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Chair

The Honourable Hedy Fry

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I would like to call the meeting to order, please. It is 3:30, and everyone seems to be here.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are undergoing a study on increasing the participation of women in non-traditional occupations. Today we have witnesses from the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists, Monsieur LeBlond and Yaroslav Zajac. From Carleton University we have Ms. Hellemans, assistant professor, Department of Psychology, Institute of Neuroscience. As an individual we have Wendy Cukier, associate dean, Ted Rogers School of Management from Ryerson University.

Before we begin, welcome, witnesses, and thank you for coming to talk about what is a very important topic. Second, I'd like to let you know some of the rules. Because you are three separate bodies of witnesses, so to speak—in fact, Monsieur LeBlond and Mr. Zajac are in one group of technology and technologists—each group has ten minutes to present. We're going to keep you to time, and then after that there's a round of questions and answers, which are also timed.

I will start you in the order in which I have you here on my agenda. We will now begin with the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists. Monsieur LeBlond and Mr. Zajac, you can decide if you want to divide your time or if one of you will speak or whatever.

Mr. Yaroslav Zajac (Executive Director, Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists (CCTT)): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, ladies and gentlemen, as we have been introduced, I am Yaroslav Zajac, the executive director of the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists. Beside me is Mr. Isidore LeBlond, who is the manager of program development at the Canadian council.

We wish to thank you most sincerely for inviting us. We are pleased that the work we have been doing in encouraging young women to consider careers in technology has in fact been brought to your attention, and hence this invitation to speak before you. Thank you very much for that. It is much appreciated.

Let me start by way of introducing CCTT as the national federation of ten provincial bodies that certify technicians and technologists across this country. We are also the body that accredits technology programs in community colleges across this country. At

this moment there are over 250 accredited technology programs that produce the skills that our future economy needs.

We represent about 53,000 certified technicians and technologists. Of those, I am sorry to say, only 8.3% are women. We are very concerned that this participation of women in this very important profession is so low. We are very cognizant of the human questions that you as a committee of Parliament have addressed. You have addressed issues of respect, of opportunity to get ahead in life, of avoidance of that glass ceiling that you all speak about. These are all vitally important human issues.

I would also like to put before this committee a question that relates to the same issue but from an economic point of view. If you think about the growth of the Canadian economy, then I put it to you that there is a centrality of technicians, technologists, and engineers to that growth. If growth in productivity within the economy is dependent upon innovation, then in fact it is the engineers who are generally the conceptors, the technologists who are there to take concepts and make them real by putting together systems, by sourcing systems, by making all those systems work, and then there are the technicians who operate and maintain. This is true for every sector of the Canadian economy, be it resources, services, manufacturing, or whatever.

In fact, if you look at productivity gains in whatever sector you wish to look at in Canada, they can only be enabled by technology. Think of a hospital. Think of a hotel. Those are service industries. They need technology and therefore they need the technology professionals to put them together. Take a look at that picture and say okay, there are only 8.3% women of this entire cadre of technicians and technologists in Canada. National statistics indicate that while there are 53,000 technicians and technologists, there are in fact 375,000 working as technicians and technologists. Our recent study done together with Engineers Canada has shown that the participation of women in that profession is only 19%.

Now, think about it this way. If you look at current projections of the cohort who is going into post-secondary education, last year, 2009, that cohort of 15- to 19-year-olds peaked and it will be steadily decreasing down and down. What that means is fewer people of post-secondary education age are coming into that level of schooling. And if you say that within that group only 19% are women within the technology professions, then that 19%, in absolute numbers, will also continue to go down and down, literally, in the next ten years.

•(1535)

What we're looking at is the need to increase total numbers of technicians, technologists, and professionals working in the technology fields, and we need to ensure that the 19%, which in absolute terms is going lower and lower, actually increases.

We're looking not just for gender equality; I suggest that we should be looking for gender balance, because we need more and more women in that economy. We need more women in the central factor that drives our economy, and therefore it is vitally important to look at ways in which we can indicate to young women that a career in the technology professions is of interest, is rewarding, and is contributing to the strengthened economy. For that reason we are busily working to encourage young people, and young women in particular, to consider careers in technology.

With that, I'll give the floor to my colleague, Isidore LeBlond.

Mr. Isidore LeBlond (Director, Program Development, Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists (CCTT)): Thank you, Yaro.

Good afternoon, everyone.

Our message is clear. How can Julie think about a career as a water quality technician or a food technologist if she doesn't know these occupations exist in the first place?

Last September the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists took part in the promotion of technology careers at World Skills 2009 in Calgary. National Technology Week and GoTechgirl hosted five demonstration areas within Canada House for the very first time. Imagine 5,000 students, teachers, educators, and parents per day for five straight days marveling at all the options available to them.

CCWESTT is another example. From May 13 to 15 this year, the Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology is holding its biannual conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Madame Matsui, the past president of CCWESTT, has already appeared before this committee.

National Technology Week and GoTechgirl will be playing host to the youth program during the CCWESTT conference. There will be four half-day sessions of interactive learning, tours, and real-time hands-on demonstrations.

We bring to your attention key findings of a recent high school survey that was conducted across Canada in five cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax. Finding number one was that the majority of young women do not have a good understanding of what applied science or engineering careers entail; therefore, they cannot aspire to those careers. Only 9% reported having heard of National Technology Week. This year marks our seventh year across the country.

A majority of young women have negative perceptions of engineering and technology occupations. Compared with young men, young women do not have role models who encourage them to consider technology careers in the first place. GoTechgirl is trying to disseminate career information to young women by tackling the negative perceptions.

And lastly, too few parents encourage their daughters to study math and science.

So what are the highlights of the GoTechgirl program? First, it is a registered trademark of the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists. Second, it is a national outreach campaign to educate and inform. Third, it is seeking out success stories and forming a champions list, a mentor list, to build the role models. Fourth, we have a number of national contests to encourage young people— young women specifically—to show us their skills across a number of areas. And lastly, we promote and put on technology camps. They're usually held in colleges and are hands-on Saturday morning sessions. Young women get to come with either mom or dad as their free ticket in to experience applied science and engineering technology occupations. These are held across the country and are gaining speed.

Do we need the program to grow? The obvious answer is yes. Do we need more resources? The answer again is yes. We are working with the private sector to do that. We represent 14 different sectors of technology, and we're doing a major outreach campaign to help us promote that. We're going to the workers, the employers who are looking for those workers of tomorrow, to help us to be part of the solution.

We bring forward to you today three recommendations. The first one is that together we must do more to educate and inform young women of the many career choices available through scholarships, mentors, information sharing like career nights for students and parents, and summer job programs for students in grades 9 to 12. And we must teach the influencers—the school counsellors, the teachers, and the parents—who face an enormous task.

Second, the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists welcomes the opportunity to work with the Museum of Science & Technology to develop TECH ZONES to promote those careers in technology.

•(1540)

Lastly, the Canadian council is a strong advocate of a national co-op placement program, especially in the areas of applied science and engineering technologies. In Canada, the greatest successes that take place are when the private and public sectors collaborate to attain a common good. That is our suggestion.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Before I move on, there's a show I really like because I'm that kind of techie freak, and it's called *NCIS*. The girl in *NCIS* is a technologist, and she is so hard-hitting and funky and everything. I think "GoTechGirls" should get her as their role model. She is absolutely fabulous.

Now, Ms. Hellemans from Carleton University, Department of Psychology, Institute of Neuroscience. Ten minutes.

Dr. Kim Hellemans (Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Institute of Neuroscience, Carleton University): Hello, everybody. Good afternoon. Thank you again for having me speak here today.

I'm speaking on behalf of the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology. I am a woman who entered a non-traditional career. I am a neuroscientist, which most people when I say it think nursing science. No, neuroscience.

• (1545)

[Translation]

I am very happy to be here today, particularly since this subject is a particular passion of mine.

[English]

I'm a former board member of the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology. I was on the board from 2006 to 2008. It's a 29-year-old registered charitable organization and it has roughly 200 members across Canada, although SCWIST is based in B.C., particularly Vancouver. SCWIST has programs for young girls; "ms infinity" is our program for young girls. It has programs for students, undergraduates, graduates, post-doctoral fellows, also women who are continuing in their careers in science, engineering, and technology. It also has a program for immigrating women in science, called IWIS, which is what I'm going to be focusing on today.

The IWIS program was initiated by SCWIST in 2001 with the idea of supporting internationally trained women professionals in science, engineering, and technology through the process of their assimilation in the professional scene in B.C. and Canada, commensurate with their education, training, and experience.

IWIS has recently developed a newsletter and a blog. It has a wonderful presence on the Internet, and I have in my notes, which will be disseminated, the address for you so that you can go and take a look.

