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Chair

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc

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•(0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP)): Good morning and welcome to the 33rd meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Today we will continue our study on economic leadership and the prosperity of Canadian women.

We have the pleasure of welcoming Ms. JudyLynn Archer, who is president and chief executive officer of Women Building Futures in Edmonton. Ms. Archer will speak to us by videoconference.

We are also pleased to welcome Ms. Janice McDonald of This Space Works and Ms. Anne-Marie Roy of the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa.

Each speaker will have 10 minutes for an opening statement, which will be followed by a question period.

On a personal note, I also have the pleasure of welcoming today two young people from the Boys and Girls Club, who are here as part of their leadership program. Natasha and Tanner are spending the day with me, and they will learn a little bit more not just about the leadership of women, but also about the leadership shown by parliamentarians in the Parliament of Canada and on this committee.

I would like to welcome you to the committee and thank you for being here with us.

We will start with Ms. McDonald, who will give a 10-minute opening statement.

Ms. McDonald, you have the floor.

[English]

Ms. Janice McDonald (Co-Founder, This Space Works): Thank you, Madam Chair and committee members, for the opportunity to speak to you today about economic leadership and prosperity for women in Canada.

My name is Janice McDonald and I am a serial entrepreneur in the music and apparel industry. I'm delighted to contribute to the important work you are doing in looking at systemic barriers to women's advancement. I've been interested in this topic for a long time as an entrepreneur, volunteer, and because of my own research.

I've been an entrepreneur in Canada for over two decades. There has been considerable change in the small business landscape over that time period.

When my partner and I opened up our first retail music store in 1991, we were open for business. We didn't start up; we opened up. There were not start-ups, just businesses growing and opening.

As young entrepreneurs we had few peers choose the same career path. Most of our friends and colleagues did not see entrepreneurship as an option. That has changed.

In 1991, formal mentorship programs were not available, or at least we were not aware of them. Now entrepreneurs can access innovation hubs, crowdsource funding, angel investors, and all kinds of support. Organizations like Futurpreneur did not exist.

Futurpreneur is a national non-profit organization dedicated to growing our economy one entrepreneur at a time. The focus on start-up culture has increased significantly. The shift has been gradual, but now support for entrepreneurs is everywhere.

My latest start-up is called This Space Works. It's like Airbnb for business. We are part of the sharing economy, and use excess capacity in physical spaces and make it available to mobile professionals and businesses who need it.

Although seasoned ourselves, we have gathered mentors to assist us to grow our start-up. MaRS Discovery District in Toronto, Communitech in Waterloo, the Innovation Factory in Hamilton, each of these organizations is helping our company grow.

In 1992, I completed my master's in Canadian studies. My thesis topic was "Women and the Appointment Process in Canada on Agencies, Boards, Councils, and Commissions". That was before we considered women diversity. Women were under-represented, but it was viewed as a gender and power issue, not as a diversity issue. The numbers did not look good in 1992 and as we know, change has been slow.

My commitment to women's advancement has remained. I share my time and talents with numerous organizations focused on making a difference in this regard.

Comprised of leaders from the most senior levels of government, business, academia, and the non-profit sector, members of the Women's Leadership Board at Harvard's Kennedy School serve as key supporters and ambassadors to the women in public policy program.

I am a member of the Women's Leadership Board and am going to Harvard tomorrow for three days of meetings.

Board members ask, "What can we do to create gender equality and improve the lives of women and men around the world?" The focus is on rigorous, high-impact research to further the shared mission of closing gender gaps. The gender action portal is a vital resource.

I am chair of the Canadian Women in Communications and Technology national board. The goal is to advance women in Canada in communications and technology. The non-profit organization focuses on recognition, career advancement, and mentorship. It has been doing incredible work for women for over 20 years.

We believe our members can ignite their career with mentorship. In the latest issue of Women's Executive Network's *The Opinion* magazine, my article on mentorship talks about the value of it in career development. I have been a long-standing formal and informal mentor to women in business and the communications industry. I have seen first-hand the impact it can have on women's careers. A mentor can help you get to next faster.

Last year, I ran the mentorship program for WCT, and successfully matched over 20 women across Canada with senior women mentors. WCT believes mentorship is essential to career development. The WCT program is a gold standard.

The program has been running for 14 years. The call has just gone out to members to apply for the program. It is free to WCT members, and senior women mentors donate their time and share their talents for a one-year commitment. The program is made possible by the financial support of Shaw Media. It is a cornerstone to WCT programming.

The WCT commitment to mentorship is unwavering. We also know that sponsorship is vital as well. Visioned by WCT, the protégé project was created in conjunction with Catalyst Canada and supported by Shaw Media. This is a brand new pioneering project. The ripple effects of the program will be significant. It is a new collaborative venture whose promise is to level the playing field for women in the ICT sector in Canada.

●(0850)

We want to make sure rising stars in the industry make it to the C-suite. Over 10 senior executives in leading communications, media, and technology organizations have signed on to personally support the program. An equivalent number of female corporate executives will be selected and matched to work with sponsors to sharpen their leadership and business acumen.

We believe the ripple effects of the program will be significant. No one else has done a cross-industry sponsor-matching program for senior women. It will be a game changer. My personal commitment to mentorship is also unwavering. I've been invited to join the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women as a mentor. Their philosophy is to invest in women entrepreneurs so they can build their businesses. Women benefit from the program as their businesses grow, as do their families and communities.

The Cherie Blair Foundation believes if you empower women you drive growth. So do I. Their mentoring women in business program is successful. They have over 800 mentors and mentees enrolled in the program. It is offered across physical and cultural distances through the use of technology. I'm proud to offer my skills and

talents to a woman somewhere in the world and help her grow her business. My match will be completed later this month and I will work with my mentee for one year.

I'm also the current chair of the Ottawa chapter of the International Women's Forum. I am passionate about this global organization for women. IWF advances women's leadership across careers, cultures, and continents. Members are committed to bettering global leadership today and cultivating women leaders of tomorrow. Fifty-five hundred women leaders around the world are IWF members. The organization began in 1982 in the U.S.A. and there are IWF members in six continents and 33 nations. In Canada, IWF has approximately 500 members in chapters across the country. The organization is very active and interested in women's leadership.

One area of focus for IWF Canada members is to increase the number of women on corporate boards. IWF Canada is interested in and committed to seeing more women join corporate boards. The IWF national board agreed to direct time and effort to create the tools for change for its members. The sole focus of the committee has been to gather all of the necessary information for its members to join those boards. Members can access an exceptional road map to assist them. The proprietary work covers the eco-system for women on boards, vital research, the business case and approaches used in other countries. Additional information includes sections on how to succeed, prepare for interviews, and get known. It is a strategic, comprehensive, and valuable tool for any IWF member. The women on boards initiative by IWF enables any of its members who are serious about joining a board to have the information and tools necessary to succeed. Several board members attribute their recent placement on a corporate board in part to the IWF information available to them.

Like many IWF members, I received my Institute of Corporate Directors designation from the directors education program. The program is offered nationally at Canada's top business schools. Since the launch of the directors education program, more than 3,000 directors have completed the program and over 1,900 have earned their ICD.D designation. The designation reflects a director's commitment to ongoing learning and development. The program is designed to help directors overcome the challenges they face in fulfilling their roles as directors. The training program is also a rich source of networking opportunities with classmates in the most senior roles in organizations across Canada. For that reason alone, more women need to participate.

Given the complexities of business today, we can expect more boards to seek out directors with governance training. If governance training and the ICD.D designation is valued by corporate boards, then hopefully more women will apply and be selected to receive this invaluable education. In my cohort, DEP-46, we did not have an equal number of men and women in the class. If governance training is a pipeline for future directors, we need to ensure that more women receive the training offered. The Institute for Corporate Directors offers scholarships to its directors education program and it would be ideal if more scholarships were available and offered specifically for women to access.

• (0855)

I believe we have many qualified and board-ready women across Canada. I don't think it is a pipeline issue and we know the business case is made for women on boards. Equipping more women with governance training is one more way we can eliminate barriers to women's success on corporate boards.

Mentorship is a critical element for women's success, as is sponsorship. Dedicated organizations, like IWF and WCT, are taking up the challenge. Although change is hard and slow, it is possible. We all win when women are empowered.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much for that excellent presentation.

I will now give the floor to Ms. Anne-Marie Roy, who will give a 10-minute presentation.

[*English*]

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy (President, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa): Good morning. I would like to thank the committee for inviting me to appear today to discuss the barriers to achieving economic equality for women in Canada.

