it is a wonderful opportunity, a wonderful trade. Everyone I know who's in it isn't regretting that they're in it. They're in it because they love it.

**The Chair:** That's a good point. Thank you for that comment.

We'll move to Mr. Rousseau.

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Thank you very much.

Ms. O'Brien, my father was a sheet metal worker too, and look where I am now. Everything is possible.

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** There you go.

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** I will have to ask my first question in French. It would be more difficult in English.

[*Translation*]

You are a great example of courage and perseverance for our youth.

How do disabled people and women fit into non-traditional trades as well as learning and apprenticeship programs? I would like to hear your thoughts on that.

● (1235)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is everyone *en français*? You need to put in your earpieces.

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** What are the pathways for non-traditional work, more or less? Is it difficult...?

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** What's the ratio, the place, of handicapped persons in the non-traditional sector?

**The Chair:** First of all, we should make sure everyone gets the proper translation. You have an earpiece. We'll get the clerk to help you out here.

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Please ensure that you have your earpiece in and you are on channel one or two.

Is everybody okay?

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Let me rephrase that.

**The Chair:** Just hold on a second. We'll make sure everything is working first.

You're good. Everybody is good.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** You—

[*English*]

**The Chair:** All right. Perhaps you could—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Is the interpretation working now?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We won't hold that against your time, Mr. Rousseau.

Start again.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** I was asking about how women and disabled people fit into non-traditional trades. And how do they fit into learning and apprenticeship programs?

[*English*]

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** Yes, I'm the one with the expertise on this one.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Are you the only one in your group?

[*English*]

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** This is the first time that I'm not. There are two women, but we're in different classes, for whatever reason. On the job site, I have only ever encountered two women, total, in my four years in the trade.

The only other disability I have encountered is hearing impairment. I don't know so much about the disabled aspect, but I'm welcomed with open arms. I have to have thick skin and be able to give jokes and take them, but that's construction in general. Nobody cares, really.

Yes, women are welcome. Join me.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Thank you.

My next question is for Mr. Banke.

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** Okay.

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Earlier, you mentioned something that I found very interesting. Nowadays, youth have no idea what a hammer, saw or a square are. Why is that? Yes, they watch movies. What kind of incentives do you think would draw them to non-traditional trades that need workers? Right now, there is a shortage of workers in those trades.

What kind of incentives are needed? Mr. Thorson can also answer this question.

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** They need to have the opportunity to work with the tools. If they do not have the tools at home and no one works with their hands, if there is no auto mechanic or welding program at their high school and if they only have theory, youth will not have the opportunity to learn these trades.

Our culture today does not really give youth the chance the use these kinds of tools and to have the desire to learn a trade for themselves. If it does not happen in their high school, they may never pick up a hammer. People call someone—

[*English*]

sew on a button.

[*Translation*]

People call someone to do that work for them. It is very easy and anyone can do it if they can work with their hands.

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** If they can work with their hands.

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** We are talking about working with their hands. They have to be given that opportunity.

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** And you, Mr. Thorson? What do you think?

[*English*]

**Mr. Shaun Thorson:** I think your question leads to one of the valuable things that a program like Skills Canada provides. It complements the existing education system and provides an opportunity for young people to actually hold a hammer, to hold a saw, to wire a circuit board, to have that sensory experience. I think that is key in establishing in the memory of students what that experience actually is. It's not just a piece of paper being handed to them that tells how apprenticeship works or what this career involves; it is actually something tangible they can do, something they can experience. They can take that memory back and start a discussion with teachers, parents, or career counsellors on what some of the options are in those career pathways.

● (1240)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Pardon my ignorance, but are these programs available in Quebec?

**Mr. Shaun Thorson:** Yes, in Quebec it falls under Compétences Québec.

**Mr. Jean Rousseau:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you. Your time is up.

We'll move to Ms. Leitch. Go ahead.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Thank you very much. Thanks, everyone, for taking some time to join us today. I greatly appreciate it.

I too grew up on a construction site, with a father who ran a construction company. I'm an orthopedic surgeon. I just use a different hammer and saw, and they cost a lot more.

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

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** One of the issues—and Kayla, you raised this—is this issue of stigma. It's come up in many of the discussions we've had with respect to this study and others, whether it be parents, guidance counsellors, or others. Tell me succinctly the number one thing we should do to combat and deal with that.

