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Chair

Mr. Tom Lukiwski

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• (1610)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC)): Colleagues, I'll call the meeting to order. We're meeting today to continue our study on the hiring process in the public service.

Because of the fact we had votes earlier, we lost about 40 minutes. To try to gain some of that time back and allow as many questions as possible by committee members, we're going to combine the two panels into one. Originally we had representatives from the Public Service Commission and Treasury Board Secretariat scheduled for 3:30 to 4:30, followed by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and LinkedIn from 4:30 to 5:30. However, given the fact that the bells will start to ring at 5:15, slightly more than an hour from now, to try to save a little time and allow more time for questions by all of our colleagues around this table, with your concurrence, I'm going to start with the panellists who were originally scheduled to start at 4:30. We'll start with Mr. Page, followed by Madam Stinson. Then we will have opening statements by Monsieur Fleury and Monsieur Borbey. I'll get into that a little later when it's their turn to take the stage.

Seeing no disagreement with that, Mr. Page, we'll start with your opening statement. Go ahead, sir, the floor is yours.

Mr. Michael Page (Government Lead, Talent Solutions, LinkedIn): Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today. I'll keep my opening remarks brief. I imagine there are varying levels of knowledge about LinkedIn here today, so I'll start with an overview.

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional social network with over 610 million members worldwide. Members use LinkedIn for a variety of reasons, but three core reasons are to get the right job, build meaningful relationships and stay well-informed. This means LinkedIn members want to know about the available jobs that fit their background and interests; stay in touch and make new connections with people professionally; and keep up to date on what is happening within their industry and profession through news, content and their network of connections. An individual's LinkedIn profile is often considered to be their professional profile of record.

Specifically in Canada, there are over 15 million members on our platform. For context, there are approximately 18 million individuals

employed in the Canadian workforce. On LinkedIn in Canada, there are also 800,000 companies and 25,000 educational institutions represented, over 400,000 jobs posted currently and 50,000 skills within our skills ontology. The aggregate of this information in Canada and globally is what we refer to as the “economic graph”, or what we view as a digital representation of the economy.

As a company our vision is to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. From a day-to-day perspective, this is operationalized by devoting much of our organizational efforts toward bringing together people, skills and jobs in various ways.

In Canada, beyond being the largest professional network, LinkedIn is also the largest job board and the largest skills-focused online learning platform, with over 13,000 courses comprising hundreds of thousands of videos, ranging from how to prepare for a job interview through to Google-endorsed Android developer certification courses.

Another way we strive to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce is through our economic graph projects. These are pro bono partnerships wherein LinkedIn partners with government and related organizations, typically for the purpose of labour market analysis. Globally we have worked with the World Bank and the World Economic Forum, among many others. Within Canada we have partnered with the City of Toronto, the Ontario Ministry of International Trade and, most recently, the LMIC or Labour Market Information Council on an analysis of skills that are most in demand in Canada.

Most related to today's context, LinkedIn is one of the largest, if not the largest, recruitment services company in the world. Our Talent Solutions products are the largest area of LinkedIn's business. In that capacity, we work with organizations to support their ability to attract and retain the talent they need for their organization to be successful.

Understanding that the federal public service must often operate on a scale unique to itself within Canada, from a LinkedIn perspective we are very accustomed to supporting large organizations, as referenced by the fact that 100% of the Fortune 100 companies and over 95% of the Fortune 500 companies are LinkedIn Talent Solutions clients.

Based on review of previous testimony at this committee and discussions across the federal public service, I understand that some of the challenges and aspirations of the public service's hiring process include the length of the hiring process, the intense competition for talent, the need to attract millennials and youth, the desire to modernize and move beyond traditional approaches, the need to communicate external job opportunities more effectively to attract diverse talent pools and passive candidates, the use of technology to match candidates and jobs, and better labour market information for HR and hiring managers.

During the questions, I would be pleased to address how LinkedIn can assist the Government of Canada in addressing these issues.

Thank you.

•(1615)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we'll hear from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.

Madame Stinson, the floor is yours.

Ms. Jane Stinson (Research Associate, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women): Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear here today. I am not going to address the range of issues my colleague just identified, but rather one key issue in particular, the growth of precarious employment in the federal public service.

I urge this committee to deal with this issue. It's important for many reasons, and one is that it has a lot to do with equity for women and, as our research is suggesting, particularly for racialized women.

As you probably know, women make up over half of the federal public service workers, which has tended to represent better jobs for women compared with the private sector, especially for marginalized women. The growth in precarious employment is really troubling because it does start to undermine—indeed, is undermining—steps towards equity and gender equality.

I have been analyzing precarious or casualized employment in the public sector for many years. I think we're probably all familiar with the concept. It's the loss of full-time, stable employment in favour of many forms of less stable employment, usually with less pay and lacking the same benefit coverage, such as health benefits, pensions, and so on.

I want to share some findings of some recent research that CRIAW has conducted on what's been happening to different groups of women within the federal public service.

We recognize women's diversity and therefore use what's called an “intersectional lens” to try to identify and tease out differential impacts on different groups of women. Our study is from 2005 to 2014. We got special data runs from the public service employee survey. We analyzed that, and we've been publishing some of the results.

I tried to update it, but it wasn't easy to get this data, which leads me to the issue of the need for greater transparency in having information publicly available on this key employment indicator.

What we do know from our research from 2005 to 2014 is that the number of women in non-permanent positions has grown steadily in the federal public service over that period of time. As well, the number of permanent positions for all women fell by about 6%. Aboriginal women, racialized women, disabled women, and able-bodied white women have all experienced an increase in non-permanent or precarious employment during this time, some groups more than others.

Our data analysis indicated that racialized women, or those who are considered visible minorities—the category StatsCan uses—experienced the sharpest increase in precarious employment, a 21% jump from 2005 to 2014. Also, they are more likely than any other group of women to hold non-permanent positions in each of the profile years and so are being adversely affected disproportionately by policies that favour the growth of precarious employment and the loss of permanent and more stable jobs in the federal public service. Able-bodied white women also experienced a decline in permanent employment. The numbers are significant because they are the majority of women who work in the federal government.

This trend towards greater precarity is troubling, and I think you know why. The ILO, for example, has associated it with inadequate rights and protection at work and lower wages and benefits. There are also lots of studies that show there are greater health and safety risks when there is a higher level of precarity—in particular, things like the risk of bullying, more aggression in the workplace and more harassment. Historically, it's particularly disadvantaged groups who have suffered the most from that.

It's not just about workers. Clearly, that's important, but there is also evidence that growing precarity in the public sector means that services decline in quality, in availability, in reliability and in terms of other indicators.

I'm sure you've heard before that it's hard to attract and retain the best and the brightest when you can't offer permanent and stable employment. It's equally hard for those workers to try to plan their futures, especially the young workers you may be wanting to attract to the federal public service.

There needs to be a commitment to full-time employment. There need to be incentives, and there need to be requirements that more full-time, permanent jobs be created.

As it stands right now, there is an economic incentive to create precarious jobs, because those contract, term and temporary jobs are usually cheaper. There is a big financial savings for the employer, but there is a huge cost to workers, not only in their pocketbooks but in their lives. There's evidence of the impacts it has on people's lives, their families and communities.

• (1620)

I'm suggesting and urging that you encourage the adoption of different incentives and requirements to change this trend. The first is to have the federal government make a formal, written commitment to create full-time, permanent jobs where practicable. That's something that should be negotiated between Treasury Board and the unions. The goal should be that we want to maximize those opportunities.

Secondly, all casual, contract, temporary and part-time employees should receive the same level of benefits so there will no more financial incentive in government to get contract employees because they're cheaper, and to improve the quality of their lives as well.