I want to talk a little bit about the Canadian landscape. Rick Miner, who is the president emeritus of Seneca College and a human relations consultant, recently stated that Canada is faced with an aging population, and that severe labour shortages will coincide with a surplus of jobs requiring skills and educational attainment. It is estimated that by 2031, 80% of all new jobs will require skilled workers who need more than a high school education. And this is interesting, because it is up from 65% today. CCWESTT, which my colleagues have previously mentioned, a national coalition of women in science, engineering, trades and technology, makes a compelling business case that it makes no sense to exclude half the Canadian population from participation in technical fields.

IWIS provides a unique support for women. The broad goals of IWIS are to increase knowledge; build community and individual capabilities of immigrant women in science, engineering, and technology through building communities; and providing networking and skill development events for immigrating women in sciences and technology. In the eight years of its existence, the program has successfully helped immigrant women in science, engineering, and technology to work through the practical and systemic barriers in finding suitable professional opportunities by facilitating community participation, mentorship and networking opportunities within professional circles, and building connections with local employers, immigrant settlement, and employment agencies. With these functions, IWIS is a growing community of dynamic women with immense capability and potential.

A positive recent advancement is that Engineers Canada has created an assessment form for international engineers. However, the challenges faced by men and women immigrating to Canada are unique. For example, immigrating women are less likely to have opportunities to learn English and French, get retrained, and find a community of women scientists. Men and women face different barriers, so programs that work for men may not necessarily work for women.

Data published by Statistics Canada in February 2010 on immigrants working in regulated professions is a positive step in describing the labour market in Canada. For example, between 2001 and 2006, 42% of immigrants who landed in Canada had a university degree, compared with 16% of Canadians. In 2006, 41% of university-educated, working-age immigrants had studied in fields that would typically place them in regulated occupations such as health, law, and engineering. Fifty-two percent of foreign-educated immigrant graduates had engineering degrees, of whom 71% were male and 26% were women; only 19% of them were employed in engineering: 20% of the men and 12% of the women.

We believe at SCWIST and IWIS in helping women directly. In fact, our IWIS chair at SCWIST herself is an immigrant to Canada. Her name is Gülnur Birol, and she immigrated to Canada from Turkey in 2005. She says:

My experience as an immigrant woman has been quite different since I came from the United States; that is where I got the "North American/Canadian" experience. As such I was able to find a meaningful job right away. However, SCWIST has been extremely important in my transition in the sense that when I came here I started from scratch as far as my network goes.

So networks are something we are definitely emphasizing as important.

• (1550)

Meeting like minded women in science and technology facilitated my transition tremendously. It helped me see other women—immigrant or not—who have been in transition and their experiences as they go through this transition. It was an "aha" moment for me to realize that I was not the "only" one and I was just in transition. Half of my network is as a result of my interactions with SCWIST. The workshops that SCWIST put forth have been invaluable in clarifying my career and personal goals, helped me stay in focus and more importantly empowered me to take the next steps in my career. For that I am grateful and that is why I wanted to join the SCWIST board to give back to the community and I am glad that I did.

So what is needed? I'm sure I'm not the first person to mention child care.

We need to facilitate the recognition of foreign credentials. Although we recognize the government has made steps, it's clear we need further movement in this direction.

We need further mentoring and timely language skills workshops. We need networking workshops, employer connection workshops, and sector specific workshops. We need events to facilitate immigrants to connect with current Canadian society. We need community round tables and basic skills workshops, on résumé writing, interviews, Canadian culture introduction, career goal setting, and how to transition into a new culture.

We need opportunities to facilitate immigrants to somehow get some Canadian experience. You cannot get a job in Canada without Canadian experience, but it's impossible to get Canadian experience. For example, we could develop a program where companies can take on skilled immigrant workers, such as co-op or volunteer experience. There's a company in Vancouver called FutureWorks, which works with the provincial government to support and help with training of new hires.

There are obviously cultural and language barriers. We need more convenient channels to help immigrants build up their confidence. Many immigrants report that they feel their training is devalued in a new country. Another program in Vancouver, called SUCCESS, has set a good example. However, we need much more.

To conclude, Canada will face an acute skills shortage, and it needs to develop fast-track programs to use skilled immigrant workers more efficiently. It typically takes about ten years for immigrants to reach their education-appropriate level of employment in Canada. In many cases immigrants will require further education and training in order to take advantage of available opportunities.

Immigrant women form a very special group of people with highly specialized skills and knowledge. They can contribute tremendously to the Canadian workforce.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

You're probably one of the first people who has talked about the cross-cutting factor of immigrant women as one of the factors we have to look at in non-traditional work.

Now, Wendy Cukier.

Ms. Wendy Cukier (Associate Dean, Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University, As an Individual): Thanks very much. I'm pleased to be here.

I will try not to repeat what has been said by the other panellists, although I very much endorse some of their key points.

I'm going to provide a high-level presentation drawing on a number of studies that Ryerson's Diversity Institute in Management and Technology has conducted in recent years. Unfortunately, most of them are only available in English, but if people want to follow up with me, I would be happy to provide more detail.

These studies include one for the Information and Communications Technology Council, looking at diversity, competitive advantage, with a focus on the ICT sector, and a study with Catalyst, which surveyed 17,000 middle managers across Canada, 7,000 of whom worked in technology sectors and 3,000 of whom were women. A recent study on unemployment in Peel showed a huge disconnect between the needs of employers and the available labour market. It was not a skills shortage, it was a skills mismatch. The jobs were there, the people were there, they weren't getting connected. I think that needs to be addressed. I guess the most recent project is one with the Canadian Advanced Technology Alliance, which looks specifically at best practices for attracting and retaining women in Canada's technology sector.

So I'm going to try to draw from those studies at a high level. But the Diversity Institute is focused primarily on fact-based strategies to promote inclusion. We are in a business school, and for that reason we very much endorse the notion that inclusion is not just—although it clearly is—a matter of equity and human rights. Inclusion is also a matter of national competitiveness and innovation. We would like to see a better linkage between many of the social and developmental policies and the economic and innovation policies because they are so clearly linked.

Because I'm used to talking in three-hour blocks and I have 10 minutes, maybe only seven now, I'll start with my conclusions. The paper is high level because I wanted to stick to the 10 pages, but there are a few key points that I want to ensure I communicate.

The first thing is that I've entitled my paper "More than Just Numbers, Revisited" because I've been working on this issue for 20 years. Many of you will recall after the Montreal massacre that there was a huge focus on women in technology professions. The Canadian Council for Professional Engineers produced the "More than Just Numbers" report in 1992, which recommended an integrated strategy to promote women in engineering in particular, but it has implications for women in other non-traditional occupations.

I regret to say that many of the recommendations in that report almost 20 years ago are just as valid today as they were then. We made some progress, but in the last decade there has been considerable backsliding, and in fact you'll see from the data that today in Canada there is a lower percentage of women in computer science than there was 20 years ago. The participation of women in engineering increased over the 1990s, peaking in 2001, and since then it has declined, not quite back to the same level. In contrast we've seen tremendous growth of women in biotech and life sciences. We've seen tremendous growth of women in business and management programs, and the participation of women in mathematics programs at universities is well over 40% today. So the notion that women are excluded from technology professions because they don't do math is simply fallacious.

The CATA WIT study—Canadian Advanced Technology Alliance Women in Technology—which is hundreds of pages long, focused on best practices in employment. We did a lot of work with companies like IBM and Hewlett Packard and so on to look at best practices for attracting, retaining, and advancing women. However, working on this for the last 20 years, I'm absolutely convinced that those measures are important. Things we do at universities are also important. But many of the critical decisions that set young women's lives in motion are a result of influences that affect them as early as grade three.

•(1555)

We need an integrated strategy. We need a strategy that focuses on upstream issues. We need a strategy that looks at the broad environment.

The other thing I have to say is that over the last 20 years—and we did a study where we evaluated 75 different programs—there has been a huge amount of energy and attention focused on this issue, lots of resources invested, very little longitudinal evaluation done to identify initiatives that work, as opposed to initiatives that are well intentioned. So obviously one of my themes, coming from a university, is the need to really emphasize the real evaluations—not the one-page evaluations that many organizations submit at the end of their funding—that look not just at satisfaction and participation levels, but also look at impact, at longitudinal effects over time.

The other thing that I want to underscore, which the other speakers have done, is the intersections between race and ethnicity and immigrant status, disability, sexual orientation, and so on. Our research showed very clearly that in large high-tech companies like Hewlett Packard and IBM, there is a slight gap between men and women in perceptions of fairness. Women feel excluded from informal networks. They don't feel they have the same opportunities. But the gap between white Caucasians and visible minorities is far greater than the gap between men and women, so the intersection between those issues is critical. Similarly, whether we're talking about engineers, lawyers, politicians, the intersections between gender and socio-economic conditions and class are huge.