My name is Anne-Marie Roy. I am the president of the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa, representing all undergraduate students at the U of O. I also sit on the national executive of the Canadian Federation of Students, Canada's largest and oldest student organization, with members from Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia. The Canadian Federation of Students represents over 600,000 students from more than 80 students' unions. It advocates for affordable and accessible post-secondary education.

For years, students have been at the forefront in the fight against gender inequality and violence against women. I am pleased to be here today to discuss some of the struggles with you. As a woman who through my own efforts and the help of my community has reached leadership positions, I know how important it is to celebrate those victories, but also to look around and ask: who is absent from the table and why.

Over the past 20 years, women's participation in post-secondary education has risen dramatically. We know that in order to have a chance at a living wage, women must go further in their education than their male counterparts. Between 2010 and 2012, average real wages for women with a bachelor's degree were closer to the earnings of a man with only a high school diploma than to those of their male peers with a bachelor's degree. Unfortunately, at the same time, in almost every province, tuition fees and student debt rose

dramatically, making it increasingly difficult for women to access the education they need to achieve economic stability.

In 1991, average tuition fees in Canada were \$1,706. As of 2014, that number has increased to \$5,959. For many women, this cost alone can mean that getting a post-secondary education is simply not an option. High upfront fees are more likely to be a barrier to women from marginalized communities, including racialized and indigenous women, women from low-income households, women with disabilities, and queer and trans women.

Women who are able to attend school are often forced to take on substantial student debt in order to pay these high upfront costs. In total, Canadian students owe \$16 billion in student debt to the federal government, and billions more to provincial governments and private lenders. Rising tuition fees particularly impact women, who account for 60% of borrowers from the Canada student loans program. On average, after a four-year degree, a student in Canada will graduate with over \$26,000 in debt. When you break it down by province, the situation is even more alarming, with average student debt being as low as \$14,400 in Quebec and as high as \$39,600 in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Once in the workforce, women continue to make less than their male counterparts. A recent study by Statistics Canada on cumulative earnings between 1991 and 2010 found that working women earned \$500,000 less than men over that period. At every level of education, and across occupations, women earned less. In the case of engineering, women earned an average of 47% less than men over the course of 20 years. Even in teaching, the occupation where women and men were the closest, women earned 19% less than men. These differences in earnings mean that it will take women longer to repay their student debt after graduation, and as a result, they will pay more in interest. Ultimately, this means that women are paying more for a post-secondary education than their male peers, whose incomes would allow them to pay down their student debt more quickly. The federal government should be working towards pay equity across Canada, but by reducing the cost of post-secondary education and investing in the Canada student grants program, the federal government could, at least, stop women from being doubly penalized for their lower earnings.

Campuses are also workplaces for many students. Recent trends of precarious employment are damaging students' working and living conditions. For many graduate students, working as a teaching or research assistant while studying is necessary to complete their program; however, the shift at many universities to hire staff on short-term contracts has left graduate students without benefits or job security. Investing in post-secondary education by increasing transfer payments to provinces and replacing the Canada student loans program with grants would be a good start towards making post-secondary education more affordable and accessible to women.

For first nations, Inuit and Métis women, there are additional barriers when it comes to being able to access a post-secondary education. Educational attainment levels among aboriginal people in Canada remain significantly lower than those of non-aboriginal people. Only 8% of aboriginal persons hold a university degree compared with 23% of the total population.

● (0900)

Currently, the federal government funds education for aboriginal students through the post-secondary student support program, also known as the PSSSP. Unfortunately, annual increases in funding for this program are capped at 2%, despite the growing number of aboriginal students seeking post-secondary education and the increasing cost of tuition fees, which increased by more than 3% this year.

Prior to 1992 funding was allocated based on the number of eligible students and their estimated expenses. As a result of the funding cap, over 18,500 qualified aboriginal students were denied funding between 2006 and 2011 alone. Aboriginal communities are often forced to choose whether to fully fund a few students or spread funding over a greater number of students. This is a clear violation of Canada's treaty responsibility to fund aboriginal education. Lifting the cap on increases in funding to the PSSSP would help ensure that no qualified aboriginal woman is denied the funding she needs to attend post-secondary education.

For students with children, access to affordable child care is required to take on or complete a degree. The average cost of after-tax child care in Canada is now \$15,000 per year. Day care facilities on campuses are often similarly overpriced, and overcrowded, with waiting lists that take years to get to the top of. In some cases, as happened here in Ottawa, there have been attempts to block some students from accessing child care subsidies. Even today, women continue to be more likely to be responsible for the primary care of children and other dependants. Without a universal child care program in Canada, women will not achieve equity with their male peers.

Last, as we have seen this past year, women continue to face the threat of sexual and gender-based violence on campuses. It has now been 25 years since the Montreal massacre, and women are still unsafe at Canadian colleges and universities. Young women aged 15 to 24 experience higher instances of sexual violence in Canada than any other age group. Much of that sexual violence happens on our campuses, in workplaces, and in our communities. More than ever it is incumbent upon our institutions, both colleges and universities as well as governments, to show leadership in challenging attitudes that perpetuate sexual violence and normalize rape culture.

Our country has disgracefully stood by as over 1,200 indigenous women have been murdered or have gone missing. We continue to be complacent in the high instances of violence against indigenous women, who are eight times more likely to be murdered than non-indigenous women like me.

Across North America, trans women experience dramatically higher instances of violence, and often college and university campuses intensify the already daily violence with strict legal name policies, gendered washrooms, and severely lacking anti-violence policies.

The Canadian Federation of Students has been at the forefront of movements against sexual and gender-based violence on our campuses and in our communities, but often our efforts are undermined by the lack of funding and support from governments and institutions to address the root causes of these issues. Women's social and economic equity cannot be won in a day. Students know that we need broad social changes if women are to achieve gender equality in our lifetime. I hope the committee will recommend the implementation of substantive changes that can move us toward this ultimate goal.

Thank you.

● (0905)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Roy.

[English]

Now we'll go to Ms. Archer, for 10 minutes.

Ms. JudyLynn Archer (President and Chief Executive Officer, Women Building Futures): Thank you for the opportunity to join the conversation today.

I'm here today to talk about women in construction. As we all know, Canada needs all hands on deck to support the continued industrial investment that helps drive our economy. This means we must ensure that Canada has the workforce it needs to build, operate, maintain, and provide leadership on those big projects. The challenge is that this industry will lose 24% of its workforce and specifically those individuals who have moved up in the ranks and into leadership positions. We're going to lose those people to retirement and global competition.

Underemployed women in Canada comprise the largest underutilized workforce in Canada. These are jobs that require no student debt to get into or to succeed at. Canada needs to support any and all proven initiatives that attract and prepare those who want to enter this industry, in particular women.

Women coming out of the Women Building Futures programs on average see an increase in their annual income by 127% on day of hire. What's not working right now is the funding that's needed to help women get into this industry.

The recent Status of Women Canada call for proposals forces respondents to create projects that will repeat work that's already done. It called for research and the identification of best practices and gaps in service. It allows for no training, awareness, mentorship, or any direct service to women as part of the project. It is our opinion that there is a plethora of existing research out there that identifies gaps, success strategies, and best practices related to this specific issue. This funding could be applied directly to what Canada really needs in women, which is programs that will attract and prepare women for construction jobs, including those jobs that offer leadership opportunity at a high rate of pay, I might add.

This year alone, Women Building Futures has seen 5,000 women come through its doors looking for a way to come into this industry. Our funding allows us to train 120 of those 5,000 people. We have a 90% success rate in helping women get to work in this industry, increasing their average annual income by 127% on day of hire, and yet organizations like ours are ineligible for the funding from Status of Women Canada. It doesn't make sense to us.

Our recommendation is that Status of Women Canada funding should support direct programming that does have a proven track record in helping women get to work in areas that will result in economic prosperity for those women.

Next, I'm going to speak momentarily on equality. Women, boys, men, and girls are not homogenous, yet government policies that drive programs are often based on all people being equal. This framework negatively impacts half the population of Canada. I'm going to give you a short case study to demonstrate this.

I'm going to talk about Susan. Susan's a single parent of two, works full-time earning \$30,000 a year. She wants a career that will increase her income substantially and offer leadership opportunity. Construction is her industry of choice. Susan applies for a construction training program that has a proven track record of success. The program is fully funded by an employer. The trick is Susan doesn't have sufficient savings to cover her living costs during this eight-week training program, so she goes to the Government of Alberta to request a counsel to leave, which is a process to request permission to leave her current low-paying job so that she can have money to pay her bills and feed the kids while in this eight-week training program. The cost to government would be approximately \$3,000, or 1% of the investment that that company is making in that individual. The response from government was no. Living costs for people in this type of training program are not an eligible expenditure.