Thirdly, there should be a requirement for more annual reporting on changes in employment status in this category of the public sector. It's really important. It should be there in the public highlights of the public service employee employment survey and in the Employment Equity Act and the federal contractors program. Departments should be required to monitor and publish data in a way that would allow for actual transparency about what's happening with this really important employment indicator.

Finally, the data really should be published using an intersectional analysis. The federal government and StatsCan are increasingly moving to this more fine-grained level of analysis. It's broken down by gender and by different groups within the gender, so that we can better monitor the equity implications of precarious employment.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Colleagues, I'm just going to take a moment to consult with my clerk. We're waiting for some documents to be sent over to the committee.

I'll suspend for about two minutes, please.

• (1620)

(Pause)

• (1620)

The Chair: Colleagues, the difficulty we are having here is the fact that we have Mr. Borbey's opening statement and comments in both official languages, but not Monsieur Fleury's. Oh, we have them now. We'll be distributing those as I speak.

Colleagues, to save a little time I'm going to suggest a process that we have used recently, namely, that the speaking notes presented by both Monsieur Fleury and Monsieur Borbey be considered and taken as read and appended to the evidence of today's meeting. What that will do, then, is allow more time for questions.

The opening comments, which you are going to be receiving momentarily, will be in your possession.

[See appendix—Remarks by Patrick Borbey]

[See appendix—Remarks by Jean-François Fleury]

Madame Mendès.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): My question is only about Professor Stinson's notes. Have they been translated? Can we have them?

The Chair: No. The reason we had Madam Stinson and Mr. Page read their opening statements is so that the translation—

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: Oh no, that's not what I'm asking. I'm asking if we can have a copy, because I don't....

The Chair: Are there no copies of either Mr. Page's or Madame Stinson's statements?

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: You received them, but they've not been translated. Is that it?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Paul Cardegna): The copies that we received from Ms. Stinson and Mr. Page were unilingual and given to the interpreters only. We didn't receive them in time to have them translated to be able to distribute them to the committee.

The Chair: They have been read into the record and hopefully that will suffice for now.

Mr. Borbey and Monsieur Fleury have both agreed that they will dispense with their opening comments and we will, as I said, append them to the evidence of today's meeting, which will allow us to go directly into questions.

We will start a seven-minute intervention by Mr. Peterson.

• (1625)

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate Mr. Fleury and Mr. Borbey allowing us to read their comments into the record so I can jump right in here.

I'm going to start with Mr. Page from LinkedIn. First of all, thank you for being with us.

I take it that your organization can probably offer a tremendous amount of advice to the federal government when it comes to hiring and connecting employees with employers, and the vast amount of data that you would have in this regard.

Is there any formal relationship right now between you and the federal government that would make that an easy process?

Mr. Michael Page: We work with a handful of departments directly for varying degrees and capacities of recruitment. There is no type of centralized relationship that would easily facilitate that at this point in time.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Would you see that as worthwhile pursuing?

Mr. Michael Page: Yes, absolutely. To be honest, we get feedback on that frequently from the individual departments. They're asking for a centralized relationship to help make it easier for them to partner with us as well, so there's more formality and scale to that relationship.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Mr. Borbey, I don't mean to put you on the spot, but I'm sure you have some—

Mr. Patrick Borbey (President, Public Service Commission): Mr. Page won't mind my revealing this, but I did talk about our request for information process for the transformation of our GC jobs recruitment platform that we launched back in the fall. We're happy that LinkedIn was one of the companies that responded to this request for information. We've had presentations by LinkedIn on what it could potentially offer as a future solution. We're not at the procurement stage yet, but we have developed that relationship with LinkedIn, so that may well be something that we'll deepen in the future—but, of course, we have to respect procurement processes.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Of course.

You've been before us many times, Mr. Borbey, and it's always a pleasure to have you. Some of the topics of our previous conversations dealt with the platforms, how we get the word out there that the federal government is hiring and how you intake that information in a way that makes the processing of that information as efficient as possible—

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: —and it seems to me there might be a platform that already exists. There are probably other platforms. Mr. Page is with us today but...

Mr. Patrick Borbey: I would distinguish between the job board, similar to what LinkedIn provides, versus a full solution related to the recruitment system. The job board can be used right now by departments and agencies. In fact, we encourage it. If it increases the reach of a job advertisement, then that's great. There are no barriers for departments to be able to use LinkedIn and some of the other social media sites right now.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: You pre-empted the question I was going to ask.

Can any manager right now post on LinkedIn, if they see fit?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes, but the caveat is that they also have to post on GC jobs because that is the platform with the mandate from the Government of Canada to ensure that all Canadians have access to those opportunities.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Thank you.

Mr. Page, what's the capacity of LinkedIn to offer services bilingually, and is that an issue that the federal government should be aware of? Is it completely seamless?

Mr. Michael Page: Yes, it's completely seamless. Everything's available bilingually.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: That's good to hear.

It seems that some of the work is already being done. Some of the stuff is always organic. As it happens, the market dictates some of the procedures that we take, but it's good to see there is some progress already going on in that.

Ms. Stinson, your presentation was about four or five minutes, but it was jam-packed with so much amazing information, and there are so many questions coming from that. I'm a bit of a stats guy. I love stats and studies. I have a few questions that may be definitional.

Did the study go from 2005 to 2014?

Ms. Jane Stinson: Yes.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: That's almost 10 years.

Were there control groups of women and men, or was this looking at different categories of women?

Ms. Jane Stinson: We sliced and diced the data in a lot of different ways, but the analysis we have done looked largely at what happened to different groups of women. Occasionally we also asked what happened to men, but that wasn't our consistent comparator. It was more focused on what's happening within the universe of women.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: You said there was an increase in the number of precarious workers.

Ms. Jane Stinson: Yes.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Was that increase a percentage or a number of raw workers?

• (1630)

Ms. Jane Stinson: It was both. We were dealing with raw numbers, and then we calculated the percentage increase.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: So it's not the case that there were x number of workers and then all of the new ones became precarious workers. Some of the existing workers would have changed to precarious work.

Ms. Jane Stinson: I believe so. It wasn't following jobs to know exactly, but it certainly appears that this is the general trend over time. There's a decline in permanent positions and an increase in precarious ones.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: That was my question. Is the increase in precarious work a new development? If you were hired in the last three or four years, would you more likely be precarious than if you were hired in the four or five years before?

Ms. Jane Stinson: It appears so. It appears that it's gradually increasing, but it's not necessarily that new. I was looking at this question from 1997 to 2007, and there was an increase during that time too.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: You kind of alluded to it, but are managers incentivized to hire precarious workers?

Ms. Jane Stinson: I think the cost incentivizes it. I've listened to some of the earlier testimony to this committee, and it seems that delays in hiring could also be a factor that a number of people were raising. Sometimes it's faster to contract out or get a temporary position than to go through a longer, formal, permanent hiring process.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Is that one of the attractions of a contract worker, that the same process doesn't necessarily need to be followed and can be done more expeditiously than hiring a full-timer?

Maybe Mr. Borbey or Mr. Fleury could comment.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes. Certainly, if we focus on casual employees, they fall outside the Public Service Employment Act. These are contract arrangements that don't have to meet merit.... But we do track them, and we report them in our annual report. We have noticed that the use of casual workers is on the upswing.

But we've been through cyclical.... During the last 15 or 20 years we have also seen increases in casual work. Some of it may be related to uncertainty, budgetary or otherwise. We are looking at this and I'm particularly concerned with the gender impact of the rise in casual work. That's certainly something we are tracking and want to watch very carefully.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. McCauley, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Welcome back to several of you, and welcome to those who haven't been here before.

Mr. Borbey, you may have covered in your opening presentation—forgive me, as I wasn't here—the infamous 197 days that we're talking about.

