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Chair

The Honourable Hedy Fry

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), this committee is studying ways to increase the participation of women in non-traditional occupations.

Today we have three groups with us. They're all from my neck of the woods in B.C. I want to welcome them. They are: International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada; B.C. Human Rights Coalition; Canadian Labour Congress; and British Columbia Maritime Employers Association. They are going to talk about the non-traditional work that occurs at the ports in terms of longshoremen and how to increase participation of women in that area.

Witnesses, I will let you know that when we begin you will have 10 minutes for each group. As you can see, we have four—I said three—groups here. Each group will have 10 minutes to present. I'm going to give you a little sign at about three minutes so that you know to wrap it up soon. We'll have a question-and-answer period later on.

I want to welcome all of you. We're going to start with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada and Tom Dufresne.

Oh, I'm sorry. This is one group. Let me get this clear.

Tom, would you prefer to have Ms. O'Donnell do the presentation or will you share it?

Mr. Tom Dufresne (President, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada): We'll share it.

The Chair: Okay. You have 10 minutes to share.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: All right.

The Chair: So we'll begin with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union of Canada, and Tom Dufresne, who is the president, and Susan O'Donnell, who is the executive director of the B.C. Human Rights Coalition. The Canadian Labour Congress is here, with Barbara Byers, executive vice-president. We've seen Barbara many times at this committee.

We will begin.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Thank you, Dr. Fry, Madam Chair.

My name is Tom Dufresne and I am the president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada. I've held this position for some 14 years now.

With me are Barb Byers, the executive vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress, and Susan O'Donnell, who is the executive director of the B.C. Human Rights Coalition and is advising ILWU and our members on processes going forward to improve the working life in the workplaces on the coast, not only for women but also for men.

The ILWU represents approximately 5,500 people who work at the Pacific coast ports. We've distributed a backgrounder to all the committee members and the translators; hopefully, you all have a copy.

We welcome your initiative and are pleased to appear before you today. Your session helps to shine the light on our industry, which is beginning to open its doors to women. It's a slow but steady process that will benefit from free collective bargaining and will suffer if free collective bargaining is stifled. We have made some progress, but much more needs to be done.

In recent years, this fact has been underscored. For example, in 2008, the BCMEA, the B.C. Maritime Employers Association, earned the lowest grade possible from the Canadian Human Rights Commission for failing to meet expectations concerning women's participation in our workplace.

I know that your committee is looking at three specific aspects of women in non-traditional jobs: recruitment, barriers to participation, and retention. We will focus our remarks on these areas.

It is our view that the best and most equitable way to recruit new workers to our industry is through a gender-balanced recruiting process, whereby equal numbers of men and women are recruited on a local-by-local basis—a fifty-fifty approach, if you will. That is subject to negotiation on a local-by-local basis, because what's good in one local might not work in another.

For instance, in the Port of Vancouver, which represents about 60% of the workforce in British Columbia, what would achieve the best results there is not necessarily the same as what would be best in Fort Simpson. We also have agreements that represent the Nisga'a in northern of British Columbia and we wouldn't want to go in there and dictate any type of process to them. We work with the bands as well, Bella Bella and Bella Coola, to recruit people to work. They work in their own specific areas and are allowed to travel.

Also, in a couple of locals, we have lists of people who have applied in the past when there was hiring being done. It's our view and our position that those lists should be exhausted prior to opening this up for new hiring. Some of these people have taken the tests in the past. They might not have passed the tests, but they were given a chance to go out and correct whatever deficiencies they might have, to allow them to come in, take the test again, and try to pass.

For instance in Local 502, which is on the Fraser River and represents all of the docks up and down the Fraser River and at Deltaport and Westshore, there's a list of approximately 286 people. Of those 286, 83 are women. We're saying that to cast those 83 people aside and do a new recruitment process to put a bunch of people in the workforce would be unfair to those people, although we are prepared to discuss it, as I said, on a local-by-local basis.

This is a policy that the union has advanced for a number of years in our discussions with our employers. Unfortunately, since the vast majority of additional recruiting is done jointly with the employer, we have not been able to see this policy fully implemented. It is our goal to achieve a fifty-fifty recruitment process, as I said, once these lists are exhausted.

Having said this, I note that there are serious barriers to overcome in order to create the right conditions to increase the participation of women in our workplaces. I'll ask Susan to address these issues.

Thank you.

• (1535)

Ms. Susan O'Donnell (Executive Director, B.C. Human Rights Coalition): Thanks, Tom.

Did you know that currently there are no provisions for maternity leave at Pacific coast ports, beyond legislated minimums? The same holds true for paternity leave. Also, there are no child care provisions. Waterfront workers do not have any workplace policies that make it easier to care for elderly parents or for dependent adult children.

As you know, these family responsibilities of caring for young and old family members frequently fall to women to fulfill. The absence of these kinds of supports helps to explain why the waterfront is less attractive as a workplace of choice for our daughters, our sisters, and our mothers. The waterfront is less attractive as a workplace for women and men because there are significant barriers that block access to benefits, such as long-term health and dental care, for new workers.

There are other troubling indications of gender inequality on the waterfront that constitute serious barriers to women. From a variety of reports and hearsay, it would appear that the workplace environment drastically needs to change for women and probably for most men. Although many reports have been done, recommendations in these reports have come from a somewhat subjective process. A proper human rights audit needs to be done to ascertain what is and is not going on in 2010.