• (0910)

Here's the rub: men are hired every day in Canada's construction industry without having to take any type of training. The reality is very different for women. Women must be much better than, in order to be seen as good as. That's just how it is. Opportunity in this industry is significant for women, but it is far from equitable. This woman will not be hired without the training. Barriers to training are reinforced by government policies that treat everyone as equal when they are not.

This case study is real. The woman was denied housing support and therefore was not able to enter the training program. She remains underemployed, unable to boost her tax contribution, and unable to

boost her consumption of goods. Government will continue to subsidize her and her children, and industry has lost another potential local worker and future leader.

What we ask is that gender-based analysis be used when creating policies and programs across all ministries and all programs. We would also ask that governments collaborate with each other so that we can fill these cracks that are impacting women every day.

Those are the points I wanted to make today, and I thank you for the opportunity to make them.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

We will now begin the first round of questions with Ms. Truppe, who will have seven minutes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): I have a question for Anne-Marie Roy.

I think at the very beginning of your speech you said that the study was on economic equality. I just wanted to clarify that it's actually on the economic prosperity and leadership of Canadian women.

Keeping in mind that we want to encourage leadership and entrepreneurship in this study, do you have a best practice, something positive, that you would like to share or suggest to young women?

• (0915)

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: To clarify the question, are you asking if there's a recommendation that I would make to the committee?

Mrs. Susan Truppe: A best practice, not a recommendation as such. Is there anything good or positive that you have experienced that you could suggest to young women that might help them in the future?

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: I certainly think that it's important for women to keep fighting and try to make their places in society. I think, however, it's undeniable that there are challenges and barriers that women face which men don't face. Despite that, I think it's very important for women to continue to carve their place in society and make great efforts to find meaningful employment. I think it's unfortunate that there's a bit of lack of support to achieve economic equality for men and women.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you.

Janice, I have a couple of questions for you.

Also, congratulations on being recognized as one of the top 100 most powerful women in 2013.

You had mentioned angel investors and Futurpreneur, with which I'm quite familiar. I'm happy to hear you say that the support for entrepreneurs is everywhere. I've been across Canada hosting round tables, and so has the minister, and at every round table they mentioned mentorship. I know you mentioned a lot of that, and congratulations on mentoring 20 women, I think you said. That's you yourself, correct? You were going to mentor 20 women?

Ms. Janice McDonald: I've done more than that.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Yes, you've done more than that over your lifetime, I'm sure.

Having said that, what do you do as a mentor? What advice do you give? Because mentorship was huge at every round table, what would you like to put on the record as advice you'd like to give?

Ms. Janice McDonald: I think that mentorship can start immediately. I echo Ms. Roy's comments in regard to agitating and moving forward. I think it's really important for women, particularly young women, to look around for mentors. It doesn't have to be in a formal program. The one I mentioned, women in communications and technology, is a formal program. It isn't available for students, however. That one is for people who are working who are members of the organization, but it is free once you become a member.

Certainly for young people, though, peer mentorship is important. As an example, WCT has done a mentorship circle, where it would bring together eight women in a chapter and they would work together, share their areas of expertise, and then also help each other to move their careers forward.

I think it's very critical for all career advancement for women to seek out mentors, but they don't have to be just female mentors. I've certainly had the benefit of many male mentors who have been extremely generous. I think it's important to find courage and be brave to look around and see who is available. In my experience there are many successful people who are willing to give back, but the mentee has to take the first step and ask for that help. I would encourage that as a starting point.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: What would be a typical question? I mean, since you've mentored so many, is there a question that's consistent over and over again? What are they asking for?

Ms. Janice McDonald: In my experience, the relationship is rich because it's two ways. The mentee is benefiting from the expertise of the mentor, but similarly the mentor has the opportunity to learn new things from the mentee. It is a very...I wouldn't say it's a universal approach. The mentee wants to get to next faster. I think that's generally the accepted idea, how the mentee can advance their career, but what that career advancement typically looks like is very individual. It may be help with a specific challenge. It may be around an area that has been identified either by themselves or by their company as an area of weakness, or perhaps it's a strength that they want to build on further.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: When you're mentoring, are you mentoring women entrepreneurs specifically, or also women who want to move up in their organization?

Ms. Janice McDonald: In the formal setting of WCT, as an example, that would be women in the communications and technology industry who are typically interested in moving their

career forward, but forward could also be laterally to a different aspect of the industry, etc. In an informal way, which I do very regularly, it tends to be women entrepreneurs who are looking for advice from someone who has been there already, and hopefully you can save them from the pain and difficulty of mistakes you made.

• (0920)

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Right. Thank you.

You've talked about board members and getting more women on boards, and I'm sure you're quite familiar with our advisory council and the recommendations they made. There were 11 recommendations. You were saying it doesn't have to only be women as mentors, and it's the same thing with this advisory council. I mean, it was the brilliant minds of men and women. It was a really good council of minds to come up with how we can get more women on boards, so we're working on that. We're very concerned about that, too.

You mentioned the 800 mentors and mentees. What organization was that?

Ms. Janice McDonald: That's the Cherie Blair Foundation.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Cherie Blair.

Ms. Janice McDonald: Yes, out of the U.K.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Out of the U.K. Is there anything similar to that in Canada?

Ms. Janice McDonald: I'm not aware of anything similar in Canada.

The strength of that program is that they use technology to allow mentors and mentees to get together across distances and time zones. It often is women who have very modest businesses and they're trying to really grow their businesses and increase, obviously, their livelihood and benefit their family and community. It's very unique, and I don't have a great deal of experience because I've just signed on now. I haven't even been matched with my global mentee yet.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Could young entrepreneurs or young women from Canada go on that site as well to get assistance?

Ms. Janice McDonald: Absolutely.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Ashton, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Thank you very much, Ms. McDonald, Ms. Archer and Ms. Roy for joining us today.

Ms. Roy, thank you very much for a very comprehensive presentation and speaking to the systemic barriers that young women in particular face. I want to acknowledge the way you spoke very eloquently about the situation of women who find themselves in the margins of our society, indigenous women, women living with disabilities, trans women, queer women, and racialized women. I think it's incredibly important for our committee to take those perspectives into account, especially since the timing of our study is quite limited.

I also appreciate that you ended your presentation with a focus on violence against women. This study, of course, looks at leadership and prosperity among women and we know that a core and fundamental barrier is the violence that women face. I know you had an experience directed at you as a woman leader, about which I'm hoping you could share a bit, and tie it into an attempt to answer the question of how we can counteract what we know to be rape culture that exists on our campuses and across our society.

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: Thank you for the question.

My experience last winter was traumatic. It was very problematic. I think this kind of violence, rape culture showing up on campus, is a reflection of our broader society. I don't think young educated students are showing up on university and college campuses and learning about rape culture. They already know about it. First and foremost it is really important to recognize that rape culture is an issue beyond campus borders.

There are some strategies our institutions and the government could be supporting to tackle this problem. I think that having a proactive educational approach to challenging rape culture would be beneficial.

One of the things I'm proposing and working on at the University of Ottawa is encouraging the administration to ensure that at least one class of gender studies is mandatory for all students. I think it's important for all genders to be educated on the various barriers and the various challenges that present themselves based on your gender identity.

In that educational process there should also be a component around sensitivity and educating men on the systemic violence that's present in our society and also challenging our conception of masculinity.

The challenge is that our post-secondary institutions have been chronically underfunded and continue to be chronically underfunded. It's very difficult when we're facing program cuts and courses being cut on our campuses to demand that our university make this gender studies class mandatory. This has its challenges as well.

That would be one step in the right direction on university and college campuses.

I also think elementary and high schools should have an educational program about gender-based violence and how to challenge it, from recognizing and being able to identify rape culture and gender-based violence, and not being bystanders but intervening and trying to challenge problematic behaviours when we see them.

There's a lot the government could be doing to address this situation.

● (0925)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Thank you.

As the status of women critic for the NDP, I've put forward a motion in the House calling for a national action plan to end violence against women. I'm wondering if you think that kind of comprehensive action would be important as well.

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: I think that would certainly be important. Along with an action plan to specifically address violence against women, I also think if the government were to adopt a national vision for post-secondary education that could also be something they integrate into a national vision.

I definitely think that proposal would be a step in the right direction. As a society we need to educate ourselves on gender-based violence.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Thank you.

Given your perspective, and your personal experience of having been a target of gender-based violence, and given you're one of the youngest women we're going to hear from in this important study, I'm wondering if you could also speak to the way cyber-misogyny is a barrier to women pursuing leadership at any level and at any age, and obviously a particular barrier for young women, and what actions we could see from a government to tackle cyber-misogyny.