I know this presents a challenge. Is it about advertising? Is it about talking directly to students? What would you say if I asked each one of you, all five of you, to tell us the number one thing we should do to deal with the stigma? It seems to be a huge barrier. What should we do?

Éric, what do you think?

**Mr. Éric Duquette:** For many people—not in high school, but a little older, like me—I'm 33—it can take quite a time to get registered. The ratio can be very discouraging. For a plumber, it's three plumbers per apprentice. I don't know many companies that can afford to pay three plumbers to train one guy.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** So it is dealing with the ratio issue.

**Mr. Éric Duquette:** That's right.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** That's the biggest barrier.

**Mr. Éric Duquette:** It's a big problem, for sure.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Would you comment, Steven?

**Mr. Steven Church:** I think talking to students and educating them properly is the best approach.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** At what grade should we start?

**Mr. Steven Church:** Start around the middle of high school, towards their senior years. Nobody in high school ever told me what a mechanic did, except for working on cars.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Do you think the students actually have no idea what these—

**Mr. Steven Church:** I think most people don't realize what's involved. For me, being an auto mechanic, even now that I'm in the trade, can actually be quite surprising. It's not just a mechanic anymore. I'm part mechanic, part electrician, part computer technician—that's the way the industry is going. The industry is rapidly growing, and it's getting more and more difficult to do the job.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Nathan, what are your thoughts?

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** I'll just mention one or two of the biggest challenges for skilled trades. There's the perception that in certain trades there's no regulation, and that any Joe can put his hat on and say it's Joe's Garage, without a licence or any experience. When you don't associate a certain prestige to having that licence or having attained that level of certification, or when the certification is not mandatory—

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** You're talking about mandating excellence.

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** Yes. If you mandate excellence, if you raise the bar, everyone who reaches that bar has a prestigious title. I'm not just a mechanic; I try to always call myself an automotive service technician. It sounds a little better. An automotive service technician could be held in the same regard as a low-level engineer, because that is essentially what we do.

This could be true for a lot of the trades, but the regulations need to go a little further. The regulations say that any Joe on the street can go out and buy the parts to go and fix his car at the same prices available to certain garages.

I say this for cars, but it could be for anything. Last night I was installing lighting at my mother's house. I'm not an electrician. Do I know how to do that? Yes, but in my doing that, am I taking away the prestige of an electrician? In a way, I am.

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** I don't really have an answer, but I do have a stepping stone.

I don't know what the curriculum is across the nation, but in the city of Ottawa, it was mandatory for me to take civics and careers in grade 10. It is mandatory for each section. You have to take *x* number of sciences, *x* number of maths through high school. Two trades should be mandatory. Trades need to be reintroduced into high school. Trades are gone.

You're of course going to get teenagers complaining, but that's not a foreign concept.

As you said, I was fortunate enough to grow up around a family of farmers and sheet metal workers and stuff, so although I never went on a job site, I was encouraged to do things for myself. I was told, "Well, I'm not going to hammer up your photo; you're going to go hammer up your photo in your room", so I held a hammer.

I knew what I was doing, but my friends have no clue, and that is the first step: reintroduce trades and make them mandatory in high school, to a certain extent—just basic carpentry or something.

● (1245)

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Kayla, you mentioned that you don't see a lot of women on the job site with you. I can relate to that as an orthopedic surgeon. There are not a lot of women in my profession either.

My question stems from what you commented on, but actually I want to ask it to the guys: how do we get women to actually stand in your job sites? What has to change?

I'm being serious. I'm sure you all interact with women every day at some point in time, at least with your moms. What do we need to do to make sure, Steven, when you go to the job site, or Éric or Nathan, that women feel comfortable or want to pursue the kind of career that you're in?

**The Chair:** Who wants to tackle that one first?

Nathan, go ahead.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** We always ask the women what they think will make women do this, but they are women who are in the profession. What do you guys think?

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** When mechanics are perceived as dirty and working in a trade that any Joe on the street can pick up a wrench and do, and when people don't necessarily see how much money they can make as a mechanic, why would any woman ever want to go and work on a car? Why?

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Are you saying we should be focused on the income that they would receive so they could support their families?