An audit should assess harassment, drugs and alcohol, violence, sanitation, graffiti, etc. Once a clear and current picture emerges, policies and procedures can be designed to improve the environ-

ment. There is no point in engaging in a huge recruitment process without simultaneously improving the environment.

The union has attempted over and over again to work in conjunction with the employer. That's the way I'm most used to advising people: having an employer and union working together. But it's not to be in this case, because the employer is not cooperating. So we've decided to put together a table of women who work in the union, and the CLC, and me—an expert in human rights—and seriously look at how we can help our women members succeed. We're also pleased to say that Transport Canada has agreed to fund an audit, which I think is the first most critical thing that should take place before we try to change anything else in the workplace.

It's my understanding that the employer, the BCMEA, has now put forward a proposal to place 200 women at the top of the hiring list. This would create a separate class of worker and would have the effect of bumping everyone else 200 spots down the list that determines access to work. I cannot tell you what a disastrous effect this would have. Queue-jumping is not employment equity; it's discrimination. Human rights law does not allow for placing one person by removing another. Further, the women and many men who are seen to take part in this or to support it could be the victims of retaliation.

We know that the committee has already heard testimony that this approach is counterproductive to the retention of new female recruits. One-step efforts do nothing to stop systemic discrimination. The correct tool is an ongoing, continuous process, such as a 50% hiring goal. Such a process would ensure that an equal number of men and women get to the starting gate. In addition, this inadvisable proposal would bump current female employees out of the active workforce.

I'd like to say a couple of extra things, too. I'm sure you all know that the federal jurisdiction is the only one where we have employment equity, period, so there are probably more women in longshore than anywhere else. Certainly in B.C. you can count on the fingers of one hand the number of women in alternate work.

Employment equity has shown itself to be a really good tool in the federal jurisdiction. I have to say that I've never seen a proposal that says we want a 50% equal rate at the start-up. You may remember that the Supreme Court of Canada said, in *Action Travail des Femmes*, that one in every four women should be selected, up to 17%, I think it was, so this is a huge going away from those very low numbers.

Tom, I'll hand it back to you.

• (1540)

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Thank you.

With the obvious problems associated with this proposal, why would the employer insist on this type of approach of adding 200 people? We'd say that the BCMEA's solutions would conveniently achieve a goal the employer has had for a long time: to gain control of the dispatch system and to diminish seniority rights. It would seem that the employer is prepared to do anything to achieve this goal, even at the risk of perpetuating gender inequality on the waterfront.

So what are the answers? What does the ILWU propose to overcome the barriers that are keeping women from working on the waterfront and staying there once they join our workforce? Let me give you a sense of what the ILWU has been doing.

We are working actively with Susan and the B.C. Human Rights Coalition to address issues raised in a report commissioned by the largest ILWU local, Local 500 at the Port of Vancouver, to try to get to the bottom of gender discrimination on the waterfront. During the current round of bargaining, we've also tabled proposals to address the absence of maternity, child care, and eldercare benefits, and access to benefits for new workers.

There has been a public outcry, and justifiably so, about barriers that prevent women from working on the waterfront. These issues will be addressed much more quickly if we're allowed to bargain solutions at the negotiation table.

Concerning recruitment on a local-by-local basis, our workplaces are vastly different from one another; I already went through this. In recognition of these differences, we have proposed to collaborate with the BCMEA on a local-by-local basis to search for the best way to bring more people into the workplace and more women into the workplace.

For our part, we can see immediately recruiting at least as many women into the workplace as the BCMEA's proposal for 200. Our approach would respect the seniority rights of our current employees and the goal of fifty-fifty hiring. Unfortunately, the BCMEA's agenda is such that they rejected this approach out of hand.

On raising employment standards for women in the workforce, we also have put forward a proposal. Approximately 1,000 women are working in administrative jobs in the offices of the BCMEA's member companies, jobs that have low wages and few benefits. The ILWU has made it a priority to organize these women into the union membership in order to raise their wages and working conditions. We pledge to do that.

The union has also spent a vast sum of money in arbitration to try to protect the work of some of our sisters out on the waterfront. Currently one of those cases has run the union a cost of almost \$1 million. I'd just like to say that the employer has fought us at every turn on that arbitration to try to set that aside.

I'll give the last word to Sister Byers from the CLC.

The Chair: I'm sorry, but you've gone 1 minute and 43 seconds over. We're going to have to have Ms. Byers plug in—

Ms. Barbara Byers (Executive Vice-President, Canadian Labour Congress): I know how to get back in on this with questions.

The Chair: She knows how to plug in when the questions and answers come up. She's an old hand at this.

Now we will turn to the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association. I notice that Mr. Smith isn't here today.

Mr. Greg Vurdela (Vice-President, Marketing and Information Systems, British Columbia Maritime Employers Association): I apologize, Madam Chairperson. Mr. Smith has been taken ill and was unable to make the flight out.

The Chair: That's a pity. We wish him a speedy recovery.

We have Greg Vurdela and Eleanor Marynuik.

You know the rules. You have 10 minutes to split. Go ahead.

Mr. Greg Vurdela: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

Again, I apologize for Mr. Smith's absence. He is ill and unable to make it today. Ms. Marynuik and I will continue on behalf of the BCMEA.

I am the vice-president of marketing and information services for the BCMEA. I've been involved with the waterfront for 33-plus years, so I certainly am familiar with how the waterfront works, inside and out.