I don't think you find that acceptable, but what should it be? What are the departmental goals?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: On behalf of the whole system we've committed to reducing that. By the way, we've reduced it already from 197 to 193.5, and that's the baseline we're working toward.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: You have 190 to go.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Within its own direct influence the Public Service Commission is trying to do what it can to reduce those days, but the vast majority of it is outside our direct control where we could exercise influence.

Right now I believe we're tracking at 181 days in the most recent

Mr. Kelly McCauley: What is your goal to get it down to?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: In our departmental results framework we talked about reducing it by 10%. That's our first step. Again, can we go beyond that? Absolutely.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Getting beyond that, what should it be at years from now, days from now, when you have changed all of the programs and gotten our act together?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: I think we can easily talk about half that amount of time, notwithstanding again the fact that you can't compare government and private sector hiring. We have to respect certain parameters, and that will always take a little longer.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That leads into my next question. Are you going to break down what is taking so long? Let's round it down to 180.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Twenty days of that is for security. Forty days is for this. Sixty is for that. What's the big—

Mr. Patrick Borbey: A baseline study was done a few years ago, which did get to the 197 originally. You have things such as advertising. It takes about six days on average. It can be even lower than that. Screening takes 49 days on average. Again, that probably has to do with the amount of attention managers and HR professionals are paying once the results of the applications have come in. Assessments take up to 56 days on average.

Our share of the—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Can I interrupt for a second?

Mr. Page, what do you see in the real world? I don't want to refer specifically to an entry-level job, but to a mid-term, even upper level, job like at the assistant deputy minister level, such as a general manager, building manager, an executive in the real world.

•(1635)

Mr. Michael Page: It ranges pretty significantly by organization.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Ball parkish?

Mr. Michael Page: Anywhere from probably 50 to 90 days on the higher end for a speedy organization.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: What about lower-level managers?

Mr. Michael Page: It's probably as quick as 40 days from the start to end of the process.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks.

Mr. Borbey, I'm going back to you.

I have an idea. Maybe you can present the full breakdown in a letter to the committee so we don't use up more time.

Do you believe there's a difficulty attracting people into the public service?

Anecdotally. I haven't seen there is. I don't believe there is. But—

Mr. Patrick Borbey: We get hundreds of thousands of applicants every year in our external processes. I'm told we have 72,000 applicants for our student work experience program.

We are identified in the recent study by *Maclean's* as the top choice of employer for graduates.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Not pulling out a really specific...but it's a popular employer so we don't have difficulty attracting.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: You do have some hard-to-fill positions.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Every company does.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: But by and large—

Mr. Patrick Borbey: That requires a lot more effort. Absolutely.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: You commented that you want to make hiring more open to the outside. Do we have internal rules that force us to focus on internal candidates?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: No. There are no internal rules. It's up to the manager to decide whether a position will be filled through an externally advertised process or an internal process. Of course, there are also many other choices. You can hire a student. You can hire a graduate.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: But to make it fair to the average Canadian who's not on the inside, should every job not be available to every single Canadian taxpayer?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: And that—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm sorry. I'm not criticizing you, but should not—

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: —every single job be available to every single Canadian?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes. And I think I'm on record as having said that I would favour moving towards a system where we would have—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: What's stopping you from doing that?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: I'm not the one who makes decisions. Decisions on whether positions are going to be open are made by individual managers on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: What would it take us to get to a place where all Canadians are treated equally with equal access to government jobs? Is it telling the deputy ministers?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: I think you're—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Is it your rule or...?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: I think the study might be a very good way to get that message across more broadly.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: There's no one directing them saying only go internal. There's no minister, deputy minister, saying do it like this?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: No.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: The last time we had you here we heard from the unions concerns about nepotism, which was actually reported in some of the newspapers. I'm wondering if giving these deputy ministers or managers the power to only hire as they see fit ties into this exclusion of regular Canadians from applying for government work, or even to some of the complaints about nepotism.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes, and I would say I would be very careful. Internally advertised processes do not mean there is nepotism. They mean that the pool of candidates—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: But there were complaints. We heard several witnesses complain of nepotism. I don't mean someone hiring their brother, but hiring their friend or hiring this person. Were heard complaints about that at committee when you were actually here.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Is this kind of a by-product of giving them the ability to hire as they see fit?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: No, I don't think so. I think all managers are delegated with the responsibility of ensuring that they meet the principles and values associated with the Public Service Employment Act. We have monitoring. We have ways to be able to audit—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How much time do I have?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: —and investigate cases where there is alleged nepotism. Certainly that's not acceptable.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay.

My time is up. Thanks very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Blaikie, for seven minutes please.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Borbey, I just want to follow up on that same line of questioning.

Is there a documented difference in the length of time it takes to hire if it's an internal-only process versus an external process?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes. We measure and track both. On average, it's a little bit shorter, I think about 10 days shorter, for an internal process.

But again, those are advertised processes. If you're hiring from a priority, if you're hiring a former student, if you're hiring through the post-secondary recruitment program that our department offers, it can be much shorter than that. There are lot of other mechanisms.

With the 197 or 180 days, we are talking about the most lengthy processes, the most complex processes, and therefore it's normal that they take a lot longer.

But we have processes that can take... Madam Poliquin ran a process that took 30 days. There's a wide range in terms of... Again, if managers are focused, if there is no downtime when the file lands on their desk, if they immediately pay attention, if they use the most efficient assessment tools, they can certainly cut a lot of that time.

• (1640)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Okay. Thank you.

To our witness from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, I'm curious about the numbers that demonstrate a rise in precarity within the civil service. Is that increase just for positions that have been converted to contracts, or some more precarious form of employment within the civil service umbrella? What role would contracting out services play? What kind of information do we have on that? Would it mean that these numbers are actually somewhat lower than what might be the case because contracted out work, to the extent it would be precarious work, isn't represented in the statistics?

Ms. Jane Stinson: The devil is always in the details.

When I looked at what's included in the PSES employment status, it does say "Contracted via temporary help services agency". It also refers to term employees, which is, I think, often another form of contract employment.

Yes, it does include contracted out services. I'm not sure whether it's an underestimate or not. I think you'd need to look a little more carefully as it, but it does include some of those categories.

Also, one of the issues that does exist is that the budget estimates for the past year would mention, say, \$40.7 billion allocated to all personnel costs and \$13.2 billion of that allocated to professional and special services, a number of which would be contract workers. But it's hard then to get a breakdown of that data to really understand what's going on with the number of jobs where benefits are not...and the rate of pay, etc.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: More generally speaking, in terms of privatization of delivery of certain services, is that understood in the literature to have an effect either way on the nature of the work, whether it's permanent or precarious?

Ms. Jane Stinson: Yes, there's definitely a lot of evidence that privatization increases precarity, just by the nature of it. You're taking what presumably was a full-time permanent job and you're now putting it out to tender for contract, which by definition is a defined period of time, right? So it definitely contributes to precariousness.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Those factors you identified that affect women, and particularly racialized women, in terms of precarious work within the civil service would apply as well when we see services privatized and then delivered in the private sector. Not necessarily all the time, obviously, but those trends would hold.

Ms. Jane Stinson: Generally speaking, yes.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Okay. Thank you.

We've talked a little bit about the nature of work, in terms of whether it's permanent full-time, with full benefits, but in terms of the kinds of jobs that women are hired into within the civil service, do they tend to be certain kinds of jobs? Is there work to do to make other kinds of jobs where women have perhaps been traditionally under-represented in order to increase their participation? Would you say that access to the various types of work isn't gendered, or is there work to do, and what kinds of things might this committee recommend if there are problems in that regard?

Ms. Jane Stinson: Definitely women's participation in the labour force and in the federal public service is gendered. We did not look at an occupational breakdown of where precarious employment was occurring, so I can't answer that—

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Okay.