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: With the rise of social media, that's certainly a reality for a lot of young women. It can certainly be intimidating to see that kind of violence and problematic comments around you personally on your social media. Nobody likes logging onto Facebook and having problematic language about them in their newsfeed. That is certainly a reality a lot of women are facing.

One of the concerns I had was with the situation I faced last winter. The five men who took part in the Facebook conversation about me were in positions of leadership themselves, so my concern was twofold. I was concerned for the safety of women on my campus because these men were responsible for organizing events, some of which involved alcohol. The other concern I had was that women on my campus would feel intimidated to run for positions of leadership because the reality of the misogyny that young women face is in no way comparable to any of the violence that men face on campus.

The misogyny women face is a form of intimidation that men don't experience. It is unfortunately going to be discouraging women from running for positions of leadership.

I chose to keep fighting. I don't want to let problematic attitudes prevent me from moving forward and achieving my goals, but the reality for some women is scary, particularly women who might have experienced traumatic experiences prior to seeing this kind of behaviour. Misogyny is certainly a deterrent for women obtaining positions of leadership.

Having a proactive approach and educating our communities around gender-based violence and misogyny and how to challenge it is going to be the key to moving forward.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ashton and Ms. Roy.

Ms. O'Neill Gordon, you have seven minutes.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): I want to welcome all of you and thank you for taking the time to be with us today.

My first comment is for Anne-Marie Roy. I want to congratulate you on the work you are doing. You mentioned gender-based analysis in your comments. I want to assure you that gender-based analysis is used in many ministries across our government and is a very important concept and concern of our government, and we make it very clear that we do keep it in mind in everything we do. I wanted to let you know that we do notice that and thank you for your comments today.

Second, I want to congratulate all of you on the work you have done in order to achieve all you have done. It takes a lot of hard work. It takes a sincere focus to accomplish all that you have accomplished.

I want to direct my questions to Janice McDonald. I was happy to hear you say that you share and work with women as a mentor. With all you have accomplished over all of these years, you certainly have a lot to offer others. I know they would learn a lot from being mentored by you, so thank you so much. It's these new people who are coming out and people who need our assistance, need your assistance, who we need to focus on and help them as we go along. It's great to have someone with us to follow and encourage us to carry on as we are doing.

I was just wondering, how long did your journey take you to get to where you are today? I know you have many more ideas of other things you hope to accomplish, but just in focusing on where your journey has taken you to get to today, I was wondering if you could give us an outline on that.

• (0930)

Ms. Janice McDonald: Sure. Thank you.

I finished grad school and opened my first business with my partner straight out of grad school. I would say it was the beauty of youth and that we didn't realize things couldn't work out. We just thought it would work. Fortunately we were lucky. We picked an industry, the music industry, which at the time was going through a significant change, but also it was a very wonderful time to be in that industry. Of course it changed a lot because of technology, but we were able to keep up with those changes as we went through. We had an online business, a record company, an apparel industry, just continuous innovation, which I think is important and typical of many Canadian entrepreneurs whom I know actually.

We opened that first store in 1991 and we will be closing it in the spring actually, given the changes in the industry. It has run its course and we've moved on to do other things, which is how business is, I think. It has been over two decades of, I would say, continuous focus on entrepreneurship but also lifelong learning as well, which I think is incredibly important given how the landscape for business continues to change at such a rapid pace.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Yes, that is one thing, but as you said, being in your youth and not really seeing what all could have happened certainly was a plus that helped you carry on. No doubt through it all you have encountered many successes, but there must have been some obstacles along the way as well. Could you share with us some of the obstacles that you did face along the way and how you overcame them?

Ms. Janice McDonald: We were lucky because we had friends and family who supported us in a financial way to launch our business. That was exceptionally wonderful but it is not necessarily the typical path. I think access to capital is a critical issue for business in general, but for women in particular. It's not a level playing field. It is way harder for a woman in business to access capital; that's just a plain reality. A lot more work needs to be done there. To me that's a huge challenge. It's easier now if you look at it compared to when we launched in 1991. There weren't things like crowdfunder funding and Kickstarter, so you couldn't try your idea out and see if it would work. Crowdfunder funding is amazing for small business. It's a great way to try your idea out.

I also think that women approach business differently. You know that saying that if Lehman brothers were Lehman sisters, the outcome might have been different. I think there's some truth to that. It's not that we're risk averse; I think we just have a different approach to business. If you look at now in terms of benefit corporations and conscious capitalism, the sort of caring movement that's moving forward, that's a really exciting time, in my view, for women, because it offers us an opportunity to bring our full selves to entrepreneurship and really shape how business is done differently going forward.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: In today's world, is there more access now for women to get money? You mentioned some different places, different institutions, that you could go to now and apply for money. Is that seen as a little easier?

Ms. Janice McDonald: I'd like to say that it's vastly improved, but it's still a challenge. The research will show that it's harder for women. It's harder for women start-ups. I think Ms. Roy made the comment that we have to do more and be better just to be equal. I think that's also true, even in the start-up culture. It is hard to get money. You can do it and it is there, but don't kid yourselves, it is hard. It's harder if you're a woman. It just is.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Do you feel education is essential to starting a business? Do you stress this factor to those who are looking at starting a business?

• (0935)

Ms. Janice McDonald: I think education is critical. Business is so complex now, and I think tremendous resources are available online, even if you're not in a position necessarily to go through a traditional institution. A lot of amazing information is available. Also the whole focus is different. There's an entrepreneurship community, a start-up community that you can tap into, which can really benefit young entrepreneurs in how you grow your business.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Freeland, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

It's a real pleasure for me to be here. I'd like to start by thanking our three witnesses for their terrific testimony from such different areas of women's lives. I think it's worth it for all of us to pause and reflect on how important this conversation is. Also, at least for me, it's shocking that we're still having these conversations.

My mother graduated from U of A law school in 1970. I remember being so proud of her as a pioneering Canadian professional and feminist, but really being confident as her daughter that these kinds of conversations, which are very familiar to me from my mom's kitchen, would not be ones that I would be having. I think our generation, the women around this table, have to make sure our daughters don't have these conversations 20 or 30 years from now.

Ms. McDonald spoke about how progress can happen, but that it's very slow. I think we collectively have to decide to speed it up.

I have a few questions.

Ms. McDonald, I was interested in your comments about women on boards. I would love to know your view on how strong the nudge from legislation should be. What's your view on quotas for boards, on a comply-or-explain kind of policy? Is there a country that you think gets this right?

Ms. Janice McDonald: As I mentioned, in 1992 when I originally wrote on this, we considered women one of the two genders. Obviously, things have changed now, and needed to in a whole bunch of ways, but we weren't a diversity. Change has been slow. I go back and forth because change has been slow, but comply-and-explain seems to fit with me. It's important that we get women on the lists for consideration. I think that's a starting point. I think we need to target the nominations committees to make sure that women are included in every search. We have to reach out to recruiters in that way as well.

I truly don't believe it is an issue of not having enough board-ready women. I think there are plenty of board-ready women, and I don't think it's a pipeline issue. We need to have those board-ready women identified. I would agree with Catalyst in that perhaps sometimes we just need to nudge to add one more board seat, because if we're waiting, we'll continue to wait for those board seats to come available.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: I agree with you, and I like your comments about B-corps. Would you like to see some Canadian legislation that encourages them? Some states in the U.S. and Latin American countries have it.

Ms. Janice McDonald: I think that benefit corporations are tremendous. Conscious capitalism says the triple bottom line is people, profit, and planet, although lately purpose is being added to that as well. I think where benefit corporations are interesting to me is they change the legal framework and allow companies to look at those other elements and not just profit.

It's not a Canadian example, but if you look at Ben & Jerry's, in 2000 they had to sell their company to Unilever because their

requirement was obviously to maximize shareholder return, but the co-founder and some of the board of directors didn't think that aligned with their overall mission and purpose. Had they been a benefit corporation, they would have been able to look at all those aspects, which I think are very powerful for a new way of doing business.

•(0940)

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: I'd like to ask Ms. Archer one last question.

Thanks for that great presentation. It was wonderful to see you in Edmonton in the summer. You identified, as you did in Edmonton, this very small funding gap for women, especially, say, a single mother with kids who wants to get training and boost their well-being, their family's and the community's. How would you suggest we go about closing that? Would it be an expansion of what we think of as student loans? Would it be an expansion of job training? What's the solution?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: I think the solution is for the federal and provincial governments to work collaboratively. Right now what we're seeing is a tremendous gap, and that's where these women fall into the gap.