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** Income, the prestige.... As you said, essentially now you're part electrician, part computer technologist, if you will, and part mechanic. The actual changing of parts is the easy part. Getting there is everything else. It's all the hard work to get there.

The perception isn't there for a lot of the trades. If there's no prestige in doing it, why would a woman ever want to come to a job site and work like that—unless they love it, like you?

**The Chair:** Does anyone else wish to comment on that before we conclude?

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Big sighs. He gave you the pass, gentlemen.

**The Chair:** All right. We'll move to Mr. Cuzner.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

In your concerns about the timeliness of receiving EI benefits, really what you've done is echo concerns that have been shared by probably eight, nine, ten, eleven other witnesses.

The question begs to be asked: why don't you just phone the number? Can't you get answers there when you phone in?

**Mr. Steven Church:** I'll comment on that one. This is a perfect time for that question.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** It's a legit question.

**Mr. Steven Church:** I'll start by explaining the exact procedure that we have to follow.

One of the things that EI or Service Canada has done well is to allow us to apply up to two weeks ahead of schedule, before we actually start our classroom training. We get a letter in the mail that gives us a reference code that allows us to complete our online application for employment insurance. Our claims still do not get processed until a record of employment is handed in, of course, but at least there's a bit of a head start on our claim. As soon as they receive a record of employment, we should start receiving benefits.

That said, this is a perfect year for this example. In my case, we didn't receive our reference code ahead of time. We received it on day one of our classroom training. That was late. We were told that was a Service Canada issue and not an Algonquin College issue because those reference numbers get sent out with our schedules.

I completed my online application on day one, as soon as we met with the EI representatives, and I submitted my record of employment about a week later, because that was when I finally received it from my employer.

As I said, I got a message saying that they hadn't received my record of employment. It was about three weeks ago that I finally received this message. I called the 1-800 number. All you get is an automated message saying that if you want more information, go to the website. There was no option to actually speak to somebody right then. I had to call a separate number that was for reporting my online claims, and when I finally got to an option to talk to somebody and I finally reached that person and talked to them, the only answer I got was, “I'll look into it.”

Do you know what I mean? They say, “I agree. It's not showing up in our computer system; it should have, within 10 days of your submitting it, so I will put out a request to get it registered.” Now I'm waiting for another phone call to say, “Yes, we got your record of employment; everything is registered, and we've started your claim.”

● (1250)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Have any others had problems with the call centre?

**Mr. Éric Duquette:** It was the same as Steve, the exact same thing.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Is it a little tough getting hold of someone?

**Mr. Éric Duquette:** Yes. We're getting the runaround constantly.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Is that right?

**Mr. Éric Duquette:** Yes.

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** Two weeks ago I was told that I needed to call, for whatever reason it was. It was a Monday. The call centre is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. I called three times an hour, every hour, until I finally got through at five o'clock at night. They were so busy they wouldn't leave you on hold. They would disconnect you, and you'd call back later—

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** They'd drop the call.

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** It was a dropped call.

I got through at 5:10 at night. They close at 6:00. I didn't get through to somebody until ten to six. I was on hold for over 40 minutes, and when I did talk to somebody.... There has to be some kind of discrepancy between the online reporting and what's in the computer system, because they were asking me the same questions that I've answered, for this claim alone, four times.

Maybe it's just security, but—

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Do you think it would help the call centres if there were fewer people working in the call centres—if they let more people go?

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** I'm going to say no.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Guys, it's been something....

Go ahead, Nate, if you have something.

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** Every person I've talked to about EI or about apprenticeship—every person, every level—everyone's always had a problem, always. Yesterday I was at Algonquin College, and this is one of the things all the teachers said to me. They said to make sure I bring this up, because it pisses them off all the time.

If you have a whole bunch of students, they're there, they stop working, they're in school, they're excited for school—but then they're broke. You're dealing with 40 students who are broke and stressed. How are you going to teach them?

This to me has always been the base-level question in my head: why is it unemployment? You're employed. Why is it linked to EI? When you leave work and you go to your apprenticeship, I know there have to be lots and lots of reasons that it falls into the realm of employment insurance. You're still employed.