Ms. Jane Stinson: —and be specific about which positions or which jobs. Frankly, I think it's a problem, generally speaking, throughout the public sector or throughout the federal public service. It would be helpful to apply those recommendations across the board to try to curb this trend and reverse it and create more full-time jobs.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Great. Thank you very much.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Blaikie.

We'll now go to Mr. Jowhari for seven minutes.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be sharing my time equally with my colleague Ms. Ratansi.

I'm going to start with Mr. Borbey.

I was looking at the submission you made, and I did some quick calculations. One of the things I noticed is that the percentage of students they hire compared with the number of applicants is very, very low. Under the PSR program it's about 16.5%, or 711 out of 4,300, as you mentioned. Under the RPL program it's 21 out of 1,500. I understand that the level of expertise needed under the RPL is very different. I just did some rough calculations based on the number of 13,000 that are hired versus what you mentioned in your response to one of the questions, that there are roughly about 72,000 applicants. The percentage comes to about 18.5%. These are very low numbers.

I understand that we've gone from 197 to 181.

Why are we not recruiting? Are these people not available by the time we get to them? What's the reason these numbers are so low?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: I'll ask my colleague Madame Poliquin to answer, please.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Sure.

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin (Vice-President, Services and Business Development, Public Service Commission): I think there are a number of reasons why we're not maximizing the use of these inventories. I would just like to clarify that there's the number of applicants, but then we use that number when they start meeting the merit criteria. For example, for PSR, we go from 17,000 applicants to about 5,000 candidates whom we deem qualified and place in these inventories. That said, 711 is still not the number we're looking to achieve.

I think there are a number of reasons why they're not using it as much. First, I think the DNA of our hiring managers is about looking inside first. Even for entry-level positions, they're looking to hire within their own organizations. Going outside is not a muscle that has been developed just yet, and we are nudging the system to get there.

There's also more of a tendency to post one job for one position. Managers tend to have a number of set criteria for a position, and expanding it to make it generic is still not something they're familiar with. When we have these inventories that are entry-level positions, for PSR for example, they have very few requirements to meet because they're entry-level jobs. Managers haven't shifted their paradigms to recruit this way. Again, we need to nudge the system and train them to use the system.

Finally, it's about just being familiar with the programs. The Public Service Commission is continuing to do outreach with the hiring community to make sure they maximize the use of the programs we have.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: If you could suggest one thing we could do to turn this around, what would that be?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: If I could do one thing, I would provide pools that are more assessed, so the hiring manager could have access to fully assessed candidates to recruit—

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Are you referring to the consolidation of the pools, or just accessibility to the pool?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: I'm talking about putting candidates who are fully assessed into the pool, so that managers wouldn't have much work to do. The Public Service Commission would have done the work, and they could just draw from it.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Thank you.

My time is over.

Ms. Ratansi.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Page, of your 15 million members, do you have a breakdown of how many are millennials, women, minorities or indigenous people?

Mr. Michael Page: We don't have a breakdown along all of those measures. I don't have them with me, but that is something I could provide. We would have a breakdown by male versus female, as well as age, to an approximation.

There are certain types of information that we don't explicitly request right now. It's a longer-term discussion around what people want to publicly share. We have some of that information, though.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Listening to everything that's going on, how would you help the government ensure that women are not in precarious positions? How would you ensure that the recruitment process is a little faster? What sorts of tools would you be able to provide?

Mr. Michael Page: In terms of supporting women not to be in the more precarious positions, there is one giant piece there, which is around hiring contractors. That's something that's often done, because it's felt there is a specialization that certain private organizations can provide to get those people quickly.

By contrast, with the 15 million people on LinkedIn, basically almost any type of talent you would ever want to recruit is there. At scale, with a couple clicks of the button, you can pretty much communicate with them. At this point in time, it's almost never done, other than by a handful of departments, within the federal government.

The vast majority of people who come to the federal government fall into the bucket of the 10% to 30% of the population that is actively seeking a job. Most of the labour force or most employers are looking at those individuals, but also at the 70% to 90% who aren't necessarily going and looking at the GC jobs website or at a job board. The whole mechanism by which LinkedIn works is that it enables you to take those jobs at scale and easily present them to the overall labour market and say "Here are jobs you may be interested in", as we term it. That allows you to tap into a gigantic pool of people who have very specialized skills but who aren't currently get communicated with.

• (1650)

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Mr. Fleury, you have not been asked a single question. You are from the office of the chief human resources officer, whose job it is to help people in their recruitment process. Listening to what Ms. Stinson said, I was really shocked, because I was under the impression that the Public Service Commission was doing a good job of hiring visible minorities and women.

The research really opens up a new Pandora's box, saying, "Where are these women, and why are they in precarious positions?" How would you address that issue that has come up?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury (Assistant Deputy Minister, Governance, Planning and Policy Sector, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, Treasury Board Secretariat): First, I really want to have the time to dig deep into the methodology. I think there are issues happening in terms of skills and workforce availability. In terms of workforce availability as it stands, we are meeting all of the benchmarks. That doesn't mean we're meeting them in all of the different subcategories. For example, we know that we need more indigenous executives. We know there is a shortage of women in scientific and STEM-related jobs.

On the precarious side—

The Chair: I'm sorry. I know you were going to get into some more detail, but unfortunately we're already past our allotted time. I will suggest to you, though, that should you have additional information, you could provide it to the committee through the clerk. That would be extremely helpful as the committee goes into further deliberations and conducts this further study.

We'll now go to our five-minute rounds, starting with Mr. Deltell.

[*Translation*]

You have five minutes, please.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this parliamentary committee.

Mr. Fleury, I'll give you an opportunity right now to complete your answer to Ms. Ratansi's question.

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: That's fine.

I was going to say that according to our statistics from March 31, 2018 on jobs and types of jobs, 84% of public service positions are permanent.

[*English*]

You mentioned the category of temp help and whatnot.

[*Translation*]

The categories may change the perspective of the study. That is why I absolutely want to avoid criticizing Ms. Stinson's work. However, 84% of federal public service positions are in fact indeterminate, and that percentage has increased over the past years.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Could you explain what you mean by "indeterminate"?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: Permanent jobs in the public service.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Eighty-four per cent seems like a lot.

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: I don't want to express a position in a debate about studies.

Several other institutions adopt the opposite approach on this in order to be able to respond with greater flexibility to the economy, to demand. I'm not saying that that is the position of the public service, but we've reached a point where we must analyze studies like yours and others to decide on our future direction. There are significant changes in the workplace and we have to determine the best combination to adopt.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Fleury and Ms. Poliquin, you are here at the same time as Mr. Page. I think this is the first time we've had witnesses from the public and private sector here together. I was quite pleased about it when I saw the witness list.

Mr. Page had the opportunity to explain what he could do for the public service. I would now like to know how you, as representatives of the public service, think you could benefit from the experience, expertise and advantages that Mr. Page's enterprise can provide.

• (1655)

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: I will let Ms. Poliquin talk about the system.

One of the benefits I see is the possibility of having access to existing data on skills assessment and to learn how they are managed. On this topic, the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer just happens to be doing a study on a human resource management data system for the future. This concerns not only the internal data of the public service, but also external data. In this way we will be able to design a system and strategies that will provide us with all of the knowledge we need to make good decisions and plan for the future.

We will certainly be holding other meetings on data sharing, not only with platforms like LinkedIn, but also with the Public Service Commission, which has an enormous volume of data.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: When you organize a competition, do you also post notices on sites such as the one for the company Mr. Page represents, so as to reach potential candidates?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: The Public Service Commission does not do that, because we have our own recruitment platform, GC Jobs. However, some departments do that, because it is another way of attracting people's interest. In any case, the Public Service Commission's nomination policy requires that a competition notice be posted for at least 24 hours on the Government of Canada website.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: What happens next?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: The notice may be published in newspapers. Nothing prevents managers from using technology to reach as many people as possible.