This issue is across Canada. Underemployed women fall between the funding cracks. They're not quite at a level of poverty where the welfare or the social assistance programs can pick them up, and they just don't quite fit into the government funding box very well. I think that is a problem between the federal and provincial governments. They both point the finger in each direction and say that she should be funded over here or over there. At the end of the day these individuals are falling through the cracks. They are the ones who make up a huge workforce here across Canada and are under-employed.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: Is there a specific way that you would extend that? Is there one program which you think should be expanded?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: The Canada job grant. The Canada job grant has no living costs attached to it. In our case, for example, when we're training we can work with employers. Employers are absolutely willing and ready to step up and contribute to the training costs of individuals. They will not pay the living costs for individuals. They will not pay for child care, transportation, any of those kinds of costs. Those costs are not associated typically with men; they are associated with women, so women are being left out of the picture of the Canada job grant.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Archer.

Mrs. Ambler for five minutes.

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Thank you to all three of our wonderful presenters today. We very much appreciate your coming to inform our study.

Ms. Archer, I want to thank you for your presentation and for bringing your unique perspective to us. In particular, the numbers that you gave us, the statistics, were enlightening and surprising. Your program sees a 127% increase in income on the first day of employment. That is very impressive, and it's a little bit sad that 5,000 women have come through your doors but that you can only help 120. Thank you for sharing that information with us.

Can you tell us what your program does exactly? How do you achieve that kind of success, the increase in income from day one? Why do women need training but men do not to get into the construction industry?

• (0945)

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: First, with regard to the increase in income, for women who are coming into our programs and heading into an apprenticeship, into a trade, the average increase is 127% on day of hire. For women who are coming into our programs and going into some of the other areas of construction, such as heavy equipment operating, that average income increase is 169% on day of hire. Just to make sure, I've differentiated between those two: the increase is significant no matter what she goes into.

If you take a look at the average income of a woman working full time in Canada, it's approximately \$32,000 a year. When you compare that with a person working in the construction industry, it would be triple that, at minimum. This industry provides incredible opportunity. It comes with no student debt, a way to earn as you learn, and a way to make an income that most women would not dream about.

Why do women need training and men don't? I can't remember the young woman's name, but she said it best: it's just the way it is. This is a predominantly male industry, 96% men. It has just been the natural way of things, the natural order of life, that men have walked into these jobs. They walk into these jobs every single day and are hired. The standards to which they are held are much lower than the standards to which women are held. Women definitely must be much better than to be seen as good as.

In terms of our success, our success rate is 90% or greater, consistently, with women coming into our programs. That's because we understand the challenges that women face in this industry. We seek out women who have tenacity. They need to have smarts and all of that, but they need to have tenacity, perseverance, and the objective to succeed. We select carefully the women we're going to train.

Let me just tell you that if we train a woman and she ends up over in one of the big companies, if she doesn't work out, then that company will not come back to our organization and hire another woman. That's the reality.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Of the 5,000—

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: So why train women...?

I'm sorry.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: No, it's okay. I didn't want to interrupt; I just wanted to know how many of those 5,000 women would be good candidates or good fits for your program, who would have that tenacity and a willingness to learn.

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: I would say two-thirds.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: What does the program do? What are you teaching? How long does it last? What do you ask of them?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: The first step in the program consists of awareness, helping women understand what these opportunities are and what realities come along with these opportunities. This is not for every man or woman.

The second step is to help women make a well-informed decision before coming into this industry.

Third, we provide hands-on skills training: welding, electrical, pipe-fitting, whatever. We provide the hands-on skills training, but most importantly, we provide workplace culture awareness training that helps women understand the industry, the predominantly male environment, and how to thrive within that environment.

Last, we do job matching. We help every woman who comes through our program find a job that will be successful for her and the company. We provide ongoing coaching to ensure that each woman who goes into an apprenticeship actually becomes a registered apprentice and successfully completes her first year of technical training in the shortest allowable timeframe.

Those are the key—

The Chair: Thank you. Those are the keys to success.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: That sounds like a great program

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sellah, you have five minutes.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, I would like to apologize for arriving a little late.

I would like to thank the witnesses for enlightening us with their testimony and their personal experiences. We are all aware that gender equality is not universally respected and applied. We are still far from achieving pay equity, and gender-specific equality is even further away. We know that we must remain vigilant if we are to maintain the progress that has been made.

My question is for Ms. Roy.

I would like to tell you that I am very impressed. I congratulate you for your journey. I will ask you a simple question.

Has it been difficult for you, as a woman, to make your voice heard? Have you sensed any discrimination? Do you feel that it would have been easier for you to achieve certain things if you were a man?

Meanwhile, you said that day cares can be very useful for ensuring the prosperity of women. You are not the first to say that to the committee. Indeed, women entrepreneurs have spoken to us of the challenges of finding child care. Some even said that they started their business at home so that they could look after their children.

Our party is offering voters universal day care access. I would like to hear your comments on this.

And finally, I would like to know if both sexes are well represented at the University of Ottawa, and if so, does that encourage equal participation?

• (0950)

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: Thank you.

In terms of the challenge of making my voice heard, I would say that all women face certain prejudices, even if sexism is sometimes subtle. Yes, I have faced certain obstacles.

In meetings, for example, we are regularly interrupted by men. We always need to fight a little harder, yell a little louder to be heard. I have also experienced sexual comments and attacks aimed at degrading me or taking away the credibility that I had earned on my campus. So yes, there are certainly challenges in this area.

As for representation at the University of Ottawa, I think that there is a link that can be made with the next subject. I will speak to the question of day cares immediately after. I think that the University of Ottawa is making an effort, but I have noticed that when postsecondary institutions look at the issue of sexism and gender equality, they often seem to be more concerned with their image and with public relations than with going to the trouble of investing in programs or approaches that will truly allow female students to reach the same status as their male classmates. The people from the University of Ottawa will tell you that they are making efforts in this area, but I think that their actions are mainly focused on preserving the University's image and maintaining a certain status in society.

Finally, I think that a universal day care program is truly necessary. As I mentioned in my statement, it is women who are often responsible for dependants, children. A program like this would certainly promote the status of women in its broadest sense. As we have seen in certain cities—including Ottawa—municipalities decide to raise barriers that prevent female students from accessing funding for day care. In my opinion, a universal approach would eliminate this problem, as well as all the challenges that we face when we try to obtain funding for day cares.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Thank you very much.

The Chair: I would now invite Ms. Young to take the floor. She will have five minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): I'd like to echo the comments of my colleagues and thank you all for such interesting and insightful presentations. I'd love to spend a day with each of you, but unfortunately that's not possible.

I'm going to be very focused because I have questions for all of you. If you could keep your answers really brief and to the point, I would really appreciate that. Of course you know that you can send supplementary information to this committee if you think of something later or you come across something that will enrich this study.

I want to start with Ms. Roy, because that is where our youth are starting to branch out, and all of that.

As you may know, I have had seven foster children, one stepdaughter, and twins of my own, so I think that probably makes me the parent in this room who has put the most people through university and watched them and that sort of thing. In addition to that, I've done mentorship for many decades. My colleague across is right that we've been talking about this for a good 20 or 30 years.

Just to springboard off all that, I have some very specific questions.

Ms. Roy, your presentation was fascinating. However, it did not focus very specifically on our subject, which is economic prosperity and leadership. I am wondering with regard to a student body if you capture other aspects. Universities are large. There are all these different sectors and specialties, etc. I don't know if the University of Ottawa has a business school. I don't know if that business school, for example, is tied to the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, to which our government gave \$20 million to help youth kick-start businesses. How does a university or a student body, or my daughter who's going to be entering university next year, get that information, support, programming, etc., to find her way through to start her own business?

• (0955)

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: Universities are definitely sometimes hard to navigate, so it's certainly good when we see grants from the government that encourage youth to go into entrepreneurship. However, one of the challenges students often talk about on campuses when talking about their future and wanting to start up businesses is that student debt is a big deterrent. It prohibits many students from starting their business to begin with, but also from having access to additional sources of funding or applying for loans to start up a business. That's one of the reasons in my presentation I discussed a lot—

Ms. Wai Young: No, but here's a grant of \$20 million. There's money there, and this is just one of many we've heard about on this committee. In addition, there are all kinds of businesses that provide grants, etc., as we've heard from Ms. McDonald. I'm not saying it's a beautiful and perfect world out there; it's not, but these things are available.

Maybe you can send this in to us. That would be very helpful, because we are very interested in knowing how to connect with our youth. As we all know, it's some of these younger businesses with the innovation and new ideas, as Ms. McDonald was saying earlier, that are building our new businesses here in Canada. Please send in to us any information you would have as the president of the student federation of the university. Plus, you may be associated with or connected to other universities. If we could find out what the universities are doing to promote and encourage prosperity and leadership in young Canadian women, that would be really great.