I was the daughter of a single secretary who was widowed at the age of 33. I found out what an engineer was when I was 22 years old, surrounded by them working in a government office. I thought engineers were the guys at the back of the train in the caboose. There is a huge class and socio-economic dimension to young people's

choices that often gets obscured, and we have to make sure that all residents of Canada have equal opportunities.

The notion of the links between social and economic policy is absolutely fundamental. Affordable, accessible day care is an issue that was raised across the country in all of our discussions—both the survey of over 3,000 women and also the consultation. It's a huge issue. It has a huge impact on women's ability to stay in the workforce.

The paper that is in front of me...

Dr. Fry, how many minutes do I have left?

•(1600)

The Chair: You have one and a half minutes.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: Okay.

So within the paper, which goes through, in great detail, what's happened with the numbers, it talks about early interventions, the socialization of girls, what happens at high school, what happens at university, what happens in the workplace, and I paid particular attention to what governments can do at all levels. It's messy. It's federal, it's provincial, and it's local, but we need strategies.

I will just mention a couple of points, which I hope will stay with you.

Standardized testing in grade three.... We're talking about seven- and eight-year-old children. Little girls outperform little boys in both mathematics and in English, but when they are asked, "Are you good at mathematics? Are you good at English?", little boys are more likely to say yes. That confidence gap has an enormous impact on the choices that young girls make, that mature women make. It affects not just women in engineering and technology and the sciences, it also affects women in law and it certainly affects women in politics. The things that Equal Voice is doing have just as much relevance in terms of the socialization of girls as any of the specific things targeted at math and science.

So that's one point I want to make, because I think—

The Chair: Now you have another 15 seconds.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: Fifteen seconds?

The Chair: Some of it can come out in questions.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: In terms of the political context, the last thing I want to note is that governments can play a huge role. The Auditor General's report in 2009 said that we've lost gender-based analysis. In spite of the obligation to do it, it's not being done.

I would say that re-embracing gender-based analysis and mainstreaming gender when you're looking at innovation, at sectoral policies, and at economic development policies, is absolutely fundamental to creating an environment in which all women can succeed.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Wendy.

I'm just looking at all of your degrees, and I'm saying that as the daughter of a single secretary, you've certainly come a long way, ma'am.

We will begin with seven minutes of questions and answers. I just want to explain quickly that those seven minutes include the questions and the answers. I just want to give you due warning of that.

We will begin with Michelle Simson, for the Liberals.

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

I'd like to thank all of the witnesses for coming out. It's been really fascinating—rather depressing, as a woman, but fascinating.

I'd like to start with Mr. LeBlond. In your presentation you specifically say that “the majority of young women do not have a good understanding of what applied science or engineering technology careers entail and therefore cannot aspire to those careers”.

You used an example, saying that if Julie doesn't know those careers exist, she's not going to take that type of career path. How is it that little Johnny knows and little Julie doesn't? I mean, they go to school together. I'm just fascinated by that. I know it's true, but I'm wondering what we're missing.

• (1605)

Mr. Isidore LeBlond: That's a very great question. Part of the understanding of little Johnny is that he's probably surrounded by people around him who are actually practising and working in those areas. Other people, such as friends, relatives, and neighbours, talk about it. They know about things. They come home and they hear the different things that are talked about. Little Julie doesn't have anybody around her in her surroundings who says “This is what I do”.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Well, wouldn't she have the same brother, father, grandfather, or uncle? She's in the same family unit. This is just a question, but is it the family unit or the way they view it that's excluding her from even a conversation in regard to perhaps going into that area? What's your view?

Mr. Isidore LeBlond: I believe you've hit it right on the head. It's the family unit. Yes.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: We've heard a lot about role models. I'll ask each of you this. Is there is no way that a role model can be effective if it's cross-gender?

When I was growing up—and I'm going to date myself—from the time I was 10 until I was 19, I wanted to be a lawyer because I used to love watching *Perry Mason*. That was a male role model. I didn't want to be the nurse on one of the hospital shows.

How much does that come into play? I'll ask each of you to quickly respond to that.

Dr. Kim Hellemans: I can definitely respond as somebody who has been through that experience. As a scientist, I can say without a doubt that if I didn't have female role models who balanced life and family and science, I wouldn't be here today. It's definitely the case that women half a generation to a generation earlier didn't have those women mentors, because women who went into science didn't have families. It was very rare to see a female full professor who had a family.

I think there is something about looking at somebody and saying, “I can be like them and I can do what they're doing”.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: But you're saying that it has to be a woman?

Dr. Kim Hellemans: For the most part, yes, I think so.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Thank you.

Wendy.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: It wasn't translated so it's not in my report, but a number of studies have shown that different variables play a role. There are individual variables. There's your character. Maybe you play with Meccano sets or maybe you play with Barbie dolls. It depends on the environment you grow up in. Parents are a very big influence. Parents, the research shows, are much more of an influence on girls than they are on boys. Peers are more likely to be an influence on boys.

One of the things that can have an impact and that could have had an impact on someone like me, for example, coming as I did from a single-mother secretary family, is what we call a transforming experience. So a teacher, a guidance counsellor, or a family friend who introduced me to the notion.... Girls are more likely to become engineers if someone in their family has been an engineer. Girls are more likely to be police officers if someone in their family has been a police officer.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: But that would be true of a lot boys, wouldn't you say? You see them. At General Motors they went on the line. You hear about that.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: Exactly. The broader cultural context has a huge impact. Gender roles have a huge impact on the aspirations of little girls from an early age. In one study of 14-year-olds—it was in the U.S., but it could have been here—little girls were asked what they would like to be: President of the United States, president of a university, head of a corporation, or personal assistant to a celebrity.

An hon. member: Oh, no.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: The Barbie doll and Britney Spears influences are pervasive. I say that because there's a huge difference between North American culture and many other cultures in these gender roles. In the report, I refer to places like some eastern European countries and countries in the Far East where you don't see the gender splits. It's culture.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Okay.

Mr. LeBlond.

Mr. Isidore LeBlond: Mine's a completely different background. I grew up exposed to construction all my life. I wanted to be an architect. I went to school. In high school, in the past, we had these things called shops, and it was the shop teacher who guided me down a certain path. Look around today: those shops have disappeared from our educational system. Sally or George would have had access to those shops. They are gone from the Canadian system. It's unfortunate.

• (1610)

Mr. Yaroslav Zajac: If I may, Madam Chair, I'll support and build up the theme that Wendy just put forward, and that is the theme of influencers.

With the rise of such television programs as *CSI*, where do you think a majority of applications for community college programs are? People have oversubscribed in a major way to those crime scene types of programs that are being offered within the community colleges system.

Second, the Government of Canada over the last three or four years has spent many dollars to promote apprenticeships in Canada. Apprenticeships were for many years the hot button for the Government of Canada. If you look at the examples that were given, if you look at the television commercials that were put forward, the effect is there. The effect is that a lot of—most, in fact—trade programs within community colleges are oversubscribed, and there is a phenomenal waiting list.

Yet, again on the theme of influencers, if you look at where we don't provide the influencers.... And I would suggest influencers, as Wendy has said, are role models, and as Isidore has said, are family. I would also suggest that they are counsellors and teachers. All of these influencers need to be influenced. That, I would suggest, is a valuable conclusion that this committee may wish to address.

The Chair: Thank you.

I think we've just finished our seven minutes. It was a very good round.

Monsieur Desnoyers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome, everyone.

I have to admit that we have not yet looked closely at the subject your presentations are talking about today.

First, Mr. LeBlond, how is your federation organized in Quebec? Does it represent the people you are talking about?

Mr. Isidore LeBlond: It represents about 4,000 technologists in applied sciences and technology. It is the Ordre des technologues professionnels du Québec.

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: You said that it includes technicians and technologists. I imagine it covers both components.

Mr. Isidore LeBlond: That's right.

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: In the private sector, be it the aerospace industry, the auto industry or other major industries, there will be

growing numbers of white collar workers and declining numbers of blue collar workers. These are technicians now. I am thinking more specifically of the aerospace industry, about 24.4% of which, as your report shows, Ms. Cukier, is comprised of woman.

This is an industry of the future, as we know. The federal government has injected over \$13 billion into military equipment: planes, engines, etc. Using these and other programs, could the federal government do more to encourage women to enter these programs?

I would like to hear from Ms. Cukier first, and then I would like to hear from Mr. Leblond.

[*English*]

Ms. Wendy Cukier: Thank you for the question.

I think there's a great deal that the government can do from an educational point of view in terms of supporting innovative programs. The thing that would have the most profound and immediate effect would be for the government to use its influence, its procurement and communications policies, to promote this.