On our side, we must make sure that the competition notice is posted for at least 24 hours on the Government of Canada website, as it is the site the population knows best.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: When I was young, full employment did not exist, and there was no labour shortage. When I was 20, I would look at *Le Soleil*, a Quebec newspaper, on Saturday, and there were a lot of job offers there. Do you still use print newspapers today, or are job notices only posted digitally?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: The notices are almost exclusively digital, but we still use print in some places, like in the North.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Borbey, did you want to add anything?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Having worked in the Far North, I can assure you that print newspapers are still extremely important there. Jobs are still advertised in the newspapers in Nunavut and the other territories.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: In conclusion, this may be something the government should consider doing to support the print environment and newspapers. We know that the written press is having some difficulties these days. Simply continuing to do things as they were done in the past could be one way of helping the papers, rather than injecting funds directly. That, however, is a whole other issue.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Colleagues, before we go to Madam Yip, there's a clarification.

On my calendar I had a notification that there would be votes and bells starting today at 5:15. Apparently, that is not true. There are no votes tonight, so we'll be able to extend our sitting time until 5:30, which means we can get a complete round and two seven-minute interventions coming after it. We will be sitting until 5:30.

Madam Yip, you have five minutes.

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): There is a shortage of women in STEM in the federal government. Women constitute about 30% of computer science workers between the ages of 40 and 60, and only 16% are younger than 40. This shows that the public service is struggling to attract young women with a technology background.

Why is this happening? I would have thought the reverse would be true. What can be done?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: We have put a special emphasis, particularly when it comes to the IT sector, on attracting more women in our post-secondary recruitment campaign.

About 25% of our computer science workers right now in government are women, so we know we have a gap. The percentage is very similar in universities and colleges that are producing graduates right now.

The pipeline needs to be stronger. This probably starts at the level of young girls, even before they start high school...to continue their studies in STEM. That's an area where there is some activity, some work that's being done to encourage girls to continue to study in this area.

Last year when we established our inventory of about 850 pre-qualified or pre-assessed candidates for computer science jobs, I think we got to about 30% of the applicants who were women. That was quite an effort.

The thing that we are allowed to do under the Public Service Employment Act is to consider employment equity groups first, before other groups. Last year we asked that managers consider first the women who were part of the inventory, before others were considered for potential jobs. That's an example of how we're trying to change that statistic.

Similar kinds of studies or work should be done in the areas related to scientific and technical work, where we also have some gaps.

• (1700)

Ms. Jean Yip: Following Ms. Ratansi's comment about women, indigenous peoples and racialized communities, is there some overarching strategy? You mentioned already about the equity.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Between us and the Treasury Board Secretariat, we certainly work very closely on employment equity objectives. We implement the Employment Equity Act.

I want to correct the record a little bit. We have an overrepresentation of women in the public service. Among the candidates for our programs, we have an overrepresentation of women candidates. We are an attractive offer to women—again, notwithstanding the fact that in certain categories it's more difficult, but generally they are overrepresented.

We also find that in all of our processes, whether it's post-secondary recruitment or of students, we typically get about twice as many candidates as are currently represented among visible minorities. We get 30% to 35% of our candidates for our programs who apply. This is one of the reasons we want to see more external recruitment. If we open up externally, we know the candidates are there. We know that we offer them quality opportunities. It's just a matter of opening the doors a little bit more. When we create inventories, the last thing we want is to see those inventories being underutilized.

There are challenges associated with persons with disabilities and indigenous people. We get lower rates of application or lower rates of self-identification through our programs. This is an area we're specifically working on. We've identified two targeted programs, for example, that we've developed over the last number of years to increase the number of persons with disabilities and indigenous people applying and being successfully employed in the federal government. I would remind you that we are also currently overrepresented in both of those categories compared with the labour force.

Ms. Jean Yip: Do I have time?

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Ms. Jean Yip: How are you going about attracting the physically challenged populations and indigenous communities?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: I mentioned that there are two programs we created with the Treasury Board Secretariat over the last number of years for students, which specifically targeted those populations, and those programs are open right now. We're hoping to increase the number. We reported on the numbers from last year. We want to increase that number.

We're also looking at our outreach work that we do at the Public Service Commission, specifically targeting indigenous communities

or groups of communities and going directly to the communities, not just the post-secondary institutions but actually to the communities. For persons with disabilities, there are a lot of community groups with which we need to also create better relationships.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. McCauley, you have five minutes, please.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thank you.

In your pilot program in Quebec—maybe it was at McGill University—there were 32 on-the-spot conditional job offers. What do you term as “conditional”? What are you doing there that we're not doing regularly but takes us 197 days? This goes back to Mr. Page's comments. I used to be an HR manager. If you're not hiring instantly, you're losing the best person. What's conditional, and what are we doing there that we can't just do the rest of the...?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: We are actually bringing the hiring manager to meet with the candidate at career fairs.

What's conditional about them is that in some instances they need to meet the language requirements. That language testing needs to occur in one of our centres—and security clearances as well.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: So, if we're making a conditional offer on the spot, how long is it taking to get those people hired? Is it the 55 days' assessment, two-week security...?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: They're actually assessed at the career fair. It's just to get them booked on a language assessment for reading, writing or...

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Which takes how long?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: Usually once we have a candidate identified we try to schedule a test within 10 days.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: So 10 days, two weeks for security clearance....

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: For security clearance it depends on which level, so it could be....

Mr. Kelly McCauley: A ballpark figure. Again, we're not hiring the head of CSIS, but the regular person.

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: I've seen it done anywhere from a couple of days to a month.

• (1705)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay, the worst-case scenario is a month.

We're getting them through language and top security clearance in a month and a half. What Mr. Borbey was saying earlier was that it takes 55 days just for an assessment.

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: Yes.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: How is this possible? I can't in any way figure out how it can take that long.

There's nothing really special about public servants. We're all very important, as you, as anyone else.

Seriously, how does it take 55 days for an assessment, when we're assessing on the spot? Is the average hirer just not available for 55 days to assess?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: It's a combination of things. It can be that managers staff in a sequence, in the sense that they start developing their tools once they have their candidate. That takes time. It could be candidate availability as well. If the candidate has applied and is screened in, but is not available to come to the assessment, then we have to wait until that person is available. It has to be within—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Have you tried this pilot at any other work opps...?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: Yes, we have it at York University and we've done it in Moncton.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Do you do it in non-university locations, as at hiring fair?

Ms. Stéphanie Poliquin: Not that I know of, no. Not yet.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay.

You were chatting earlier about the breakdown. This government, the previous government and the government before it have done a very good job of making sure that the public service reflects the diversity of the workforce. For example, in the Library of Parliament, 55% of the public servants are women. Is that broken down? Maybe women are overrepresented there, but they are underrepresented at the executive levels. Therefore, we need to focus on that and not on overall...

You mentioned earlier that you'll open up the process and prioritize women, but are we doing the priority in the wrong area? Do we need to prioritize the executive level, to make those the first hires, as opposed to...?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes. You're absolutely right.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Does that go for indigenous and disabled people as well?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes. Certainly there are some gaps at the executive level in our employment equity groups.

For women, the gap has been narrowed. It's down to about 0.5% between—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I'm going to follow-up with a question. Obviously we started this program. Maybe in five years people will move up. The longer they're in the public service, the longer they'll move up and we'll meet full representation. Do we look at that as well? We know we're on the right track, so we don't have to focus or...?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes.

We do some modelling and of course we look at particular categories. I would say that right now we have a particular focus on persons with disabilities, doing some modelling on what we need to do to increase representation there.