I'll tell you a little bit about the BCMEA. We represent some 66 member companies, about half of which are direct employers of ILWU longshore labour in the Asia-Pacific gateway. When I say Asia-Pacific gateway, I mean from Prince Rupert south to the Fraser River, including Vancouver Island.

As for our customer member profiles, we have in our membership stevedoring companies, container, bulk, break-bulk, and cruise ship terminal operators, and global shipping companies and their local vessel husbandry agencies. Our members call at and/or operate just about all of the terminal facilities in the Asia-Pacific gateway.

BCMEA represents its customer members in the functional areas of collective agreement negotiations—we're just in the process of negotiating a new agreement with the ILWU—labour relations and human resources facilitation, government advocacy, recruitment, occupational training, safety training, and dispatch of the ILWU workforce labour pool.

That's a little bit about us. I'm now going to turn the presentation over to Eleanor Marynuik, our vice-president of human resources. What Eleanor will do for you this afternoon is give you some personal insight with respect to her experiences as a woman on the waterfront.

• (1545)

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik (Vice-President, Human Resources, British Columbia Maritime Employers Association): Thank you.

Good afternoon. I'm pleased to be here at the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

I was trying to think of what to say in the seven or eight minutes I have before you and decided that the best use of my time would be to illustrate or set the scene of the oppressive atmosphere on the waterfront.

Imagine, if you will, driving to a dispatch hall, a hall located on the fringe of one of the most depressed areas in Canada, an area noted for poverty, drug use, the sex trade, and crime. As a matter of fact, this is called Canada's poorest postal code. This is where you come day after day in the hopes of getting work—not to actually get work, but just for the chance that you will go to work.

Now, imagine yourself arriving at the dispatch hall, hoping first of all to get a parking spot in the lot, because if you don't, you have no choice but to park in the neighbourhood and walk to the hall. Imagine walking through the parking lot to get to your side of the hall to register yourself for work. As you're walking, you see a number of men congregating outside the hall prior to dispatch. This is where they congregate because this is their social network. For a woman, this is intimidating, not so much for what is said to you as you walk by, but for what is not said; it's the staring and the conversations that stop as you walk by.

You quickly walk through the hall by entering a separate entrance to register your availability for work. Casual workers are on one side and union workers are on the other. The two don't meet. You are again greeted with even more men waiting to be dispatched; it's a sea of men. You look around hoping to find other female workers to gravitate towards until dispatch is completed—safety in numbers. When the dispatch is completed and you didn't make a job for this shift, back you go through the parking lot again, with the intimidating behaviour of stares, and down the street to your car.

Imagine this scenario with the added complication of others in your family that you've had to make arrangements for while you leave the house in the hopes of getting work. Again, it's not that you're leaving the house to actually go to work; it's just for the chance that you will go to work that day.

So now a decision has to be made. Do you call it a day or come back again in the afternoon and start the process all over again? However, if you live in Vancouver—40 minutes one-way in the suburbs of Vancouver, which most people do—the decision is easy. On busy days in Vancouver, up to 1,000 workers a day congregate at the hall during three different dispatch times with the hopes of being dispatched for work.

Why, in this day and age of computerization, would anyone have to come to a hall in the hopes of getting work? Why can't a woman or anyone with family responsibilities be able to log in on a computer and register for work? This 50-year-old dispatch system, where one must be physically present in order to make oneself available for work, is just one of the barriers that impedes women from entering the longshore workforce.

Two years ago, under Andy Smith's regime, I was brought in as a labour practitioner and was appalled with what I saw on the waterfront. I can honestly say that with the labour practices that were in existence and the way women were treated, I felt that I was transported back in time to the 1960s. I knew it didn't have to be this way.

I have a background of 31 years in the airline industry. Three of those years were spent as the manager of ramp operations. In 1995 I was the first woman in the industry to be appointed to this position. I managed 13 supervisors and 750 station attendants who belonged to

the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the majority of whom were men. They were aircraft mechanics, station attendants, clerical workers, and aircraft cleaners.

Ramp operations are very similar to the longshore industry. It is physical work, loading and unloading cargo, either by hand or by using machinery. We had a number of women station attendants who were afforded the same opportunities as men in the areas of training, work assignments, and promotions. It was a transparent process. The women were not marginalized in the workplace, such as the ILWU does today.

Don't get me wrong—we did have our issues, but we worked through them. The biggest difference was the union's willingness to deal with these issues. They didn't bury their heads in the sand and pretend issues were not real, as it is with the ILWU.

● (1550)

As an example, with the influx of women, the union was not opposed to harassment training sessions. They felt it necessary to educate not only men, but also women, on harassment.

I bring forward my experience only to draw the parallel between two male-dominated industries and how different they are, different as to how women are treated and how unions behave towards women.

As a labour relations practitioner at the BCMEA, I personally have walked numerous times through that parking lot at dispatch times. I have felt that same intimidating behaviour that our longshorewomen experience and have questioned why this is happening.

I have heard first-hand the fear, hopelessness, and frustration of existing longshorewomen. Shortly after I joined the BCMEA, a longshorewoman contacted me by phone. She had no one else to turn to and said that because she wasn't one of the old boys on the waterfront, her issues were not important and they were not dealt with by the union.

I saw first-hand the fear she experienced of being caught talking to me. She was so fearful, in fact, that we met in a park. She was constantly looking over her shoulder, fearful that a union member would see her with me and report her to the union. I heard all about the harassment and retaliation if these issues were to be brought forward. After a few meetings with her, I became very aware of how the waterfront had desensitized her.