For example, in the United States, when there was a lot of emphasis on affirmative action, there were very clear targets and questions in procurement policies. In theory the federal contractors program has reporting requirements, but I can tell you from the study that we have done on the aerospace industry, the defence industry, and many other sectors that depend very heavily on government money that these sectors don't track, report, promote, or invest in women. The government has tremendous influence in using its buying power to incent behaviours that will make this a higher priority.

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Isidore LeBlond: We hope that our "GoTechgirl" program will get federal government support so it has support in the secondary schools, especially in secondary 1, 2 and 3 in Quebec and across Canada. We have to promote careers so that young people and parents know there are job opportunities for them if they are well educated, and that this requires two or three years of training at community college or cégep.

We also hope the government supports the co-op programs, and provides more support for employers who would like to give people a chance to participate in them. To do that, they need a little support. This program is national.

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: Would you be more in favour of establishing more specific schools? For example, in the aerospace industry, technicians are trained at cégeps. That kind of school, rather than a large school where everyone is mixed in together, would it encourage women to enter the field?

[English]

Ms. Wendy Cukier: I can say that we had a program in Ontario a few years ago called "Double the Pipeline". It created more space in the universities and colleges for engineers and technologists, but they couldn't fill the spaces. There's no question that there are ways to teach, ways to mainstream technology, so that all students are exposed to technology and all students are taught math and science in ways that make sense to them. There is a lot of experience around experimenting with those kinds of pedagogies.

While making more programs available at the CEGEP and university level might be helpful and would make us happy, I would argue that the real issues are earlier in the pipeline, on the one hand, and among the employers, because you can put people through the programs, but if they end up with employers who are not supportive of women or with employers who don't deliberately attract women, then you're not addressing the problem.

I think that's part of the solution, but again I'd say, "Think pipeline". Think about expanding the pipeline and plugging its leaks.

Mr. Yaroslaw Zajac: I find myself supporting Wendy all the time, and that's good.

Very often an individual making a decision about a career path in technology—let's take engineers—who decides to become a resource engineer working within the resource industry will suddenly find that the resource industry is absolutely dead. Now the person has no prospects for employment, and suddenly the decision that the young man or lady made four years ago is a wasted decision.

Therefore, as Wendy has suggested, a broad-based approach is vitally important. I'm going back to a theme that I've said before, which is that the need to influence the people who provide information to young people in Canada is very important. The other—

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: We were just talking about the people who have influence, like the government, companies, family. Right now, however, with a significant and urgent need in those industries, we know that we have a lot of women in their thirties who have unfortunately lost their jobs because of the crisis, and who want to change directions. How could we help them get back into the labour market?

Ms. Cukier and then Ms. Hellemans could answer that question.

• (1620)

[English]

The Chair: We're going to have to make your answers very short, because we're over time.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: There should be multiple pathways for exactly the point that you raise.

Dr. Kim Hellemans: I agree.

The Chair: Okay, thank you very much.

Thank you, Monsieur Desnoyers.

For the Conservatives, Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Good afternoon, everyone. It is very nice to see you. It is interesting to see the image we often have of women, whether it comes from family or from the media. I do a lot of work on the possibility of examining the image of women in society.

I come from a family of police officers and prison directors. I wanted to be an electrician and linewoman. I remember in 1979-1980, at school in Trois-Rivières, I was told I would do secretarial work. I didn't like that and I changed fields.

Certainly governments, whether municipal, provincial or federal, have things they need to do, but the image that is projected of women in those trades, and you talked a lot about women with careers and women technologists, is very rarely seen.

Would you consider it important that we work precisely toward having not just role models, but also women mentors who are able to "sell" these non-traditional careers in a positive way so that people respect women for their abilities and their desire to achieve their dreams?

I would like to know what the men think.

Mr. Isidore LeBlond: We in fact thought of starting the "GoTechgirl" program. It was for exactly that reason. We produce T-shirts and graphics. It is positive, interesting and creative. Girls need to be in a special club for themselves where they can ask questions and get answers in a situation where they are just among themselves and not in competition with boys.

So we start in grade 7, talking to them about careers and occupations. It has to be positive. The competition works and is for all the people you talked about.

That is why I have 14 different hats in my office. Whether it is architecture or mechanical and electrical work, what is essential is to give the teachers, and most importantly the parents, the information to persuade them, for example, to let their daughters do what they want. If they want to do it, they have to be given the opportunity. It's positive and it is happening.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I remember that at one time we talked here about the Economic Action Plan and it was said that there was no mention of women. I have looked at it, and I can say that isn't true. I have seen that a woman in construction is in fact a woman who is in construction. That really struck me, because now that is being talked about more and more.

It started way back. Unfortunately, or fortunately, now, we are able to push our girls more. I have two daughters, aged 20 and 21. I push them to go into non-traditional occupations, but obviously there are the media, the Britney Spears and company, who give mothers headaches because that is really not what we want our daughters to become.

Do you think mentoring is important? In your fields, do you have reliable, solid mentors who are able to get our girls where they want to go and not where the parents want them to go? Can you go so far as to tell our children that they should follow their dreams and not the ones that have been achieved? Can you tell them to achieve their dreams? Can you go that far?

[English]

Mr. Yaroslav Zajac: If we speak about the GoTechgirl campaign, there are about 20-odd mentors who can be reached through Facebook by any young woman. That allows any young woman to ask, what is it like to be a biotechnician? They can pose that question to a biotechnologist via Facebook. We need much more capacity to provide that type of mentoring activity to young women. We need more capacity to deliver that type of information to young women. One approach we have used is Facebook. That's obviously a very popular one, but these social networking things pass by rather quickly, and all of a sudden it's something else.

The more we did that, the more access we had to young women and the more we were able to convey that. Again, I go back to the theme of influencing. Why are school counsellors not familiar with such things? Why are school vice-principals, who are very generally involved with these components of career planning, not informed? Why are they not focused on women? "Oh, Sally, you clearly don't want to go to university. You know, a dental hygienist would be a great career for you." Yes, but that's, again, stereotyping. It's the ability of our influencers not to stereotype that I think is a major achievement that needs to be achieved.

● (1625)

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Last week, we met with a group of women by teleconference. They specifically said that in their non-traditional fields, they do not sexualize their approach. In construction, they look at themselves as being like everyone else and start at the same level as everyone else. I think that is a positive message to send to girls.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're trying to work out some timing here for going another round or not.

Now we have, for the NDP, Ms. Mathysen.

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

Thank you very much for being here and providing this expertise.

Again, I have so many questions. I hope I can get through at least some of them.

Ms. Cukier, I didn't have a chance to go through this as thoroughly as I would have liked. I did note in this paper that there are a number of reasons, a range of factors influencing the decision for young women not to pursue technology careers. I found it interesting that both you and Ms. Hellemans mentioned child care and the lack of child care as the number one constraint when it comes to young women. I wonder if you could comment on that and the other factors suggested, in terms of women making these decisions.

Dr. Kim Hellemans: Yes, child care is a huge issue, and I can speak to this personally. I spent 13 years in post-secondary education, and by the time I was ready for a job and a tenure track position at a university, I was at prime child-bearing age. Many young women who are highly trained in these fields feel the same way. They build their career and put off child rearing altogether.

Then it becomes an issue because they may not want to take time outside of their career to raise a family, or they put it off and put it off, and then have issues related to fertility, which is a big issue in women in our community. There are issues of not being able to be up for tenure at the same time as their male colleagues. Many women may not want to take a full year of maternity leave, because you've always got job pressures.

That's not just university. That's in many other positions as well. A lot of women choose to have their children during their masters or PhD, where child care is a huge issue.

So putting money and resources into child care I think is a wonderful way to go.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: I'll echo that. There's also a class issue. Particularly for young women in lower socio-economic levels, the decision to work or not is often a question of affordable child care.

If you look at the best companies in which to work in Canada, they're almost always companies with on-site child care and, increasingly, elder care and other forms of support for women.

In the high-tech sector in particular, we heard in our consultations about one of the real challenges—this is true for academics as well. If you take time off to have children you get out of the loop. You don't just get out of the loop; you don't have your publications, and you're not going to conferences. Technology changes just like that, so progressive companies, and presumably institutions, put in mechanisms to support women and men who are on parental leave so they don't get out of date, they stay plugged in, and so on.

So I think it's a case where there's real intersection.

● (1630)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

Ms. Cukier, in your opening remarks you referenced the initial document as being more than just numbers, as being the result of a response to what happened in 1989 at École Polytechnique.

I'm going to date myself now, because when I was an undergrad at the University of Western Ontario there was a real barrier for women considering engineering. It just wasn't the place for women. There was a sort of rough and tumble attitude that I think might have been intimidating. One of the things we've heard from presenters is that harassment, sexual harassment, is part and parcel why a lot of women don't go into trades traditionally regarded for males, and perhaps the professional schools.