We are also just completing a study on the promotion rates for each of the employment equity groups, which we will be releasing in May. It will look at data going back 20-plus years, to see how each group has fared along the continuum towards executive types of positions.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: What I'm trying to get at is that I don't want to be chasing down this way when the solution, the real issue, is

here, so that we avoid just focusing there, as opposed to backfilling more.

In your—

The Chair: Mr. McCauley, you have a couple of seconds left.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. Thanks.

The Chair: I suggest that we move now to Madame Mendès for five minutes.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

Hello everyone.

I was very struck by your presentation, Ms. Stinson. Your statistics were quite eloquent.

First, I'd like to put a question to Mr. Fleury.

I understand why the public service made this change at a certain point and opted for short-term, temporary contracts. It was at a time when we were tightening our belts and trying to find economies of scale everywhere in government.

But since the government realized that this precariousness was growing in scope, have you begun to reverse this and to offer more secure employment, or are you maintaining the same level of precarious employment in the public service?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: According to the most recent annual statistics, 86% of public service jobs are indeterminate, or permanent.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: What does “indeterminate” mean?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: It's the same thing as “permanent”.

As I mentioned earlier, that figure varies according to whether it includes temporary workers or not. I will in fact want to meet with Ms. Stinson to discuss this. The remuneration of temporary workers is considered contractual payment rather than a salary, which complicates the distinction. The percentage of indeterminate positions has been increasing for a few years. I also believe that hiring temporary workers through agencies, or the practice of giving employees casual status, is being gradually replaced by fixed-term contracts, that is to say, by slightly more “permanent” jobs.

The profile is changing. As I was saying, it is really important that we have a good grasp of this profile for the future. Several studies have shown that having a very high percentage of permanent jobs reduces the possibility of hiring the best workers from the demand economy. So this is a good time to carry out these analyses and develop a staffing strategy for the future.

● (1710)

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: This confirms the impression I had from Ms. Stinson's remarks. We note an increase in the number of precarious jobs in the public service, as well as discrimination—deliberate or not—against women, particularly women from very specific visible minority groups. We are depriving ourselves of the talents all of these people could contribute to the public service.

Once again, I don't want to assume that that is deliberate, and I prefer to believe that it isn't. But the fact remains that these are undesirable, unintended consequences. We need to address this problem as expeditiously as possible, according to my understanding of the study and of what is being proposed. If we want tomorrow's economy to benefit from these skills, we will have to provide sufficiently attractive working conditions to encourage these people to stay in the public service. We agree on that, correct?

Mr. Jean-François Fleury: Absolutely.

As Mr. Borbey was saying, we have statistics, such as the ones on persons with disabilities or indigenous people. In-depth analyses are being done on gender balance, but also on occupational groups and what they do within government. We use all of that information to devise strategies to fill potential gaps.

[*English*]

As was said before, we need to make sure that we go down the right track and get that right. So right now we are spending a lot of time looking at all that data.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: That is because in terms of the occupational gender differences, it is quite apparent that a large majority of women occupy the lower-ranking jobs in the public service, which also tend to be more precarious. I'm not even sure why they are the ones who are so overwhelmingly in these positions, in the lower ranks of office work and administrative jobs.

The Chair: Unfortunately, that question will have to go unanswered because we're out of time.

We'll go now to Mr. Blaikie for three minutes.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Borbey or Mr. Fleury, I'm curious to know the following. A policy seems to have been adopted in the last little while that gives local managers a fair bit of discretion in the hiring process. What's the role of the HR department in that? Obviously the HR department is there for a manager to call if they want advice, but do they act more like an auditor who reviews hiring decisions after the fact, after a number of hirings have been made, and then have some findings as to whether or not the hiring processes were being conducted properly?

Or are they involved in the hiring process and is that a place where delay gets created in the back-and-forth between the manager who is doing the hiring and whoever in HR is involved or implicated in the hiring process?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: We live in a delegated model, and it's not just in the world of HR. It's in the world of finance, contracting, etc. We have been delegating that decision-making authority as close to the front-line manager as possible, and that's obviously where the authority lies. But it has to be done in the context of an overall frame that we set. The deputy ministers also determine how their human resources should be organized within their department.

Therefore, the role of the human resource adviser can be very much as an adviser, or it could be a someone who is more focused on ensuring accountability afterwards, or doing some monitoring. It varies from department to department, but clearly we're concerned about the fact that sometimes the staffing file and the 50 candidates or so are caught in-between because either the human resource manager is too busy to be able to pay attention to it or the hiring

manager is not focused on it. It's on the corner of his or her desk, and we want to see it in the middle of the desk.

• (1715)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Do you have data on which departments have a model where HR is more implicated in the hiring process as such, versus what I'd call more of an audit model? Do you notice any differences in the length of time it takes to make a successful hire between the two models?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Again, human resources would be involved in hiring in any department, but the role they play would be different.

I would say that a lot of it comes from the leadership at the top. If a deputy minister sets the tone, you can see progress. I've talked about cases where deputies have decided they are going to reduce the average time it takes and focus the attention on this, and we see the results. Clearly, leadership is very important, but there are many factors at play here in determining how long it takes to get a position staffed.

The Chair: Thank you.

Colleagues, we'll have time for two more interventions of five minutes each.

On my list I have Monsieur Drouin.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had seven minutes, but I'll have to settle for five.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Francis Drouin: Thank you for being here.

Mr. Borbey, I know you've appeared on many occasions before this committee.

Ms. Stinson, I do have a couple of questions about precarious work and how you define that. I know it's an issue, but I have also met a lot of people who would say, "You'd call me crazy in my generation, but I would never stay in the same spot or even grow within the same organization for 30 years."

How do you balance that within the Government of Canada, perhaps allowing for people to grow within the Government of Canada, knowing there are various different opportunities?

I would seek your advice. Do you have any advice for those—I won't call them millennials because, as I say, I'm an old millennial, but I look younger—

Mr. Kyle Peterson: By a month.

Mr. Francis Drouin: —by a month; but I would say it's an issue. Perhaps millennials don't feel that the Government of Canada is the right place for them to work, knowing that they want to hop from job to job because that's the environment they enjoy.

Ms. Jane Stinson: I think there is a difference between your desire to work your whole life in one job and actually offering stable employment. When you offer stable employment you do provide pathways for people who want to move from one job to another because they know it's going to be there, that it's not going to disappear. It's not being converted to something short-term. I think those two are quite compatible.

For individuals who want to have variety in their lives, as I certainly have in mine even though I'm not a millennial, you need to have career paths and opportunities internally to address that. It's not by creating temporary and insecure employment. In fact, I'd argue that temporary and insecure employment makes it much harder for millennials to plan their lives and to figure out what their career path is.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Yes.

I'd be curious to find out what the practice in the private sector would be. Again, I don't know what the statistics say, but I know anecdotally that even though they will have financial security, they will still change because they're just bored out of their minds. They can't stand it; they have to go somewhere else.

How do you balance that within the Government of Canada to ensure that there are proper pathways and a path forward in that environment where there is the security in knowing that yes, there is that pension plan at the end of the day when you've worked x number of years within the Government of Canada?

I don't know if there are any barriers to changing from one collective agreement to another.

Mr. Borbey, maybe you want to jump in there.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: I think you are making some excellent points.

We are the biggest employer in Canada, but we're also the most diversified employer, and we're one that has a high degree of mobility. I report on the mobility rates in our annual report, which are actually trending up. That means that somebody who starts their career in the public service does not have to stay in the same department, in the same kind of job. If they want to explore different ways to serve their country, they can go work in a region. They can work internationally. They can leave their field of expertise completely and learn a different kind of field. There is a lot of opportunity.