Today she is no longer a longshore person. I can think of no greater travesty than a woman having to quit an industry over harassing and intimidating behaviour that is condoned by the union. I say "condoned" because they do nothing to prevent it.

We can no longer tolerate the sins of the past in the area of recruitment, a practice that is not transparent and fraught with nepotism. As an example, on the list Mr. Dufresne speaks about, in Vancouver, 411 out of 758 are relatives of members who are currently longshore, and only 41 of them are women. Now, Mr. Dufresne has said they wanted these lists exhausted prior to doing a fifty-fifty hiring. It's very difficult: we will not get to employment equity if we follow these lists.

Training is another area controlled by the union, with our antiquated dispatch practices that require one to be physically present in order to make oneself available for work and systemic sex discrimination experienced by women on the waterfront. To perpetuate this history would be the second greatest travesty in this industry.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. That was very good and under time.

Now I will open it up to the very first round of questions and answers. Each questioner has seven minutes, but that includes the answers. I just wanted to let you know that if you want to get in enough questions and answers, try to be as succinct as you possibly can.

We will begin with the Liberals and Michelle Simson.

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

Thanks to all of you for appearing before the committee this afternoon.

I confess to not knowing that much about what's involved in becoming a longshore person or longshorewoman.

Mr. Dufresne, could you take me through the education, training process, length of apprenticeship, and what's involved in actually getting there?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: That would depend on the area you're in.

For instance, the union local in Prince Rupert, which is the recently developed port up there—there's been quite an expansion—went through a recent hiring process. They put ads in the local newspapers, the various community newspapers, for that, and I think also in the *Sun* and the *Province*.

They also put out a notice to people who had been registered in the past, telling them to come in and reactivate their numbers. They got those lists of names and submitted the lists to the BCMEA to let them know what names were on the list. Then they brought them in.

There's a training program that consists of a number of different tests. It's called the general waterfront safety training program, and there are parts I and II. You have to go through those processes in order to get registered.

• (1555)

Mrs. Michelle Simson: How long would that course take?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: It depends. Some of the courses are for one day and some of them are for a week.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Oh. So it's not a long-term process.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: No.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: From what I've heard this afternoon, it appears there is a problem with respect to changing the union's attitude in terms of women. I also understand that there was a report that outlined the harsh environment for women in the ports and recommendations were put forward to try to correct it.

Do any of the witnesses know if the recommendations in the report were implemented? Were any? Were all of them?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Some of the recommendations in the report were implemented. Others are still on an ongoing basis.

Do you want me to go through them seriatim or just in general?

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Just in general.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: You're referring to the Ready report, I assume.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Yes.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: I just want to point out—

The Chair: I'll stop you for a second. I won't take up the member's time.

Members should know that there is a report done by Vince Ready. It is available in English only, which is why we haven't given it to you. But it is available and it can be downloaded from a website. As well, you do have the recommendations from that report in both languages.

The report is quite an extraordinary thing to read. It sounds like something out of the Middle Ages. So people may want to read the report itself because it is quite disturbing.

I think that's what you were referring to, Ms. Simson?

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Yes, exactly.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: I'd like to point out that the Ready report was commissioned by the union. The union offered the employer to go fifty-fifty to conduct that study. The employer declined.

Mr. Ready conducted what some would say was a subjective study. There were a number of issues raised that needed to be addressed, and he made a number of recommendations on developing policies and procedures to eliminate discrimination and bad behaviour on the waterfront.

I'd like to point out also that, out of the Ready report, we offered with the employer to jointly... We contacted the United Steelworkers of America and attempted to adopt part of the program that they have developed over the years in the coastal forest industry and what have you. We offered to run a pilot project in the port of Vancouver. That was declined by the employer.

We recently had the first woman elected as the vice-president of ILWU Canada. There's a woman on the Local 500 executive. We have contacted the Canadian Labour Congress, and we are availing ourselves of the services that the Canadian Labour Congress can aid us with in regard to developing programs, not only in hiring but also retention, and better equipping women to participate in the union. So it's not only to work down there; it's also to become active in the union, and to take positions within the union.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Mr. Dufresne, that was going to be my next question.

The power-point presentation on the longshore division says that all officer positions in the union are elected.

• (1600)

Mr. Tom Dufresne: That's correct.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: How many such positions are there?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: It would depend on the local. In the Canadian area, for instance—

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Collectively, let's say, with all the locals.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: It's about 20 positions, I'd say, full time.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: So 20 full-time positions, and you just made mention of the fact that the first female vice-president was recently elected—

Mr. Tom Dufresne: At ILWU Canada.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: —at one of the locals.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: No, no, at ILWU Canada.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Okay.

Of those 20 elected in all the locals, how many would be women? Would it be safe to say “none”?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: That's correct.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: So there are no women at all.

Because the union has so much influence over what appears to be maybe a 50-year-old dispatch system, would it not make sense to try to get more women elected to the executive of the union?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Well, that's what we're trying to do. That's why, before you cut me off—

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Sorry.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: —I was saying that we had availed ourselves of the Canadian Labour Congress. Sister Byers here has a long history of working within the labour movement, obtaining one of the highest positions in the Canadian labour movement as executive vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress. We've contacted the B.C. Human Rights Coalition. Sister O'Donnell has a long and storied career in human rights.