I'm wondering to what degree women may be avoiding this kind of job or professional school because they feel vulnerable, isolated, or even unsafe.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: I would say it's a factor today, but not as much as it was. When I started working—and I was in an engineering-dominated environment more than 20 years ago—there were sunshine girls on the walls. My colleagues talked about female anatomy the way they talked about what was on the sports pages—including the women around us. The one time they took me out for lunch they took me to a strip joint to see how I would react.

That would not happen in a government agency today. So I would argue that a lot of the safeguards in place have dealt with some of the really bad cases of harassment in government and in very large organizations, particularly for professional, white, middle-class women. However, in small and medium-sized enterprises they often don't even know there's a human rights code. In some engineering schools and technology schools the behaviour of the students is still appalling. The anti-racism task force at Ryerson just issued its report and found lots of evidence that racism is still a problem at my university.

So I would say that harassment and the other things you mentioned are still a problem, and we're kidding ourselves if we pretend they've been wiped out. At the same time, the environment is much healthier than it was 20 years ago. The biggest impediments are not overt discrimination and harassment. The biggest impediments are the systemic barriers: exclusion from the informal networks; people saying you don't want to work in the oil industry because it's dirty and your hair will get messed up.

The informal and systemic barriers are actually tougher to address because they're harder to see. That's why I think it's really important to continue this work.

The Chair: Thank you.

That round is over. In order for us to get through a second round and still have our half hour on future business, I'm going to move the five-minute slot to a four-minute slot. That will get us all to fit in nicely and get on with our jobs.

So I shall begin my second round with Liberal Anita Neville.

•(1635)

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you all for coming today. This is a very interesting panel.

I want to just pay a bit of attention to the immigrant women you talked about. I was really struck just at the end here, Ms. Cukier, when you talked about the informal and systemic barriers for women, period. I was struck by how profound they must be for immigrant women, whether it's in a learning facility or whether it's in the job. I appreciated your comments on procurement. That's very concrete in terms of what the federal government can do.

Could anybody give us some definitive recommendations in terms of immigrant women? Clearly, there's a lot of talent coming into this country that we are not taking advantage of.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: Maybe let's let Kim have her share.

Dr. Kim Hellemans: From what I've heard from the women I've worked with, there are two big issues. Number one, it's faster training to get them ready for the Canadian workforce. As I

mentioned in my notes, it's often ten years before they're actually certified to work in the Canadian—

Hon. Anita Neville: Is that access to institutions, or credentials?

Dr. Kim Hellemans: It's credentials, that's right. The second one is facilitating language and getting into the Canadian culture and networking with other groups of women. So it would be some centralized facility or site that could, once they immigrate to Canada, say this is where they go, these are the local networks, the actual virtual things so we can give them resources.

Hon. Anita Neville: Are there enough ESL classes for special purposes?

Ms. Wendy Cukier: What was quite shocking about our study in Peel, and we surveyed 3,000 people—immigrants, non-immigrants, employed, unemployed—was that only 40% of the immigrants said they were satisfied with the services available, and only 25% of the immigrants with post-secondary education indicated that they were satisfied with the services available. This doesn't just apply to just women; it applies to men as well. I would say the fragmentation of services—and I think that's Kim's point—and even the funding model that promotes competition rather than cooperation and one-size-fits-all sorts of solutions really do not serve well-educated immigrant men or women. So that's one point.

On the second point, on the happier side, there's really good evidence that programs like the ones offered by the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council and groups that offer internship and mentoring kinds of formal programs have interesting results. Immigrants who go through those programs get jobs less quickly, so other immigrants get jobs faster, but the immigrants who go through the mentoring and the internship programs get better jobs, are paid more, and spend less time trying to get back to the level at which they entered. There's huge research to support the incredible impact of having those kinds of internship and mentoring programs available.

As well, it's not just about ESL. There are many immigrants who come to Canada who actually are anglophones, but they speak with an accent. They don't understand the cultural norms. They don't understand the modes of communication, etc. So the bridging programs that are needed for professional immigrants are much more sophisticated, complex, and customized in terms of their needs than a lot of the programs that are currently available and supported by the existing funding models.

Hon. Anita Neville: I don't have any time.

The Chair: Yes, you do. You only have about 30 seconds.

Hon. Anita Neville: How are the existing models currently funded, by federal or provincial governments, or jointly?

• (1640)

Ms. Wendy Cukier: Both, all.

Hon. Anita Neville: Everything.

Okay, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now, for the Conservatives, Ms. Brown.

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

This has been very interesting. I studied music and economics, but to put myself through my music degree, I worked in a drafting office. I had a multitude of jobs in that capacity. So I'm very interested in seeing women in technology jobs. I had the advantage of being in a high school where there was a tech department. I had the opportunity to choose credits from the tech wing. Would you want to see that as part of a core curriculum? Do you think that's the conversancy we need to be encouraging? I fully recognize that's under provincial jurisdiction, but do you think that would help solve the problem?

Mr. Yaroslaw Zajac: I think it's a question of a focus. If you take the average grade school student, average high school student, that individual can name you the planets in their orbits in the right order in the solar system and around the sun. That's science. That same individual cannot tell you how a telephone works.

We teach science—and it's vitally important, and it's good—but we do not take that one step further and start teaching applied science. So when an individual starts making a decision about going into an applied science field, that bridge is not there, and that decision is not made.

If I had my druthers, I would knock on the door of the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education and I would say, “Change your curricula in the school systems. Focus not specifically on science but on applied science so that an individual starting to make a career choice can actually think in terms of applied science.” At the moment, they do not.

Ms. Lois Brown: One of the things we see is the speed of the evolution of technology. There are technologist jobs available today that, when I was in school, weren't even dreamed of. We had x-ray technicians. Now we have MRIs and CAT scans and technologists to go with each of those new criteria. I look at that, and I see there's a constant evolution. I see more women in those jobs, partly I think because they're what we would call clean jobs, not welding jobs. I think there's a basic attraction there.

I did want to speak to Ms. Hellemans as well about the issue of credentials. Again, as a federal government, we're dealing with a constitution that allows that part to be handled by the provinces. We have currently across Canada—I was vice-president of a regulated health college in Ontario—447 credentialing agencies across Canada where you can't even move from one jurisdiction to another without having to reapply and recertify. How do you see the federal government working in that area?

Dr. Kim Hellemans: I cannot give you an answer to that because my knowledge of this is very limited. I'm speaking on behalf of

someone who wasn't able to come today, so I will confess and say I don't know.

Ms. Lois Brown: Do you have any ideas from your experience? I think it would be helpful for the committee to hear those, and any suggestions. Obviously our government is looking. There are currently some agreements in Alberta and B.C. where the provinces themselves have gotten together and said they need to solve this problem because of the demand. I think there are some initiatives we could—

Dr. Kim Hellemans: Is there no regulating—

Ms. Lois Brown: It's provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Yaroslaw Zajac: I wonder if I might dive in here.

The agreement on internal trade, in chapter seven, now says that if a credential is awarded in one province, it must be recognized in another. That's law in Canada. However, the implementation of that is going very slowly.

The other component that ties in with what Kim has been speaking about is the whole idea of foreign credential recognition and the framework to ensure that an individual has his or her credentials recognized very quickly, specifically within a year of arrival in Canada, or that a program is put together to allow that individual to in fact attain the credential that is needed in Canada based on Canadian prerequisites. Those things are in place, but....

• (1645)

The Chair: Just finish your sentence, Mr. Zajac.

Mr. Yaroslaw Zajac: What is happening is that the embryo of that is there, but we need to accelerate it. We need to make sure that what is already in place is in fact implemented fully, and it is not at the moment.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now, from the Bloc Québécois, Madame Demers.

[Translation]

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

Thank you for being with us today. I found your comments extremely interesting. In particular, I was very relieved to see that I was not the only one who thought I couldn't do math, even though I have been managing my budget and paying my debts and bills for 60 years.

Ms. Cukier, you said that a number of recommendations were made 20 years ago, after the tragedy at the Montreal Polytechnique, but very few of those recommendations were acted on. We are still at the same point. I wonder whether this is connected with the fact that fewer women are now enrolled in engineering and technology.

Have we succeeded in making those who have taken these kinds of courses feel welcome? Are we now able to make them welcome and retain them, are there structures for bringing them in and retaining them, that are properly adapted to make them feel comfortable alongside their colleagues and coworkers? Could that be part of the problem?

[English]

Ms. Wendy Cukier: I want to be clear that there are more females in engineering today than there were 20 years ago. There are fewer computer scientists. But we've seen a decline of women in engineering since 2000 so that's one thing worth noting.