Ms. McDonald, you talked about mentorship. I myself received some great mentorship. At those moments when you're running a small business.... I also ran a small business for about 20 years, and unlike Chrystia's mother, my mother did not speak English. She raised seven children, and that was her thing. Around the dinner table, as you can imagine, I didn't get a lot of coaching on starting or running a small business. However, I succeeded regardless of all of that. I think mentorship and having the support of your family and community are really important to achieve that.

How do we kick that up a notch? You've already given us some great ideas. We've been doing mentorship. I myself have been a mentor in formal programs at the YWCA and so on for a long time. How do we kick that up a notch, or is it already happening? We've also heard from other witnesses that there are some amazing programs going on. Maybe we just need to cross-fertilize and learn this across Canada, because there is obviously a lot going on. You're three people today, but we've heard from lots of others. Where is it that it seems people are still not getting their information, or knowing how to reach out to Catalyst?

The Chair: Ms. McDonald, a very brief answer, please.

• (1000)

Ms. Janice McDonald: There are two things. Mentorship is happening across the country, but I think we can still do a better job in letting women know how to access it and the host of opportunities that exist. As I mentioned, there is Futurpreneur, and Startup Canada is another one.

Also, to answer in regard to the University of Ottawa, I usually have an intern every year from its entrepreneurship program. That's one direct, simple, straightforward way that a young woman can get the kind of skill and experience she needs, by working directly with an entrepreneur.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. McDonald. That was short and sweet.

Ms. Crockatt, for five minutes, please.

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Thank you so much to all of our witnesses today.

This is a fascinating time. I'm happy that we're doing this today because I am mentoring two young women who are with us today from the Boys and Girls Club. They are getting an opportunity to hear from some women with really great ideas.

I'm a huge advocate for education. I think I rival Wai because I had my own two kids when I went to university, and three nieces and nephews lived with my husband and me while pursuing their degrees.

Ms. McDonald, I'd like to first talk to you, and then go to Ms. Archer in Edmonton.

I wonder if we're fighting the last war a bit. We all want to get our kids, our girls, to university, and now we're seeing that more girls than boys are graduating in many cases.

The *Financial Post* had an interesting story last summer. It said that people who go to university now are earning less than they did before, that those numbers are declining, especially in the fine arts,

where graduates are earning 12% less than high school graduates once they factor in the cost of their education. It speaks to Ms. Roy's point.

I wonder if we are overbalanced now in people going to university, and especially taking humanities. We've heard from Ms. Archer that women are making \$60,000, \$80,000, or \$100,000 in skilled trades. We perhaps have to start refocusing where we're sending our girls, especially when college graduates are now inching up to higher paying jobs than university graduates.

I hope I can address that to you Ms. McDonald, and then go to Ms. Archer.

Ms. Janice McDonald: As Ms. Archer said, I do believe that skilled trades are an important opportunity for women, but I think it's interesting that as more women are getting their liberal arts degrees, they're finding that they're getting paid less.

I will also say that I think a liberal arts degree has never been more important than now. Things are so complex, and we need thinkers. That's what a liberal arts degree provides. That's my bias. I think it's important.

I think education is still very important, and I think women thrive in the education setting. Work is not an educational setting. It's very much more challenging, and it's more difficult for women to perhaps get the pay they deserve and that their education reflects.

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Yes, I got that point too, from women taking the directors program. Most men have never taken the board of governors programs, yet they get on to boards. Now women seem to need them. That's maybe just a fact of life that we need to live with.

Ms. Archer, I thought that you brought us some valuable information today.

I looked up your program, because I had only heard a bit about it in the past, and realized that the federal government gave you \$2.5 million to get the centre established. I was happy to see that, as well as some ongoing funding for some of your technology that helps people take this program at more of a distance.

What I saw too is that it has been effective with aboriginal women. I wonder if you could tell us how you're getting them in, what the retention factors are like, and whether enough women are aware that this program exists.

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: Awareness is still very low. I would say among Canadian women that this industry provides incredible opportunity for them and how they can get into the industry. Awareness is still something that we need to do and we'll need to do for a long time yet.

For aboriginal women, about 30% of our student population is aboriginal women. We go out and engage with aboriginal women in their communities throughout the province. We listen to what they have to say, and engage with them in the conversation about this particular opportunity. What we find consistently is that aboriginal women are very interested. However, there are challenges that they face on top of being women coming into this industry. Certainly, I think most of us are aware of a lot of those challenges.

Our process of helping women make an informed decision before coming into our programs is we deliver that process and program out in aboriginal communities so that women can go through that process of making that informed choice right there where they live. It helps them understand what they would need to do in order to come into the industry, and for those who say they're ready, we're ready to have them.

•(1005)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Archer and Ms. Crockatt.

Ms. Freeland, for five minutes.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: I'd like to go back to Ms. McDonald.

I'd like to start by saying I really appreciate your point about the not accidental coincidence that in professions and in academic areas where we see women starting to succeed, we start to see a pay differential opening up. I felt that very much when I was a reporter in the Soviet Union. I discovered that what we would call finance directors in factories were all women and they were paid very little, and also all the doctors were women and they were paid very little. There is a social component to high-and low-paid professions.

I was really interested in your comments about access to capital, and that it is difficult particularly for women entrepreneurs. Is there anything we can do about that?

Ms. Janice McDonald: Change everything.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: Feminist revolution, for sure, but what are our steps?

Ms. Janice McDonald: Yes, what are the steps?

Awareness is the first thing. I think we need to be aware that that's happening. Perhaps a separate fund that is focused on women's start-ups would be beneficial. It's not really my area of expertise in terms how to solve that; I'm just recognizing that it is a challenge and that something needs to be done. I'm not certain what the exact steps are to fix it.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: Finance is a heavily regulated industry. Is there maybe some kind of reporting that we should start making obligatory just to be saying, separating out, how many loans are going to...?

Ms. Janice McDonald: I think any time you shine the light on a problem it can be very effective. Certainly, tracking the outcomes would be a great starting point: how many women, how many businesses, are getting funding, and how much they are being funded and how that compares to their male counterparts.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: Thank you very much.

I want to go back to Ms. Archer in Edmonton.

I think we've all been really impressed, as I was over the summer, with the great work of your program. I'd like to ask you whether from the perspective of the work you're doing you think we should be increasing the work of apprenticeship programs and focus maybe specifically on young women earlier in their lives, maybe in high school. Is there an opportunity there?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: Absolutely. Yes, there is.

I think it's the pre-apprenticeship where we need to shine the light. There's a lot of money for apprenticeship training. There is no

funding for pre-apprenticeship. In getting that awareness out there, getting people, in this case women, trained up to come into an apprenticeship, getting young girls to really understand the opportunity and to consider and start preparing to come into this industry, we could do a lot there.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: That sounds really smart and intriguing. What would pre-apprenticeship training or education be? Can you describe your ideal a little bit?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: Yes.

Our programs are all pre-apprenticeship, so they are, number one...trade jobs are not rocket science. The actual determining factor for a woman to be successful in the trades is to be able to thrive in a predominantly male industry. There's workplace culture, being able to understand what that looks like, how it is today, the realities of it. Also, we know from research the strategies for success. Getting that information out there so young girls can really take a look and see that they can be a project manager on a huge project, that they can earn \$250,000 a year easily, that this is their career path, this is what they need to know before coming into this; otherwise they won't make it. Those are some of the things that we could do.

•(1010)

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: Do you think being really specific with young women and girls about the financial differential is something that we're not doing, and would that make a difference?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: The financial piece is usually the second or third item on the list when we hear back from our graduates. The first thing they talk about is that they cannot believe the level of confidence that they have where they are now compared to where they were before. These jobs are not rocket science, but building huge projects gives you a sense of confidence that for most women takes a long time to get. You will get there quite quickly in the trades, so confidence is the thing our graduates talk about more first, and lifestyle is the second thing they talk about.

Now lifestyle costs money, but they say, "Well I now have the money to travel. I've always wanted to be a volunteer for Habitat in Ecuador. I've always wanted to do this and that and the other with my time off. I now have the financial capacity to go and do those things."

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mrs. Archer. That was a very good answer in a timeframe that I'm looking for.

Now we're moving to a seven-minute round. We have Mrs. Ambler for seven minutes.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Thank you once again. I'm so glad to have another opportunity because I have so many questions for you today.

Ms. Roy, I want to thank you for your presentation. I am especially sensitive, I think, to your comments on rape culture on campus. I think we all are. It's a depressing fact of life. I know I didn't have to deal with it 25 years ago when I was in university.