This work is to develop policies, not just to say, okay, here's something for window dressing. Part of what we're going to do, and what they're going to help us to do, is develop programs that will encourage women to participate, fully participate, in the union and in the workforce.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I think we have come to the end of your time, Ms. Simson.

Now from the Bloc Québécois we have Madam Demers.

[*Translation*]

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

Thank you for your attendance here today, Mr. Vurdela, Ms. Marynuik, Ms. Byers, Mr. Dufresne and Ms. O'Donnell.

Ms. Marynuik, hearing you speak reminded me of the story of *Oliver Twist*. It was very bleak, and I could see the difficulties women who work in these occupations may face, especially when they have to get to the docks in the morning, and so on.

It reminds me of when we, the 60 or so women who work in Parliament, arrive here. We experience the same thing. So, it does not just apply to people who work on the docks. When we get to Parliament, we realize that it is a men's world, that things are changing at a very slow pace and that we ourselves have to make that change if we want to improve the situation.

What I find strange is that both sides seem to want to have more women working as longshoremen. However, you have different ways of going about it. The union would like to implement measures to better welcome women into these occupations. The employers seem to want to hire a group of 200 women with no experience and no training, who do not know what they are getting into, simply in order to increase the number of women working in this field. However, the request was made after the union filed a harassment complaint. I am having some difficulty understanding and following the issue.

Ms. O'Donnell, can you tell me what you felt as you listened to Ms. Marynuik's testimony?

[*English*]

Ms. Susan O'Donnell: I can't really dispute what she says about the environment because I'm new to this. There has been a lot of literature, but my problem as a human rights person is that the literature is all subjective and has all been done in confidentiality. So the stories that have been told by people are allegations that haven't been proven. We can't get to the motivation, so once again I'm saying we need to do an audit and find out what's there.

But what really bothers me in this whole situation is that the employer has now filed a human rights complaint against the union, stating all these things again. But the employer doesn't have standing in a human rights complaint. The women would, but they haven't filed a human rights complaint.

So I'm very confused by the actions of the employer. It might be because I'm just too new. I realize I've walked into a long-standing dispute between two parties.

•(1605)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: My father worked as a longshoreman at the port of Montreal when he came back from the war. It was one of his first jobs, because it was easy to find work there at the time. The system was much the same: he had to go to the docks and if there was work for him, he would be hired. If there was no work, he would come home. That was in 1945. A long time ago.

I am wondering whether there are ports in other parts of Canada where things are different. Is this how things work in all ports? Did you experiment it in other places? Did people from the union and the employers hold discussions to try to come to an agreement that would facilitate things?

If people were to use the Internet, I would be afraid that there might be discrimination because you can see a person's name. Perhaps you could do this by phone. If the union were to call people individually, rather than ask them to go somewhere, it might be preferable. I think that is what is being done currently in Montreal. Have you tried to work differently and to use other methods of facilitating the involvement of women and men? Generally, when you make things easier for women, it makes things easier for men as well.

[*English*]

Mr. Greg Vurdela: This is the base reason for us filing the human rights complaint that we did file. We have tried to bring the union along with several proposals that have been tabled and would address the long-standing issues of recruitment, transparency of access to training, and basically the ability to secure employment without having to physically attend at the dispatch. This discriminates against those people who have family status issues—primarily primary caregivers.

Let's put a couple of things to rest, if we may. The official proposal the BCMEA tabled with ILWU, and in fact the basis of its human rights complaint, does not include some 200 women being immediately recruited and thrust into the union. We all understand, to Mr. Dufresne's point, what a disaster that would be. That's simply not the case. We have never advocated that officially. We have never put that in a proposal. It's not in our human rights complaint. It is simply not part of the piece.

What we're talking about is this initial recruitment piece where we say to the union, "We cannot go off your lists". In fact, they are illegal. They are full of nepotism. They are full of relatives. We can't discriminate against relatives and we can't discriminate for relatives. We simply can't use these lists.

What we're saying to the union... The example that Mr. Dufresne decided to cite is the one place where we have worked together. We have an ad in the paper, we have people apply, and we simply pick the best people. What we are suggesting in order to bring forth a critical mass of women, to begin to change the culture Ms. Marynuik is speaking about, is that we need to recruit, for the time being, on a fifty-fifty basis. If in fact... Our statistics show that if men and women start in the process on an equal basis, as we're suggesting, they do equally well. There is no issue once women get into the

workforce, once they are appropriately trained, and once they have the ability to get work. This is where we have to make the changes.

We have tried on a repeated basis to talk to the ILWU. We have a trail of meetings and suggestions and proposals that have gone on and on. What we get from the ILWU is ongoing intransigence: "why can't we do things the old way?" and "why can't we just do what Mr. Ready has suggested?"

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Excuse me, Mr. Vurdela.

If I understand correctly—

[*English*]

The Chair: Excuse me, Nicole, but next time around... Sorry about that.

For the Conservatives, Ms. McLeod.

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

Certainly as I listen, out of all the witnesses who have come forward from a whole host of non-traditional occupations for women, I think that perhaps the story we're hearing is mostly in the history books, and it's very difficult to hear this kind of history in terms of what's happening.

I have a couple of quick questions. Out of the 5,500 workers that arrive at work, do they come, do they go...? How many of those are women?

•(1610)

Mr. Greg Vurdela: We have the statistics for you.

Ms. Marynuik, if you would.