I think the "More Than Just Numbers" report set out a very strong conceptual framework without anything to support the implementation or the accountability. Whether we're talking about employment equity legislation, a national strategy around women in technology, or foreign credential recognition; implementation and accountability, I would say, are the big gaps. That's why I think there have been a lot of programs and a lot of good ideas but they've been very fragmented and there hasn't been the follow-up to say, okay, three years later, where are we? People will say we had brochures, we had events, we had people do this and that, but where are we in terms of our goals? I think that really, to move us forward on these issues we need not only the strategy, but we need the teeth and the commitment to follow through.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Ms. Hellemans and Ms. Cukier, you said that some choices were available to women in their thirties who wanted to go back to school. You didn't have time to give us more details about that. Could you do that now?

[English]

Ms. Wendy Cukier: Yes.

I am not an engineer. One of the things that I think is very important to emphasize—I'm glad you asked the question—is that many of the people working in technology jobs are not technologists, are not engineers, but they're what we would call hybrids. So a business student who does a minor in biotechnology could work in the technology sector. A business student who does a minor in information technology management can work in the technology sector. A psychology student who studies human computer interactions can work in the technology sector. We can also think smarter about the range of pathways in. There are many excellent managers. Someone may be an excellent manager in retail and they can be retrained to be an excellent manager in a telecommunications company and probably earn twice as much.

We've often thought about taking engineers and turning them into managers, but we don't think as much about taking managers and turning them into technology professionals. What you'll find is in many of those hybrid professions there are more women. So there are lots of multiple avenues. Project management is a really good example of a hybrid job where the management skills are important and you need technology vocabulary. It's very difficult to set those pathways.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now I will go to Ms. Mathysen for the NDP.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have a couple of quick questions for Mr. Zajac and Mr. LeBlond.

Mr. Zajac, you actually said you would like to go to the door of the meeting of ministers of education and pound on it and say, you must make a change in terms of curriculum and teacher training and outreach to students.

Some years ago, I was involved with some young women who wanted women's studies included at the high school level, and they just plugged away at it and finally we are seeing some of that. It was called the Miss G__ Project for Equity in Education, and I think it's going to begin to give women a sense of how important we are in the economy, the society, and to the advancement of this country.

You said you'd like to go but have you made any kind of overtures? Has your council gone to various ministers of education, and if you have, what kind of response have you had?

Mr. Yaroslaw Zajac: Really, very little. We have not actually gone to the Council of Ministers of Education. Our provincial bodies have spoken with provincial ministries of education. What progress has there been? I would say it's been minimal, if any.

This is something that I think should have more emphasis, which it hasn't had. It is organizations like the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists, like Engineers Canada, like the Canadian Society for Chemistry that should be knocking on the doors of those ministers. At the moment, it's done piecemeal at the provincial level. There's a lot of improvement that could happen.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: You also talked about the national cooperative education and internship program. How did you manage to get businesses to participate in that? How do you encourage them to become a part of that process? I think it was in regard to this GoTechgirl program.

Mr. Isidore LeBlond: It certainly is one of our recommendations that we have strong support for a national program. Large, medium, and small employers need to have a little bit of a wage subsidy, something that can help them attract young people. It's not there now. We don't have it. It's one of the things we aspire to. That's why we're bringing it to this committee's attention. We'd like you to help us move that forward. It's one of the areas we need to work on, absolutely.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: So the federal government has a role here?

Mr. Isidore LeBlond: They do.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay, thank you very much.

How am I doing for time, Madam Chair?

The Chair: Go ahead, you have about one and a quarter minutes.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay, I'll talk more quickly then.

Employment equity has been mentioned and this is something I worked on a number of years ago, and it was very clear to me that equity and equality are different. Equity means that you make sure the things that are lacking are in place for individuals to succeed and, in this case, for more women, more immigrant women, to succeed.

So what special measures should we be considering or advancing to give women, including immigrant women, that step up?

The Chair: You have half a minute to answer the question.

Ms. Wendy Cukier: On behalf of everybody, I would suggest the following; funding for transition programs and internships; language and cultural training; perhaps tax credits for companies that start to really invest in these things; and better counselling and customized services to ensure that women are getting the right information about where the jobs are and how to get them.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we go to the final questioner, Ms. McLeod for the Conservatives.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I too appreciate the discussion here today. I think we've had some really good discussion, including on many new things that we haven't talked about before in this study, which is a very important one.

My first question is that while we've done a lot of talking about the relative influences of family and mentors, has there been any research done at all on the relative importance of the different components?

• (1655)

Ms. Wendy Cukier: There are some studies, and if the committee is interested, I'll be happy to send a more complete bibliography. But for sure, with young girls, it's more their parents than their peers, and there is research that says that.

There's definitely research that shows that fewer girls than boys in high school know what an engineer is.

The other thing I'll say, just on the mentoring point, which is so important, is that there's no question about mentors and role models, but anyone who has a teenage daughter or a 22-year-old, as I do, also knows that the messenger is as important as the message. For me to go and talk to high school girls and say there are great careers and come be rich with me in technology is not going to have nearly the same impact as a university girl going to talk to the high school girls about how much fun they're going to have at university, building stuff and learning how things work.

It's really important. Mentoring works under certain conditions, with certain kinds of people, etc. That's why I think the evaluation and the targeted and nuanced strategies are so important.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: I also really appreciate comments about the mismatch between the training and the opportunities. Certainly computer science comes to mind. I look at Ottawa, and you've had, of course, a huge number of people heading into that industry and the collapse.

So I appreciate your comments around having some broad-based strategies, but we don't really want to be funnelling and targeting, because that could be dangerous and difficult for students. I guess you're saying that creating for young women and girls the opportunity to dream and to know that they can have access to any opportunities is the message, not really focusing on anything in particular.

Is that fairly accurate?

Ms. Wendy Cukier: Can I comment on computer science, though, so that my friends at ICTC, CATA, and ITAC won't disown me?

One of the things that drove down enrolment of girls in technology was this notion that the ICT sector collapsed: Nortel laid off, Mitel, and so on. The fact is that there is a huge number of ICT jobs not in the sector.

If you think about the banks, the banks have technology operations as big as many small technology companies, and people don't understand. Whether it's retail or any industry today in this country, it has a technology component. There are technology jobs in those sectors as well, and it's really important that we communicate that.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: You talked about 8% of women. Has there been any research done that talks about a lower or higher socio-economic status as having more success or non-success in terms of making that shift? Has anything been looked at there?

Mr. Yaroslaw Zajac: I don't know of any specific research, but again, this has been spoken about at this table earlier.

Depending on your socio-economic level, you have more or less access to those people who can in fact be the influences. Someone at the higher economic level can have access to people, neighbours, and family who are in fact engineers, lawyers, or whatever. Unfortunately, those at the lower level of the socio-economic stream may not necessarily have access to that and therefore not have access to those role models.

That's unfortunate. If you recognize that reality, can you build a program that in fact will somehow address that reality? Can you take young women and bring them into a laboratory at the community college?

The Chair: Mr. Zajac, I'm going to have to ask you to wrap it up. We're getting to five minutes now on this question and answer. We're cutting into our time.

Mr. Yaroslaw Zajac: Madam Chair, my only comment is that hands-on experience is something we need to build.

The Chair: That's good. Thank you very much.

In fact, Cathy, with regard to some of the questions you asked, the Canadian Council on Learning has published some indicators that looked at socio-economic status as one of the strong indicators of people's ability to have access to certain occupations, traditions, learning, post-secondary education, and all those things.

I would suggest, then, that perhaps Ms. Cool could send for that document as background information, because it deals with a lot of things that were heard here but actually compares us with the OECD and looks at how Canada is different and how it is similar to other countries.

Thank you very much.

I want to thank the witnesses. You did a great job. It was very exciting and interesting, and we talked about a lot of things that we haven't talked about before. So thank you very much.

I'm going to suspend the meeting. We're not going in camera. I'll just give time for everyone to leave so we can move into business.

• (1655)

(Pause)

• (1700)

The Chair: I am calling the meeting to order.

We only have half an hour, and we're eating into it.

I would like us to move forward. We have three motions to deal with. The first one was tabled on March 25, a motion by Madame Demers, and it says

[Translation]

That the Committee invite the Minister of International Cooperation to appear before the Committee to present a detailed plan of the maternal and child health strategy which the Prime Minister intends to present to the other G8 leaders before their scheduled meeting in June.

[English]

I think that's a self-explanatory motion. So I would like to open up discussion, starting with the mover, Madame Demers, who can just quickly say what she means by her motion. Then we will discuss the motion.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Very quickly, Madam Chair.

First, take out the first part; we don't have to "report to the House".