I think we can feed that kind of appetite for diversity that young people want.

Mr. Francis Drouin: How does training fit into that?

I ask because we're telling kids in kindergarten that by the time they graduate, 65% of the jobs in the private sector will not exist. I'm assuming it's probably similar in the Government of Canada.

• (1720)

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes.

Mr. Francis Drouin: How do we fit that particular training program and comfort potential employees to say when they come to work with us, they're going to get training opportunities? If they're

ever bored in their job, they'll get to go somewhere else and succeed in whatever they want to do.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes, and reskilling is an extremely important investment that the government has to make. We know that the labour force of the future is going to be very different from what we have right now, and we have to help our current generation of public servants make that shift.

We also have to be more open—again, externally—to get some of that talent that already exists out there in the private sector, and not try to duplicate that inside. I'm thinking about areas like data analytics. Tons of great people are coming out of our universities and colleges right now who can contribute to it. We need that talent.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madame Poliquin, maybe I'm seeing, as you mentioned—

The Chair: You are out of time.

Mr. Francis Drouin: I'm already out of time? I told you I needed seven minutes.

Thank you.

The Chair: You were so close to it.

Perhaps Mr. McCauley will be able to finish by following up on some of your comments.

Mr. McCauley, you have five minutes please.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I want to get to page 14 of your departmental report.

I have a quick question about the hiring of vets. There's a part from the priority entitlements for the medically released that we know about: "All qualified veterans must be hired ahead of other candidates in processes open to the general public". Where does that fit with other priority hiring that we direct toward disabled, women, first nations, etc.?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Employment equity is different from the priority system.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Right. It says here that vets—not the medically discharged ones, but the regular everyday vets—must be hired ahead of other candidates, but is that ahead of—

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Preference.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: —everyone, but below the equity hiring?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes. If you have a qualified vet and you have a position available, that vet must be offered that position first before anybody else. That's the preference provision.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Except for those who are in the equity preference.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: No.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: No? So the vets are first? And they'll only know about it if the job is advertised, so if it is kept in-house...?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: No. All the jobs for priorities are made available to them. We have a system to share. Whenever a job comes out, before it's advertised, it has to clear the priority system. Therefore, the vet will have the chance to bid for it before it even goes out.

By the way, that's one of the fastest ways to staff a position.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That's great.

I'm dealing with a vet on this, but this would actually apply to any Canadian. The vet applied for a job, their resumé accepted, and they went before a hiring board—the 55-day process. There were three of them. They sat there for an hour-and-a-half interview. They passed. They were put in a hiring pool that would be valid for 90 days. It turns out they really didn't have an opening, but they were looking for candidates in case something opened.

Ninety-five days passed and he saw another opening—this is for a CR-4 level positions—and reapplied, and had to go back before the hiring board again. He was there 94 days ago. He was told he had to do it again.

This time he flunked, even though he had written down the identical questions. Everything's the same, but he flunked and didn't get into the pool.

Why are we creating pools for jobs that don't exist? I'm not blaming you, but why would we have a system where we ask people to go before a hiring board repeatedly? What would change in 91 days that would make someone qualified and then unqualified? It's for the same department and same position.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: It's hard to comment on a specific case, but we know that pools are sometimes used quite well, and sometimes they're abused. Sometimes pools are created and managers don't intend to use the pool except for maybe the top one candidate they wanted.

• (1725)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: When would a pool be worthwhile?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Pools can be an extremely useful tool if you know that a number of positions are going to become available. If there's a little uncertainty as to how many of those positions there might be, then you have, let's say, a dozen candidates in a pool, but that pool should be drawn as a priority because you've invested all of that time in creating it.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: The issue of the pools came up, I think, the last time you were with us. It may have been PSAC or someone else—I can't remember which—who spoke quite strongly against them, or else they were talking about one large pool. Once you're approved, you stay in the pool, period. Are you looking at this pooling system right now as part of your ongoing efforts to improve our hiring?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: Yes, and that's one of the areas—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Because obviously there are a lot of ways it's not working.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: For example, we're providing guidance to departments on the appropriate use of pools. This is an area where, again, we're not directing but providing guidance. You're right.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay. Are you continuing the name-blind pilot we spoke about last time?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: The follow-up to the anonymized recruitment pilot project is a full audit of the progression of our employment equity groups, each group along the staffing system, from applications, screening, and assessment all the way to actual appointment. That study is currently under way. We're looking at hundreds of staffing actions to see what kind of trends we may get. That will be reported in the fall. It's a full audit that we're doing.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Great. One of things that came out of the last one that was the most surprising is that we do really have a strong almost anonymous system, but those who were actually in the government already, who knew the buzzwords and knew how to get through it, were the ones succeeding. Have we changed the name-blind process to try to work that out, or are we just continuing as a larger pilot program?

Mr. Patrick Borbey: I think that's a broader issue—

The Chair: Give a very brief answer.

Mr. Patrick Borbey: That's a broader issue, the inside track that people have. That gets to getting the jargon out of some of the job advertisements, so that we use terms that people can relate to, rather than just the inside government folks. There's some work to be done there, for sure.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

To all of you, thank you for being here. I know there was a number of pieces of information you might have wanted to transfer to this committee but didn't have an opportunity to do so. Again, should you have additional information that you think would be of benefit to this committee as we continue our study, I strongly encourage you to provide it in writing to the clerk. That would assist us in completing our final study and give us all of the information we may not have been able to elicit from you today.

Thank you for being here, and I will dismiss you.

Colleagues, just as a reminder, tomorrow we are meeting at 8:45 a.m. in room 330 here in the Wellington Building.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès: I will be meeting at that time, but not at that address.

The Chair: Okay. Those of us who can make it will be meeting at 8:45 a.m.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: We have the people from France—

The Chair: We have a video conference with some of our colleagues from overseas. That's why we're meeting at 8:45 a.m.

Thank you. We are adjourned.

Speaking Notes for
Patrick Borbey
President of the
Public Service Commission of Canada
Regarding the
Public Service Hiring Process

Standing Committee on Government
Operations and Estimates

April 1, 2019

Check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the invitation to appear today. The Public Service Commission (PSC) appreciates the Committee's interest in public service recruitment. Accompanying me today is Stéphanie Poliquin, Vice President of Services and Business Development. Ms. Poliquin is responsible for the PSC's recruitment programs.

I would like to remind Committee members that, while the *Public Service Employment Act* authorizes the PSC to make appointments, it also provides for the delegation of this authority to deputy heads. The Act also encourages further delegation so that managers who best understand the type of talent needed and who can identify the strongest candidates make the actual hiring decisions.

Recruitment is a fundamental part of the PSC's work and we have provided Committee members with documents that highlight some of our programs. Our 2017–18 Annual Report also contains a wealth of information on staffing. To support renewal and to ensure that the public service can continue to meet the needs of Canadians, the recruitment of students and new talent are a major focus of our efforts.

As described in our annual report, student recruitment programs resulted in nearly 13,000 hires in 2017–18. The Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) accounted for more than half of these hires, while Post-Secondary Co-op/Internships accounted for nearly 5,000 hires. Another 280 students had work assignments through the Research Affiliate Program.

To help the public service more accurately reflect the population it serves, FSWEP also includes some targeted inventories. The Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity, for instance, led to the hire of 186 Indigenous students last year, while 61 students with disabilities were hired under the Youth Accessibility Summer Employment Opportunity.

These numbers are certainly promising, but the results for the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program hint at one of the challenges we face when it comes to timely hiring. Of the almost 16,000 applicants to the Post-Secondary Recruitment Program, about 4,300 were found qualified for the five career streams identified in consultation with departments and agencies, for example an IT stream. But managers hired only 711 of them. This means that relatively few managers are hiring from these pools created based on their identified needs. Clearly, we need to raise awareness of the advantages of PSC recruitment programs and encourage managers to make use all of the flexibilities they have when it comes to hiring.