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: Sure. As casual workers, we have a total of 255 women who represent 5.4%, and we have 37 union members who represent a total of 1%.

Mr. Greg Vurdela: If I may add to that, the significance of these statistics is that the way the union is structured only full union members have the vote and representation in their terms and conditions of employment, which is why the casual statistics cited are dreadful.

But worse than that are the statistics cited within the union ranks, because it is this 1% that is vying for control of terms and conditions, which they don't have, and that is why you find, from an election perspective, that there are no women in the ILWU executives.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: So you—

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: Sorry, but I may just add this? Also, there is Local 514 of the ILWU, which represents foremen. That is the next level of supervision. There are 435 foremen within ILWU Local 514 and one woman is a foreman.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Could I address that, Madam McLeod?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Go ahead.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: It's a good thing that Ms. Marynuik is bringing up the 435 supervisory positions. Out of all the supervisory positions on the west coast of Canada, only one is held by a woman. The foremen are hired directly by the companies. The union has no input into the hiring for these positions. That hiring practice is one hundred per cent employer dominated. We're trying to put an end to it in this round of bargaining and to say that we want to move people up from the workforce into these supervisory positions.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Presumably if your workforce needs someone with experience to be a foreman, and—

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: Sorry, but if I may correct Mr. Dufresne—

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Sorry, but you know what? I would prefer that you give a written correction.

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: Okay.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: I don't know that this is the forum to be solving what seem to be long-standing concerns and issues.

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: Sure.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: I guess you represent 66 companies. Could you talk about international examples? Are there things happening in other places? You talked about best practices you've become aware of through your representation. Are there any successes you can share, as opposed to the very discouraging stories?

Mr. Greg Vurdela: Well, the success appears to be almost legislative in nature, if I could coin it in those terms. On the U.S. west coast, the ILWU had the same issues that we now confront. The way they dealt with that was through their gender equity legislation, which essentially forced on the ILWU an appropriate percentage and a critical mass of women who would be able to then change the terms and conditions under which they work, and the atmosphere, essentially, under which they work. That, unfortunately and most unhappily, that is what we end up resorting to in these cases, which is again why the association has filed the human rights complaint that it has.

We need to put this issue before a body with the authority and knowledge to give us a solution, because clearly, as you're pointing out to us, the parties seem unable to do that on their own. It is a well-entrenched issue and it needs to change.

Ms. Susan O'Donnell: May I answer that?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Sure.

Ms. Susan O'Donnell: I think that's the one weakness of Vince Ready's report. He went to San Francisco, so what he was looking at was the affirmative action program of the United States of America. What he was looking at was a suit under that program, where a judicial order happened to order this number of women and the way it should go about, right? In the United States, affirmative action sets quotas of women and minorities and sets a certain timeframe when they must bring those people in. They have no bona fide occupational requirements as their bottom line of ability and no training requirements as their top line of ability; it's entirely different human rights law.

In Canada what we have is the Employment Equity Act. It says that we have to reach out to women and minorities, identify and remove barriers, and work from that perspective, which is what

we've been talking about as a union all this time. But we can't turn around and introduce affirmative action measures when they're not the law in our country.

The Chair: You have about another minute and a half.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Thank you.

So when you put ads in papers where you're looking for people who are interested in this kind of employment, let's say... You indicated that you've done that just recently. You indicated that an ad went into the papers for people to become part of a list. Is that accurate?

•(1615)

Mr. Greg Vurdela: We have not advertised recently because of the economic downturn, but that's what we would intend to do going forward. I think that is really one of the critical issues here. We should concentrate on the go-forward position as opposed to our sad history on these issues.

We propose to do something completely transparent. That's what we have put forward in our proposals. Essentially an ad would go out based on the criteria we need and we would pick from that pool of individuals on a fifty-fifty basis, until we get what is generally professionally and expertly recognized as a significant group in terms of numbers of women, to begin to change the culture that has been described for you today.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: So if you did put out that kind of ad, you don't have a historical reference in terms of how many women versus men you would anticipate applying?

Mr. Greg Vurdela: We would anticipate... When we did that on our website... You see, the recruitment process is interesting; what BCMEA has done is... It's mandated fifty-fifty in terms of recruitment by the collective agreement, so for anyone to suggest otherwise is completely inaccurate in terms of whether the BCMEA has done this unilaterally or not. We're bound by collective agreement to do this fifty-fifty. The last time we did a recruitment we posted jobs on our website, and in one day we had 9,000 hits in terms of applications and turned away many more due to the fact that our site was overwhelmed.

When you look at the wages and salaries on the waterfront, where the average longshore person makes \$90,000 in wages and an additional 40% in benefits, I would suggest to you, Ma'am, that we will have ample representation amongst that group.

This is in direct opposition to what the ILWU locals do on the Lower Mainland, where they give what is the equivalent of an application form to the union individuals and those people can give these applications to whoever they wish. As you can probably guess, they give them most often—and as proven in these lists that Mr. Dufresne quotes—

Mr. Tom Dufresne: You know, Mr. Vurdela, you're making some pretty serious allegations about the handing out of those lists.

Mr. Greg Vurdela: They give them—

The Chair: Order.

I'm sorry. You are not allowed to intervene—

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Oh. Excuse me.

The Chair: —but perhaps you can wrap it up, Mr. Vurdela. We've gone to eight minutes on this round.