[English]

The Chair: I was informed that you would allow for the removal of that preamble.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Yes, but since you didn't say it, I prefer to say it to make sure that people know. Because it's still there, Madam Chair. That's the only reason.

Obviously, that we ask the Minister of International Cooperation to inform us about the various ways the strategy will be implemented, and to come and tell us about that before the G8 Summit. I have been told that she might be available in about May, which would be a very good time to do it.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Demers.

Now I'm going to entertain a list of people to discuss this motion.

We'll start with Ms. Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to propose, as a friendly amendment, if the mover will accept it, that the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of State for the Status of Women be included in that as well.

The Chair: I take it, Madame Demers, that you are accepting that.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: That's a very good idea.

• (1705)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

All right, just before we go, there is a friendly amendment, which the mover has accepted. So this invitation will be extended to the Minister of International Cooperation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of State for the Status of Women.

Three names are now invited instead of one. So we now are dealing with that new motion, because it was a friendly amendment by the mover.

Yes, Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: We asked the Minister of International Cooperation, first and foremost, because it is her responsibility. I don't see what the Minister for the Status of Women will do, since the maternal and child health strategy comes from CIDA. It is the Minister of International Cooperation who should come, first and foremost, and present the detailed plan of the strategy. Not the Minister for the Status of Women or the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Boucher.

Is there any further discussion on this motion?

Yes, Ms. Mathyssen.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: I rather like the motion as amended, because it seems to me that all three ministers have something they can add to the discussion. Because we've heard very little in terms of detail, I think it's important for this committee to have that chance to talk with all of them.

The Chair: Go ahead, Monsieur Desnoyers.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: Certainly the Minister of Foreign Affairs is going to play an important role in terms of the G8. So he has to hear what we have to say.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Yes, Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Having attended the last G-8, I can tell you, you spend a lot of time without your Minister of Foreign Affairs and without anybody. The Prime Minister is in a room and that's it.

If the lead, as Madame Boucher has said, is the CIDA minister, I'm not following why we're bringing in these two other ministers so we can tell them what we think, if that's what I just heard you say, Mr. Desnoyers. We might want to share with them what the committee might come up with, what you might think, and just send them off a note from the committee. But to drag in two ministers who aren't the leads on the file between now and the time of the G-8 strikes me as being a bit of overkill. We're fast approaching this thing. Let's focus on who's going to play a role. If that's the CIDA minister, then let's bring in the minister and we'll talk to her.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calandra.

Before I call the motion, Ms. Demers, it's your motion, so do you have anything to add quickly?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, if Ms. Oda, Mr. Cannon and Ms. Guergis appear before us, it will not be to tell them what we think about this issue, it will be for them to tell us what they think. We are not the ones who will be at the G8 or in cabinet when the Minister has to put across her views on women's and children's health. The status of women is her responsibility, and I think that women's health, everywhere in the world, is important to her.

As well, Mr. Cannon, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, is in direct contact with his counterparts in other countries. So he will have to address the question and discuss it. We have to make sure that everyone is on the same wavelength on this subject.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

(Motion as amended agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: It seems that it's unanimous. My goodness, that's great, we can get through this thing.

All right, the next motion that we have was also tabled on March 25 and it is again from Madame Demers. It reads:

That the Committee invite the concerned Canadian and Quebec civil society organizations to appear following the government's announcement to make maternal and child health a priority at the G-8 in June that Canada will be hosting.

• (1710)

Madame Demers, and then I have Ms. McLeod.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: I have a point of order. Certainly we had copies of the other two motions. I'm not sure what happened with the distribution, but this particular motion we never had.

The Chair: I'm sorry, those two motions were on my place and in a folder and everyone else seemed to get it on the same day. I cannot comment on why this was not sent to you, the Conservatives. It was given to everyone. I had it as the chair, everyone else had it. It was meant to be discussed and we didn't have time last week.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: We had two motions last week; we did not have the third one.

The Chair: But the two motions last week, one of them was not to be discussed because it was March 29, which was the day we met this week.

The newest motion is March 29. These two were tabled together.

Madame Demers.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, I would like to say this. I have spoken with organizations that are affected, but simply to say that the subject concerns them, not that they are concerned. It wasn't a matter of upsetting people. I don't want to write the script, I just want to give these people an opportunity to state their views on this strategy. After hearing the ministers involved with this issue, we can hear what the organizations have to say about it. We can then simply confirm or refute their knowledge about the meeting and the strategy.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madame Demers.

I have Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Last week, when I came to the committee, I was given one. That is the one I had, I never had another. Today is the first time I'm seeing it. I prefer to tell you right away. I received it on March 29 by email.

[*English*]

The Chair: The clerk has assured me that it was sent electronically to everyone, and it was also deposited with everyone. The clerk says she will bring you proof she has done that.

We are discussing these motions, and I have no reason to find that the clerk didn't do her job.

Go ahead.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I have something else to say.

[*Translation*]

I can speak to you in English, if I wish, but I am going to speak in French.

What organizations?

Ms. Nicole Demers: There aren't many.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: How many organizations?

Ms. Nicole Demers: There are three or four.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I would at least like you to tell me what organizations, if you are able to tell me that.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Right, there's Planned Parenthood.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Not just that one, there are others in Quebec. That's what I would like to know, and how much time it will take. It's important that we know that.

[*English*]

The Chair: I think you're jumping the gun here.

First we have to approve the motion. Then, as we have always done on committees, not only on this one but on every committee, once you approve bringing people in, everyone is allowed to throw their names into the mix. Maybe the Conservatives have some Canadian and Quebec civil society people they want to put forward. I don't think it's only Madame Demers' people. Once we agree to this, then we will put in people. This is one of the things we always do. That's the protocol and process for committees.

Cathy.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Chair, we've spent a lot of time...

This is actually a new study, but we have a work plan and we seem to keep disrupting it. I think that if we want to look at these particular issues, it should be part of the work planning process that we do within our schedule. Let's look at it in the context of everything we're doing before we make a decision on this.

The Chair: There is a suggestion by Ms. McLeod that this will disrupt the current work plan, which at the moment we have laid out before us. It is the finishing up of this study on women in non-traditional work, and then beginning violence against aboriginal women—and having time, of course, to do the report on non-traditional work.

Ms. Demers, because the question really pertains to you—it's your motion—do you believe this will disrupt? Do you intend for this to stop us from what we're doing right now?

•(1715)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, what a question!

[*English*]

The Chair: Well, that's the question that was asked.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I have no intention of disrupting the committee's work. My intention is to make sure that we have adequate information so that we can judge for ourselves what the government's intentions are.

Madam Chair, I want to believe the government is honest. So for once ... in any event. This is causing me a lot of difficulty. Any time we want to get more information, we are called sinners. It isn't a sin: we want to make sure we have adequate information and make sure the government will explain what it is. It isn't just the government that's concerned, it's also certain organizations.

Even if we spent two meetings listening to people, it would not disrupt our timetable excessively. We have done it in the past. When urgent subjects come up, we often do it to make sure we meet those needs. Not to disrupt the committee's work. I am one of the people who is most eager for the study on aboriginal women and violence to get done. Don't worry, Madam Chair. The faster it can be done, the better it will be.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madame Demers.

I think Madame Demers has answered your question, Ms. McLeod.

Ms. Brown.

Ms. Lois Brown: Madam Chair, respectfully, I'd like to—

The Chair: Sorry.

Ms. Mathysen.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I simply wanted to point out that this issue has come up since we made the initial work plan and that it is the practice of this committee to look at things that are topical and of immediate concern. I think this is certainly one of them. I don't believe it will disrupt our overall work plan so significantly that we need to be concerned. By the same token, I think this is important for us to look at.

The Chair: Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: When do we anticipate doing this study? Are we not already scheduled with the violence against aboriginal women? Have we not already got all the days covered?

The Chair: We don't have the days covered, but we have a work plan that will say that this is what we're going to do. We don't have specific days mapped out. We're still working on the plan because we only recently had visit sites sent to us from our own committee members two days ago.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Then in essence we'd be doing this in advance of our study of aboriginal women, and at the conclusion of this, and after we've reviewed this report, you're suggesting that we then go into this. Who knows how long this will take? This could be a difficult one.

We had a motion similar to this in front of Parliament, and Parliament voted in a certain fashion. I'm going to suggest that if we're going to study this, you're probably going to want a heck of a lot of days to hear testimony from a lot of people and you're going to be putting our violence against aboriginal women study on hold until September, because this will not be something that we'll deal with in two hours at one meeting. There will be a whole whack of witnesses who will want to come before this committee.

As a member, if this is what we're going to do, then I'm going to bring a very extensive list of people who should be coming forward. If people want to be heard, if we want to have something done properly....