I understand that the Recruitment of Policy Leaders Program is of special interest to members of the Committee. This is a relatively small and highly specialized program designed to identify candidates with post-graduate degrees for positions as mid- to senior-level policy advisors. Last year, 21 individuals were hired from over 1,500 applicants. I would like to mention to Committee members that we are currently conducting an evaluation of the program to ensure that it continues to meet the evolving needs of the government's policy community.

Three years ago, the Public Service Commission introduced the New Direction in Staffing which greatly simplified staffing rules and provided significant flexibilities for departments and agencies to tailor their hiring practices to their particular context and needs.

Changes to the Human Resources culture within Canada's public service will not happen overnight, but we are making progress. There are more and more departments demonstrating innovation when it comes to hiring, for instance, making on-the-spot offers at job fairs or using creative job advertisements.

At the PSC, we continue to modernize our recruitment programs to better match the new skill requirements identified by departments and to reduce time-to-hire. For example, our work to transform GC Jobs, the portal that connects candidates and managers across the public service, continues to progress. The objective is to create a user-centric, intuitive recruitment platform built on the government's Digital Standards.

We are also partnering with universities to enhance graduate job search experiences and trying out new ways to match students with assignment opportunities. We piloted a speed staffing event at the University of Montreal to connect students and managers who were looking to fill hard to staff positions. Highlights of this pilot include 32 graduate students receiving on-the-spot job offers and hiring processes that were completed within a month. A similar event was recently held at York University, also with positive results.

Our pilot work on an Employee Referral Program is being implemented within the PSC to recruit psychologists for our Personnel Psychology Centre. These are all important steps toward a larger goal of renewing the public service and building a more accessible, more diverse and more inclusive workforce.

I understand the Committee is starting a study on hiring Veterans for public service positions. As you know, the *Veterans Hiring Act* facilitates entry into the public service through mobility, preference and priority provisions. These are efficient ways to quickly staff and connect public service managers with qualified and experienced candidates. I would be pleased to appear again to share information on our approach to placing veterans in the public service and on progress achieved since the new provisions of the Act came into force four years ago.

In closing, Mr. Chair, the PSC continues to work with departments and with our partners at the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer and the Canada School of the Public Service to attract, develop and retain the talent that will serve Canadians today and into the future.

We are pleased to answer any questions that Committee members may have for us.

Merci. Thank you. Meegwetch.

Opening Statement for
Jean-François Fleury
Assistant Deputy Minister, Governance,
Planning and Policy Sector

Appearing before the House of Commons
Standing Committee on Government
Operations and Estimates (OGGO)

on Recruitment Initiatives in the Public
Service

April 1, 2019

From 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

It is my pleasure to appear before you today to provide an update on recruitment initiatives.

The office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, within the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, is committed to working with our partners to improve recruitment, development and retention practices.

Recruitment into the federal public service is a shared responsibility between Deputy Ministers, the Public Service Commission and the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Recruitment initiatives are key to addressing demographic changes, planning for the future of work, changes to the nature of work and the workplace, and building and maintaining the capacity to meet the expectations of Canadian citizens.

The Public Service of Canada is strongly committed to recruiting, developing and retaining a high performing workforce that can deliver on the government's current and future priorities.

This requires an approach to people management and recruitment that includes reviewing and testing new and innovative ways to attract top talent for a high performing public service that supports and strengthens diversity and inclusion and explores new ways to serve all Canadians.

Greater diversity and inclusion have been linked to better results for organizations, including higher productivity, lower turnover, better decision-making informed by diverse perspectives and enhanced overall performance and results.

Canada's demographic landscape is changing. The Public Service needs to continue to be a reflection of the citizens it serves, and provide quality bilingual services to the Canadian public.

There are currently 9 million youth across the country representing approximately one-quarter of the population.

The Indigenous population is projected to grow at twice the rate of the general population, and immigration accounts for two-thirds of Canada's current population growth.

According to the 2016 Census, if current population trends continue, the representation of Visible Minorities in Canadian society is projected to grow from 22.3% in 2016 to somewhere between 31.2% and 35.9% in the next two decades.

We strive to employ a diverse public service that reflects Canada and to be a model of inclusion for employers across Canada and around the world. To do that, the Public Service must keep pace with these changes, for example:

Budget 2018 proposed the creation of the Public Service Centre on Diversity, Inclusion and Wellness to support departments and agencies in creating safe, healthy, diverse and inclusive workplaces.

The Treasury Board Secretariat has been collaborating with key partners and is developing a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, as well as, a multi-year Action Plan, including targeted recruitment efforts that will serve the Public Service to increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Overall the public service is representative in each of the four employment equity designated groups since 2012.

We are proud that this overall representation has been sustained for the past six years, but we observe that gaps persist for certain occupational groups and levels in some departments and agencies, and efforts continue to address these.

An important part of improving diversity and inclusion in the public service includes exploring efforts and ideas to target recruitment and eliminate barriers in areas where we would like to increase representation such as Women in Scientific, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields; Visible Minorities in Scientific and Professional Groups; and Indigenous persons in executive ranks.

Through our continued efforts on diversity and inclusion and official languages, we will also be able to attract other segments of Canadian society.

The report on Language of Work in the federal public service released by the Clerk of the Privy Council, in 2017, recognizes diversity and inclusion and official languages as complementary values. By implementing the recommendations of this report, flexible and innovative approaches will be explored, such as options to reduce linguistic barriers in the recruitment of members of employment equity designated groups (e.g.: policy changes, improving access to language training, accommodations).

I am very proud of the success of the federal student employment programs.

These programs provide students with meaningful work experience, exposure to a wide range of jobs and future opportunities in the federal government.

They also allow managers to identify potential recruits with diverse backgrounds and skill sets who can later be hired as passionate public servants who bring new innovative ideas and want to make a difference.

We will build on our efforts to expand our learning from these experiences and apply the best practices.

Our focus remains on ensuring that we have the right people in the right jobs at the right time and that we are innovative in our approaches to attract talent of all ages.

Innovative recruitment initiatives help fast-track the ability to bring in or mobilize new talent as we work in partnership with departments and the Public Service Commission to increase access to talent.

Once new employees are recruited, it is also imperative to ensure effective support tools and practices are in place to support onboarding. The Canada School of Public Service delivers Public Service Orientation for all new employees to provide foundational learning on Values and Ethics and how the Public Service works. Departments have a critical role to play in onboarding new recruits that can include specialized departmental orientation and establishing performance agreements and learning plans to help ensure new employees are set up to succeed.

We have made strides already, but we are also working on the next phases to improve our understanding of the workforce, our needs and how to bring the best talent to the public service. This will help us navigate the disruptive changes that lie ahead like quantum computing, or machine learning and understand how this impacts our everyday employees who don't work on data or technology now, in the future.

In order to increase digital and data skills across such a large and diverse organization and to continue to deliver the high-quality services Canadians expect from us, we need to recruit more employees with these skills and also increase data literacy in our existing workforce. Because all public servants are data agents.

Recruitment is an important focus of government-wide HR planning for the future. We know we have already identified a shortage in certain areas. To address this, our focus will be to build strategies to address gaps.

We recognize in parallel that the public service working environment needs to adapt. We have put in place policies to help such as flexible work arrangements or working remotely when it makes sense. Some departments have moved along and now have technology to enable employees to work at any desk on any floor. These changes have enabled different people to come together easily to work together. We will continue to press forward and modernize other people management practices.

Our focus remains on ensuring that we have the right people in the right jobs at the right time, and that we are innovative in our approaches to attract talent of all ages from coast to coast to coast.

Thank you for your time.

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