My daughter is in her second year of university. I'm wondering what advice you would give her not only on rape culture on campus, but if you could take it one step further and relate it to our study, what advice you would give girls like yourself on campus today about what they can do. I don't want to lead your answer. What advice would you give my daughter about how to become successful and how to stay safe? What can she do?

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: I think that when we're talking about....

I first want to address the comment about advice for staying safe. I think it's a little bit problematic when we talk about rape culture and wanting to challenge it and go to this narrative that puts the onus and responsibility for staying safe entirely on a woman. I think that having measures and teaching men not to rape, rather than telling women not to get raped, is one part of that.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Right, sorry. You know what? You're right. I didn't phrase that properly.

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: Yes.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: What can be done, not....

I also wanted that piece about advice for....

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: Yes. I think one thing's for sure: she will face challenges throughout her time at the university. Sexism takes many different forms, misogyny and rape culture as well. I would encourage her to continue fighting and hold her head up high, despite some of the barriers that she might face on campus.

I would also encourage her to work with the administration and other women and allies on campus to pressure the administration and the institution to adopt educational programs to prevent sexual violence and also to educate folks of all genders and identities to understand and recognize rape culture, because unfortunately, it's so present in our society that I feel that some folks sometimes become a little desensitized to it. I think it's important to educate folks on what rape culture is to be able to properly identify it, call it out, and challenge it.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: I like your idea about both young women and young men taking a course at university. It's a good idea.

• (1015)

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: I think that many institutions have failed because they are very concerned, as I mentioned earlier, with their image and the PR strategies that come around scandals relating to sexual violence. Also, institutions don't have very much of a proactive approach. That's one of the fights I'm fighting currently at the University of Ottawa. Rather than implementing measures that only penalize those who perpetuate sexual violence, I also think that an important component is to take steps to prevent that violence from happening in the first place.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Thanks very much.

Ms. McDonald, we have been talking about mentorship in this study and have talked about it considerably today. There is a program here on Parliament Hill, and there are a few of them where women university students come from. There is Women in House at McGill. The University of Western Ontario has one. At the University of Toronto, I try to take the opportunity each time that I can. It's only a one-day program, but it's a great day.

I keep in touch with my mentees. They're always wonderfully accomplished young women, and I know they're going places. They don't necessarily want a career in politics, but I think the program opens their eyes to some of the possibilities. I think we all know that in elementary school and even in high school, young women sometimes don't know what kinds of careers they can have. They know they could be a teacher, a lawyer, a doctor, or a firefighter, but after those, they have no idea that there are a million other things they could do.

I want to ask you specifically about your mentorship program and what kinds of knowledge you impart to your mentees. What do you want to teach them?

Ms. Janice McDonald: There are a few different things. I think your example of making sure that young women see leaders in action is critical, because the saying that you can't be it unless you see it is I think very true for women. You have to have the role models and see them to know what is possible. That's the first thing, which I think is critical.

Another important piece of advice is that what got you here won't get you there. You may have had strategies that got you to a certain level of success, but if you're ambitious and want to get to the next level, you're going to need to develop new strategies. We heard that culture in the workplace is important. If you think about the example we heard in regard to non-traditional roles for women in construction and the trades, you need to be able to move successfully in that kind of culture, so you have to seek out the new skills that you need.

That's where I think mentorship is very important. It allows you to talk to someone who is invested in your career, but in an impartial way, if you will. They are perhaps willing to call you out, nudge you in some ways, and sometimes just be a great sounding board.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Do you think one's status in society plays a role in becoming successful?

Ms. Janice McDonald: What do you mean?

Mrs. Stella Ambler: I mean that sometimes you grow up with lots of advantages. I would argue that my daughter has grown up with many advantages. I'm wondering whether you think that makes it easier for some women than for others, and if so, what we can do for the ones who need a little more help.

The Chair: Again, be very brief.

Ms. Janice McDonald: I think that with advantages comes responsibility. As long as those young women are aware that they have a greater responsibility, that's critical. And yes, women who don't have those advantages definitely need to be supported in other ways.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That was very brief but to the point.

[Translation]

Ms. Ashton, you have the floor for seven minutes.

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton: I'll direct my questions first to Ms. Roy, and then to Ms. Archer.

Ms. Roy, could you briefly share your thoughts on your role as a student union president? The reason I ask is that I find it problematic that my colleague across the way asked something of you that I don't believe has anything to do with your work and proceeded to not give you any time to respond.

I want to point out to members of the committee and to those listening that there is an irony in asking young women to come to speak out and display courage in speaking out and that it is incumbent on us to listen, rather than to silence those who bring testimony even though we disagree with it.

Could you briefly clarify what your role is?

•(1020)

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: As the president of the student union at the University of Ottawa, I represent 35,000 undergrad students. We manage a big budget. We have a \$15-million turnover that includes payments to our health plan and to the U-Pass program, which we also manage at the student union. We have about 150 to 200 staff who work at the Student Federation. In a nutshell, what we do is support students through a number of services from academic advocacy to support for students with disabilities. We also have a women's resource centre that we run, as well as a pride centre. We do a lot of equity work on our campus.

We also lobby all levels of government, municipal, provincial, and federal, on a variety of student issues. We also lobby our administration on a number of issues from tuition fees to creating new grants and scholarships, but also ensuring that the university is upholding its responsibility to properly promote and share the information and opportunities that are available to students.

As a student union, it isn't our responsibility to be doing the work of the university and other institutions, but rather to ensure that they're properly doing their jobs and ensuring that the information is transmitted to students.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Great. Thank you so much.

Briefly on that point, given that this committee is tasked with bringing forward recommendations that the federal government can take, and I know you alluded to it in many ways in your presentation, how important is it for government members in this committee and the federal government to take seriously the need to invest in post-secondary education?

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: As I mentioned in my speech, education is certainly the key to advance a lot of women to getting successful and meaningful employment and therefore getting a good-paying job.

The two biggest recommendations that I would present to the government is, first of all removing the cap to the PSSSP to ensure that all aboriginal students can access post-secondary education, but also create more grants.

I had the lobby document here that the Canadian Federation of Students presented to the government last year. The government in 2013-14 was expected to issue \$2.46 billion in student loans, but the government also has the tax credits savings schemes, the RESPs for families who have a little bit of a higher income. They're investing about \$2.58 billion in that. One of our recommendations was to take this money that was invested in tax credits and transform it into non-

repayable grants to ensure that those who come from lower income families and from marginalized communities have access to these grants and can therefore continue their education and therefore have meaningful employment and good sources of revenue.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Thank you very much for that important recommendation.

Ms. Archer, thank you very much for sharing your work and the progress that you've seen.

I am proud to come from a mining town in northern Manitoba. I represent communities where women do their darndest to get into traditionally male-dominated work and find immense challenges in doing that. The number one challenge is the lack of child care in our northern communities. I'm wondering if you could speak to what you hear from women whom you work with in terms of that and if you see the need for federal government leadership on this front, including a universal child care program.

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: A universal child care program would have our vote absolutely today. Child care is one of the biggest barriers that women face coming into this industry. From the industry's perspective, we are asked every day, "You go away and figure out that child care problem and we'll hire more women."

Ms. Niki Ashton: That is pretty succinct. Thank you very much for sharing that.

I'm wondering, you mentioned earlier in response to one of my colleagues' questions about the Canada job grant, the extent to which the federal government can play a leadership role. I realize they have to work with the provinces as well; there's no question. How important would it be to have a gender lens, as well as a lens understanding what indigenous women go through in trying to pursue work in male-dominated areas?

•(1025)

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: It would be a huge bonus. We're big supporters of that particular program, but there are inconsistencies in terms of eligibility or inclusiveness for women, the aboriginal women that we see. They do need the day care, the transportation, and living costs. Otherwise they won't be able to access that training and therefore employers won't hire them. It's pretty simple.

Ms. Niki Ashton: One of the studies that has come across our table here in the discussion of this topic is the way in which women as a whole, particularly in western Canada and in cities like Edmonton and Calgary, earn far less than men, obviously not only in heavy construction and those sectors, but overall. I'm wondering if you could speak to the impact of, perhaps, what you would like to see when it comes to women's work being valued in communities like yours.

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: Oh, gosh. This is a conversation, as we all know, that we've been having for decades and decades. Of course we should have equitable lives and equitable opportunity. We don't have equitable opportunity here in Canada. I don't know what the answer is. I don't know what the solution is. For us, we've chosen this one specific area where there is equity. There is definitely pay equity and there's opportunity equity. If you want to get into a leadership role within this industry, they're going to be losing 24% of all those leaders in this entire industry over the next 10 years. There's plenty of opportunity there. I wish it were the same all around. I wish we didn't have to talk about sexism and sexual violence. We shouldn't have to be talking about that any more. Certainly that's not the case, of course, and as part of our programs we definitely have to talk about it. When you're working in a predominantly male environment, those realities go up a notch.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mrs. Archer.