We're inviting three ministers up here. We're attempting to tell the G-8 how they should do their business; we're attempting to influence how the other world leaders come to a decision with respect to internal health initiatives. If we are going to study this, great, but let's not limit it to one meeting. Let's clear the decks from now until the end of June, do it properly, and have a nice little report prepared for the three ministers who we're bringing in front of this committee in advance of the G-8. Let's do it properly.

The Chair: Mr. Calandra, thank you. I have a long list of people waiting.

Thank you very much.

I think that usually the process in a committee is that if we agree we will do this.... I did not see the word "study", so I don't believe that this is a study. I think this is to invite certain people. Quite often what a committee does, if it's going to accept that it will do a particular thing, is it immediately....

I haven't finished speaking, Mr. Calandra.

• (1720)

Mr. Paul Calandra: I want my name on the list, if that's okay.

The Chair: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Paul Calandra: You can certainly continue speaking, Madam Chair.

The Chair: You had just spoken, so I didn't know you wanted to put your name on the list again immediately.

The bottom line is that there are processes by which this is done. Committee members will decide whether they would like to limit these meetings to two meetings or three meetings. Everyone will suggest names and lists. Then the committee will look at the list in the light of having only three days of meetings, or four days, or whatever the committee decides, and realize that obviously we can't have 500 people, and then pick and choose the ones who will fit into those three days.

This is how committee work is usually done, and this is what I hope we will be able to decide once we agree on whether we are going to accept this. First we have to agree that we're going to do this and then we're going to decide how we do it. I'm just trying to put it into a logical sequence.

Go ahead, Ms. Brown.

Ms. Lois Brown: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I question the validity of this study under the Status of Women. My thinking is this: if the minister for CIDA is responsible to create the plan and will present the plan to us, will she not already be doing her own consultation, and are we not, then, in effect duplicating that whole process? In all likelihood we would be inviting many of the same people she would be having her discussions with, which means that we would be paying for witnesses to come to Ottawa, or however we do that. It's time and money that we're looking at duplicating.

Since it comes under her responsibility, why would we not allow her to do that investigation herself? What we've asked her to do is present her findings and her plan to us, and it would seem to me that we're trying to create the plan. We're putting the cart before the horse. That's how I see this.

The Chair: In terms of the business of standing committees of the House of Commons, it is in fact a bona fide mandate for a committee to decide to look at, to question, to determine, what a particular department or minister is intending to do about things. That is part of the work of committee. Committees decide when they will do that, the timelines for doing it, how long it will take, and who they will call to the committee.

In this very thick book we have here, that is a clear part on the role of a committee. The ministers are accountable to Parliament. I would

suggest that if Parliament believes that it needs to do that... Parliaments may also duplicate studies if they choose.

This is a committee on the Status of Women Canada. The committee on the status of women will be dealing with women. They are women who are mothers, who have children, and who bear children. It's valid. It falls under the mandate to look at the issue of women.

Under all of those guidelines for committee work, I think this is a valid motion. If it were not, I would not have allowed the motion to come to the floor to be debated. It's a very valid motion. The question is whether we are going to accept it or not accept it, not on whether it is a point of order that it should be here. It is in fact within the order and scope of this committee to do this work.

Now, I have Madame Boucher, Mr. Calandra, and Madame Demers.

I think I will call the question immediately, because we really did plan to do some work. Unless people have brand-new points that they wish to make.... As chair, I will decide if we are repeating the same things.

Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I am going to tell you right off what is bothering me: "That the Committee invite the concerned Canadian and Quebec civil society organizations".

I am a Quebecker and a Canadian, and as far as I know, Quebec is still part of Canada. We might rather say: "That the Committee invite the concerned civil society organizations from all the provinces of Canada". It would make more sense to the other members of the committee and it would show mutual respect.

[*English*]

The Chair: This is a decision that's going to have to be made by the committee. Whether you accept this absolute language or we're going to hang ourselves on the language, whatever it is, that's up to you. I am here to facilitate your decision-making.

Ms. Boucher has decided that she does not like the words "Canadian and Quebec".

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: It's not that I don't like Quebec, it's that Quebec is still part of Canada. Out of respect for the others present, we could say: "That the Committee invite the concerned organizations from all the provinces of Canada to appear following the government's announcement to make maternal and child health ...". I am sure the other provinces of Canada would also like to be heard.

[*English*]

The Chair: Before we discuss whether we will change the wording of this, are you offering a formal amendment to this motion, Ms. Boucher?

[*Translation*]

Mme Sylvie Boucher: Yes.

[English]

The Chair: Could you please write that amendment down so I'm sure I know what it is?

Before you do, I would like to point out that if you only speak about provinces you will be leaving out the territories in this country. The words "civil society" encompass everybody. I think that was why the words were used.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: "... from the provinces and territories ..."

[English]

The Chair: Would you please quickly write it down and send it to me?

While we're waiting to get that amendment, there's still the principle of the motion. Mr. Calandra and Ms. Demers had their hands up prior to the amendment.

Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: This is a question for Madam Demers, through the chair.

I have that we're not doing a study, we're just listening to people's advice. Once we've listened to their advice, we will be preparing nothing. We won't actually be submitting any advice because we're listening to advice. Analysts won't be writing anything because it's not a study.

To Madam Demers, through you, Madam Chair, how long did you anticipate that we would actually study? What do you hope to accomplish from this? Do you anticipate that it would take one meeting, two meetings? How long did you think we would need to do this in order to have proper advice to the ministers we invited in the previous motion?

The Chair: Ms. Demers is the next person on the list. She can answer the questions at the same time.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I did not intend to do a study. I wanted to gather information from the ministers and the organizations concerned. I anticipated that it would only take two meetings, one with the ministers and the other with the organizations concerned. I wasn't thinking of having to report on the meetings since it would be information-gathering.

However, if Mr. Calandra wants to do a study on this subject, another motion will be tabled and I will be very happy to do the study. But I think that we first have to do a very important study on aboriginal women. Personally, I think it could be done as part of another study. If Mr. Calandra still wants to do a study, I will be very open to the idea, but at present, what I want is to gather information.

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Wong.

Mrs. Alice Wong (Richmond, CPC): I have two questions. First of all, in the wording of the motion it says "following the government's announcement to make maternal and child health a priority at the G-8 in June".

So whether it is after June, before June, right after the announcement, or right after the whole G-8 is not clear in the language itself. I don't know when or what time. Is it before the G-8 or after the G-8? When you say "following the government's announcement", I think the government has already announced that this will be our priority. So does it mean now or after the G-8? I just want someone to clarify that.

The Chair: Perhaps if we put a comma after "appear" it will clarify the statement. There's a good book to read called *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, which I would recommend to everyone who is concerned that there is absolutely no piece of punctuation in this sentence. So perhaps a bit of chosen punctuation will make the sentence very clear.

It was my understanding, from what Madame Demers said, that the committee would invite the concerned Canadian and Quebec civil society organizations to appear, following or as a result of the government's announcement to make maternal and child health a priority, at the G-8 in June that Canada will be hosting.

• (1730)

Mrs. Alice Wong: That sounds pretty clear to me. Otherwise it's very ambiguous.

My second question is related to what Mr. Paul Calandra just said. What is the purpose of this? If we want to listen to all concerned citizens, one meeting won't be enough. If we want true representation we'll probably want to invite as many representatives as possible.

I see this almost as another study.

The Chair: I think Ms. Demers was very clear that it was not a study and she saw it lasting two days, when she responded to Mr. Calandra. It is within the scope of a standing committee, as we did when we called in members here to tell us what the government was going to do. When there was a concern there would be trafficking at the 2010 Olympics, we called in people, they explained to us how they were going to deal with this possible problem, we listened, and that was the end of it.

A committee does not always have to do a report. It does not always have to table recommendations. It can collect information, and we did that. Everyone here agreed it was important. We had two meetings, and we called people back when we heard further comments that there was going to be trafficking.

These are things that are within the scope of the committee. I would advise members that you have a book in your office, the newest edition, 2009, of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. It speaks to the issue of how a committee works and the mandate of a committee and this specific committee. We will understand that committees don't just do reports and don't just table them in the House, etc.

Mrs. Alice Wong: I haven't finished my question.

The Chair: I know, but we are now at 5:30, and I need to have the committee let me know if they wish to stay an extra five minutes to deal with your question, or anything further.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Point of order.

The Chair: Do you wish to continue here, or do you want to leave now? It is 5:30. What is the wish of this committee?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: I understand in the book you just referred to that you need unanimous consent to continue after the bells start ringing.

The Chair: That's why I told Ms. Wong she could not just continue.

Is there unanimous consent to continue? No.

Therefore, Ms. Wong, I'm sorry you cannot continue your question.

The meeting is adjourned.

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