Who cares if it was an incentive? Give the money to the schools to disburse and send in a request to give out the paycheques. I don't care how the money gets there, but get the guys their money so they can go to school and get back to work and start making more money.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Your honesty, your insight, and your candour are absolutely appreciated. I want you to know that.

Have I any time left?

**The Chair:** Your time is up.

Thank you for your responses. That fellow's suggestion about having the applications go in early and maybe delinking it in some fashion so that you're treated differently from other claimants is a fair point. Getting the service that you might expect is another issue, of course, and we hear you loud and clear on it.

I'll go to Mr. Thorson. Do you have any concluding remarks you'd like to make? If you do, this would be a good time. I don't think we'll open it up to another round of questioning, but we'll give you each an opportunity for some closing remarks.

**Mr. Shaun Thorson:** I'll pick up on some of the comments that Nathan mentioned around the prestige of the occupations.

Maybe there's some way to look at trade certification, perhaps even giving it a different name. I know people who have been involved in trades for a long time are sometimes not a fan of that idea, but I know that when journeypersons talk about their certification, they talk about their trades ticket or their certificate ticket, their certification.

Some young people may be pursuing university education, some are going to a college in pursuit of a diploma, so they're getting degrees and diplomas, and then you have trade certification. Just some of that terminology immediately puts it at a different level from people who are pursuing a degree and a diploma. If we're talking about trying to raise the awareness, the profile, and the prestige, maybe that is something that we need to look at.

**The Chair:** All right.

Nathan, do you have any closing remarks?

**Mr. Nathan Banke:** In connection with Skills Canada and what Shaun's saying about the prestige, they work really hard on that. I don't even work in a shop anymore as a mechanic. It says on my business card, "Director of Business Development" at a big company. If anyone asks me where I went to school, I don't even have a diploma; I have a mechanic's licence. That's all I can say: that I have a licence to be an automotive service technician. I don't have a diploma, I don't have a degree, I don't have a ticket—nothing. That's it.

● (1255)

**The Chair:** Éric, would you like to comment?

**Mr. Éric Duquette:** I think my fellow apprentices, and Shaun and Nathan, pretty much covered everything.

Thanks.

**The Chair:** Steven, do you have any concluding remarks?

**Mr. Steven Church:** I do have a couple.

My first closing remark would be getting back to how to make things easier for apprentices while they're going through school. I feel apprentice wages have to have some sort of standardization. I can't use myself as an example because I feel I have a somewhat decent salary as an apprentice, and it has been gradually increased as I've been completing levels.

There are two guys in my level 3 right now who have been getting paid $13 an hour since day one. How do you justify a four-year apprenticeship being paid the same rate until they're licensed? If you're straight out of high school and you're still a young kid and you're just starting your life, it's not a huge deal, but if it was a guy like me, someone who left a career to do another career, having to sit through a four-year apprenticeship program making $13 an hour makes things kind of difficult.

The other comment I have is about wages in general in my trade as a technician. One thing I have a hard time wrapping my head around is that if you go back to shop labour rates 10 years ago and compare them to today, they've pretty much almost doubled, but technician wages have barely budged. That's probably something else to consider. Raising the prestige level of the trade means raising its income. If shops are raising their rates that much, there should be some sort of compensation for the technicians. We're the ones doing all the work in the end.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Kayla, do you have any closing thoughts?

**Ms. Kayla O'Brien:** I have just a couple of things.

One, I think it's a fantastic idea—I forget who brought it up—to separate the training supplement EI from the rest of the intake.

I have guys who are in town from Sudbury. They don't have enough money to go home to see their kids. Algonquin has a very big draw, so only about one-quarter of us are from town; everybody else is from out of town and living in town, so they're living at greater expense. Really, these guys need their money more than I do.

Also, I'm in one of the trades with the highest journeyman-to-apprentice ratios; I believe they are carpentry and sheet metal work. You can have one apprentice and one journeyman. After your first apprentice, it is four journeypersons to one apprentice, so it's the same as what you're saying. To get people through, that's a lot of money. I work in a small shop, and we don't have the money to do that, so I think that needs to be addressed.

Otherwise, I wish you all good luck.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for taking the time to come before us. I know many of you have not experienced sharing before a committee or providing testimony. Your testimony has been refreshing, and your frankness and candour have been certainly appreciated. I'm sure the committee members will take all of that into consideration. Thank you very much.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.