[Translation]

Ms. Crockatt and Mr. Barlow, you have the floor for seven minutes. You will share your time, correct?

[English]

Ms. Joan Crockatt: I believe we're sharing our time between the three of us.

Briefly, I want to follow up again with Ms. Archer.

Have you thought about putting a day care centre in your facility in order to expand the number of women who are enrolled? I ask you that because the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association and other organizations have done this and found that it was incredibly successful. I am wondering if that's something you have considered with your facility.

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: Yes, we certainly did consider it. We wanted 24-hour child care in our building when we built it. Unfortunately, we also had to manage our cashflow. We ended up filling our facility with training and housing and simply didn't have the capacity to put child care in our facility. That said, we chose a facility that was right in between two big organizations that have child care programs.

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Great.

I think I'll allow my colleagues to have time. Thank you so much.

Mr. John Barlow (Macleod, CPC): I'll let Ms. Young start for one minute.

Ms. Wai Young: I want to address or clarify my earlier comments, given the comments from my colleague across the way.

Ms. Roy, I wanted to actually encourage more contribution from you in fact, not silence you, as was said earlier. We would really love to hear more about what the university is doing in this specific area. Again, I would like to encourage you to provide this committee with that information in the future.

Yes, I did not have a seven-minute slot today, so that limited my ability to....

Do you have any further comment around that, although this is Mr. Barlow's time.

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: Okay. Very quickly, in that case, I would say that universities are certainly in a tough situation in the sense that they've been chronically underfunded for a very long time. The means by which they promote opportunities for students are limited, so it is very difficult on campuses for universities to adequately promote all of the opportunities that are available.

In the situation of a grant, you would have to go to the financial aid page and kind of navigate through all of the grants and all of the scholarships that are available to find the specific scholarship you were referring to. That's one of the reasons we've been calling on the government to make a direct investment in post-secondary education, because having the money directly invested and reducing tuition fees will prevent the necessity of having to navigate web portals to find different scholarships and grants.

While I think that should be advertised and I welcome grants much more than loans—

• (1030)

Ms. Wai Young: If I may, though, obviously violence and all of those other issues are very important on campus. I worked with that issue and have developed an international student safety program for universities and colleges across Canada, so that's very clear.

What I'm asking, though, is this: is helping students get a job or start their own business equally important or as important, or one of the other important things, and what does a student federation do about that? Are there job fairs, all those kinds of things that specifically help young women launch or get into the workplace?

Again, I don't want to take up too much of Mr. Barlow's time, so please if you could send us that information, that would be wonderful.

Thank you.

Mr. John Barlow: Thank you.

We were talking a little bit today about getting some of the younger girls involved. I have two daughters, one in university, one in high school, so I definitely appreciate this discussion today.

Ms. Archer, we talked briefly about getting women involved in the trades at an earlier age. We have a large comprehensive high school in my riding, which is going through a \$25-million renovation right now to improve the carpentry and welding shops. It's great to have these programs for leadership, but what specifically can we do to raise awareness at that high school level? The trend is definitely changing, where we're trying to get more people involved in the trades. That's where the job market is in Alberta. What do we do, or what programs can we look at to raise that awareness at that high school level to get young girls involved?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: I first think it needs to start happening in the grade 4 level. High school is a little late, so start a lot earlier and engage with these young girls to really help them gain the confidence that they will need in order to take part in shop class. Even if we have the shops, girls aren't particularly encouraged. We need to get the parents involved, the girls involved, starting at about age 10.

Mr. John Barlow: Is that something, Ms. Archer, that would be a partnership between business and government, or is that something we have to get guidance counsellors involved with? Where do we start on something like that?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: I think the key informants here are definitely industry, parents, organizations where youth are their mandate, and the kids themselves, yes.

Mr. John Barlow: Ms. Roy, I appreciate what you've gone through, and the courage you're showing today to be here.

You mentioned earlier in your presentation that tuition was an issue, and that it was more difficult for women to get tuition. Was that through student loans? I wonder if you could expand on that a little bit. I would find that disconcerting if getting tuition for post-secondary education was easier for men than women. Perhaps you could expand on that a little bit.

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy: The tuition fees are the same for both men and women, but because women are facing different economic barriers, the point I was trying to make is, because the cost of post-secondary education is so expensive, many women, and male students as well, are forced to take on loans and then accumulate a very large student debt. Paying back that student debt is where we see an issue with equity. Men are able to pay back their student loans much more quickly and therefore are not forced to pay interest over a longer period of time because when they join the workforce they're making higher wages than women. That's the point I was trying to make.

Yes, it is 60% of borrowers from the Canada student loans program who are women.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Barlow.

Ms. Freeland, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Ms. McDonald, one of the things that has come out very strikingly in your testimony is that it's not a pipeline problem when it comes to women on boards and in senior corporate management. That's not a truth universally acknowledged, so it's great to hear you say that.

There are women who are not being appointed to those positions of power. Is there an opportunity for the government to use its leverage as a major client and procurer to help break through this?

• (1035)

Ms. Janice McDonald: Again, thank you.

Anything we do to shine a light on the problem will enable change to happen at a quicker pace, I think, and saying which measures matter. If we look for those outcomes and make a concerted effort to say we want to see those numbers change and rise and improve, I think there is an opportunity there. Again, for me, it's comply and explain. I think we want people to understand why change is not happening. Why do you not have more women on your boards? Are you taking the steps that you could to ensure different outcomes?

Again, if women aren't even on the list or in the pool, they can't be selected. We hear a lot of times from recruiters who will say, "Well, I

wasn't required to", or in nomination committees, "Well, I couldn't find any great women." Then the women aren't on the list, so then they aren't selected, and the problem continues.

If women are on the list, then they have a chance to be considered, and we have a chance to make change.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: Can having women on the list be part of the comply or explain regime that you'd be in favour of?

Ms. Janice McDonald: Any time we can agitate for that would be very helpful if organizations saw that as an important thing to do. Why would you not want women on your boards? The business case is made; diversity is important, and you want to reflect your consumers certainly around the corporate board. To me it makes good sense.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: You've thought about this a lot. Do you have a figure in mind that you think should be the comply or explain threshold, a percentage of women on boards that we should be aiming for?

Ms. Janice McDonald: I'd really like to make it a figure that is not a figure of discussion anymore. I would like the right people to get the job, which means we're not talking about that as a gender issue anymore. We have qualified candidates. The right people are on the job and that's men and women.

It makes good sense. It makes good business sense. We're beyond talking about whether or not it needs to happen. It must happen and businesses that do it show stronger outcomes. That business case has been made. It really is in their favour.

Change is hard and it's slow, but I'm an eternal optimist. I believe we will get there, but I also think that we have to agitate to get there.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: Ms. Archer, I'm particularly grateful that you got up so early in the morning in Edmonton to be with us.

We heard from Ms. McDonald about the importance of entrepreneurship and the difficulty that women have getting access to capital. In the trades that you're helping women break into, something that can be very powerful for women is to go from being a skilled tradeswoman employee to running her own small business and maybe large business. Do you see women in the trades making that transition and what are the barriers if they're encountering any?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: Access to capital is a constant. Whether you're wanting to come into programs like ours, for example, we're not a post-secondary, so there are no student loans to come into our programs which means women need alternative sources of capital funding to come into these programs. There's no funding from government. They have to get a loan from the bank to come into our program or pay for it themselves.

Four years later after coming into our program, they're now a journey person. A large percentage of our graduates start their own businesses. Access to capital is a killer for women across the board. I'd have to agree with that.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: What are the particular hurdles? Is it what we're hearing from Ms. McDonald, that it's just harder for women, that they're just not taken as seriously?

• (1040)

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: Yes, unfortunately.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: What can we do about it?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: I don't know. When we figure it out, let me know.

Ms. Chrystia Freeland: We've been talking with Ms. McDonald about some kind of comply or explain. Financial services are highly regulated. In exchange for regulation, it's very legitimate for governments to require some real openness about what they're doing.

Would you be in favour of some kind of need to stipulate specifically how many loans are being given to women entrepreneurs?

Ms. JudyLynn Archer: I'd have to think on it.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Roy, Ms. McDonald, and Ms. Archer, I would like to thank you for your very interesting testimony and for your enriching answers. You have made a great contribution to our study.

I would also like to thank all the members of the committee. We will see each other at the same time on Thursday, November 6.

[*English*]

The meeting is adjourned.

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