Mr. Greg Vurdela: Yes. What ends up happening, of course, is that these are mostly given to brothers, uncles, and sons, which is why we have the statistics we do vis-à-vis the list that Mr. Dufresne references.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll move to the New Democratic Party and Irene Mathysen.

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

Thank you to the presenters who are here today.

I must confess that I'm finding some of this a bit confusing and I hope that you'll unpack some of the concerns for me.

My first question is to BCMEA. You've stated that you have unionized employees and non-unionized employees. Am I correct in that?

Mr. Greg Vurdela: Yes. The ILWU is comprised approximately 50% of full-fledged union members, and 50% of the workforce are what are termed "casuals". Casuals have no representation and no vote within the ILWU.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Do the non-unionized and unionized employees earn the same rate of pay?

Mr. Greg Vurdela: The collective agreement calls for the same rate of pay for both.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay.

Now, I'm hearing this dispute in regard to the list and setting aside the list, but it seems to me that as soon as you do that, you're bypassing seniority. There's an issue about seniority. Unions protect the seniority of their members.

Is that not a concern for you? It seems to me that as soon as you try to do that you create a negative atmosphere in the workplace.

Mr. Greg Vurdela: On these lists to which Mr. Dufresne refers, the people on the lists have no official status within the waterfront. Official status within the waterfront occurs when an individual is issued what's called a registration number. So after they've gone through the recruitment process and the bit of training we've articulated, those people who are selected after that process are issued a registration number.

From this number you are paid, and from this number you start to gain and retain seniority, such as pensions, benefits, and the like. So once you have this number, you have status. It would be the equivalent, Ms. Mathysen, if you were hiring for a position in your office, of taking in a bunch of resumes and applications, and then having someone tell you several years later that the next person you hired had to be off that list. That's simply beyond the pale, per se, from the perspective of having status; they simply don't.

That's what we dispute: that they don't have status. Besides which, the lists are full, as we mentioned, of relatives and full of family-status individuals, which essentially says that we can't go off them.

We would just like a fair and equitable playing field and to start again in this process.

• (1620)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay. Thank you.

I want to come back to the ILWU. You stated in your brief that BCMEA earned the lowest grade possible from the Canadian Human Rights Commission for failing to meet expectations concerning women's participation.

I'm again needing clarification. Could you elaborate on that and explain? What has happened there?

Ms. Susan O'Donnell: The employment equity legislation requires federal employers or contractors to report on their progress every so many years—I'm not sure, but it may be five years—in building the status of women and in changing the workplace, not just for women, but for minorities, people with disabilities, and aboriginal people.

We're saying that the last report BCMEA gave to the Canadian Human Rights Commission in reporting on its employment equity earned a "D" from the Canadian Human Rights Commission, which is the lowest possible mark you can receive for trying to change the status of women. Not only that, it received the letter grade "L" beside its name, and in the employment equity reporting process, that means this person was late in reporting, without permission, and may well be fined.

That, to me, shows a real disrespect. I went through all the people who were looked at in 2008 and very few got a "D" grade and very few got an "L". So I'm worried that this employer is not concerned about women. I'm worried that women will suffer in this process if we don't get together, stop this war, and start building some pragmatic solutions to change the status of women on the waterfront.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Is this grade from the Human Rights Commission linked to what you said before in regard to the lack of benefits, those maternity, paternity, child care, and eldercare benefits?

Ms. Susan O'Donnell: No. It's linked to recruitment, to environment, and to whether there's a human rights policy—those equitable measures inside the workforce. It's not linked to benefits.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay, and yet, the lack of benefits seems to be a flashpoint here in terms of women. Our committee has actually heard that because caregiving falls most often on the shoulders of women, they are most disadvantaged when they cannot access the benefits they need in order to manage their families.

I was also quite interested in the description of the process you followed with the Nisga'a. You talked about making sure that there was respect and that there was a fair process. Could you describe that?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Yes. On what happened in the north, there was some log loading being done, and it was being done by the Nisga'a tribe. They set up their own corporation to load logs. We went in there and signed an accord with them. We've done this in the past with Bella Coola and Bella Bella.

We went in there and signed them up to the BCMEA-ILWU collective agreement. It was an agreement that they would work under the terms and condition of the ILWU-BCMEA collective agreement and earn the same money that people in the Lower Mainland were earning. We sent up trainers, who trained them on how to operate the cranes and how to load the logs safely and properly. We just do monitoring on their training. All the rest of that work is done by the Nisga'a.

In Bella Coola, we sent in trainers. Some were topside—the crane operators. The rest of the work was distributed by the band council. They picked people. There's no use in just taking a whole bunch of people and saying, "Here, go load logs". It's a very dangerous job, right? You have to be trained in how to do it properly, safely, and efficiently. If you're not efficient, people aren't going to come back and load them. So that's what we did.

Under our conditions... Mr. Vurdela refers to benefits of about 40%, so what happened in that case, because the Nisga'a didn't require the benefits under the collective agreement, was that the money was set aside in a fund. Every few years, they come forward with a project and approach the BCMEA and the ILWU jointly to access those funds to buy an MRI or to put a roof on a sports complex or something like that. Dollar for dollar, they earn the same money that is earned by people who are longshoring on the B.C. coast, on the Lower Mainland or anywhere else.

• (1625)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mathysen.

We have finished the first round and are going to move into the second round. The second round is the five-minute round. Once again, that's for questions and answers.

For the Liberals, Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, Lib.): Thank you very much.

This will be very quick because I only have the five minutes, but in the past... The study is looking into the participation of women in non-traditional occupations. To a great extent, I would include politics in that as well. Recently I was engaged in a debate about women in politics. You'll find that many countries in Europe are now fundamentally trying to change the system of how they elect people in order to get people engaged.

Am I looking at something similar here, to the effect that you want to change the system by which you've hired people over some time? Because the other side of the issue is that you can encourage women to get involved in politics by financing of campaigns, educating young women, advocacy, and that sort of situation. So you have two sides to getting people involved.

One of the issues you brought up was that you had to be physically present in order to answer a call. Now, I apologize; I don't quite understand how that works, as opposed to someone who is home all the time and who wants to get involved and is unable to do so. Is this the type of systemic change that you want to see? My question to you is that in the list you have currently, my colleague makes a good point about seniority, and there seems to be a fundamental way of... Given the problems you have with it, would

you agree that the list he's talking about is a good thing in order to allow more women in politics?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: As I stated, in New Westminster, Local 502, there's a list of approximately 286 people. Out of those, 83 are women waiting to be hired. Under the proposal that BCMEA has put forward, they would be eliminated. They would be bypassed. We believe that's wrong. Many of those people have undergone testing and training and have gone out to better equip themselves to do those jobs. Some have gone out and joined gyms and what have you.

We also believe some of the barriers can be taken out, such as the lashing tests that the BCMEA insisted on. To get past that barrier, Local 502 simply refused to do the lashing test. They said no. They said they weren't going to make women go through the lashing test and that it was not necessary for them to do it to perform the jobs they were going to perform. Yet they can do it if they so choose; they made it optional.

Also, Ms. Marynuik paints a pretty bleak picture and a very misleading picture. The only local where they have problems with resolving human rights complaints is in the Port of Vancouver, where the BCMEA controls the dispatch. In Local 502, on the Fraser River, they have what's called a pre-dispatch, where people sign up for jobs the day before and make themselves available. Prince Rupert has about 95% telephone dispatches, which are done ahead of time. On Vancouver Island, almost 100% of dispatches are done ahead of time.

What they're doing is citing some very bleak figures to try to paint this oppressive picture.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay, Mr. Dufresne. If I could go back to my original point, then, you think the current system is fine as far as your industry is concerned. The question is, would you consider more options to encourage women to get involved in this one?

But can you please keep your response brief? I don't have a lot of time and I'd like to get a response from the others.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Yes. Because it's not just about bringing people into the workforce. You have to give them the proper training. You have to make them feel comfortable.

Like Ms. O'Donnell has stated, we need to do an audit. If you bring people in there and you don't have proper washrooms and proper lunchrooms for them, and you don't give them proper training, they say the—

The Chair: We have one and a half minutes left in this round.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: We want to make them participate—not just be numbers.

Ms. Barbara Byers: Can I just add to that very quickly because I've been very quiet?

Mr. Scott Simms: Yes, and I do want to get answers from the others, too.

Ms. Barbara Byers: Just on the question of women in politics, part of the work that the CLC can do with women who are in the longshore is to work with them on the questions of community activism, political activism, and activism within their union.

Mr. Scott Simms: Absolutely.

Ms. Barbara Byers: How do you get elected and how do you end up taking office? That's part of our work.

Mr. Scott Simms: That goes to the elections that you're talking about here.

Go ahead.

• (1630)

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: I'd just like to respond to some of your comments, Mr. Simms.

First of all, the number one barrier to women entering the longshore industry is exactly the dispatch system. For anybody who

Mr. Scott Simms: That wasn't my comment, but go ahead.

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: I think you did make a comment about the dispatch system and women having to go in on a shift-by-shift basis type of thing, did you not?

Mr. Scott Simms: Well, no, but I think that's where you were... All I'm getting at is the system by which people apply. That's all.

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: Apply for a shift...?

Mr. Scott Simms: Yes, whereas you don't have to physically be there—

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: That's right. That is the dispatch system.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay. That's fair enough.

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: It is the number one barrier that prevents women from entering the longshore industry.

As I had painted in my picture, to go out into the dispatch hall three times a day to register yourself for work does not in itself bode well for women entering the industry at all.

Mr. Greg Vurdela: I would just add these quick comments.

The Chair: Very quickly, Mr. Vurdela.

Mr. Greg Vurdela: Recruitment is on a fifty-fifty basis by the collective agreement, which we can't unilaterally change ourselves. When we get a failing grade as BCMEA, in fact we all get a failing grade. Our proposals are about going forward and leaving our failing grades as an industry—and I mean both sides of it—behind us, because it is a fifty-fifty process.

As well, on the benefit side, it might interest the committee to know that benefits are jointly trustee'd, so they are trustee'd plans, and they are trustee'd by three union folks on one side and three employer folks on the other. These people make the decision on benefits. They go forward on recommendations and those recommendations are then adopted by the parties. That's how the process works, and the benefits are... In fact, there are four plans: two pension plans and two health and benefit plans, and they are all jointly trustee'd.

The Chair: Thank you. That's the end of that round.

Thank you, Mr. Simms.

Thank you, Mr. Vurdela.

Now we'll go to the Conservatives, with Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): I apologize. I'm losing my voice.

I'm sorry, but I'm in a somewhat landlocked riding, so a lot of these issues are a bit new to me. When you talk about being dispatched, you mean that they go to a place and they're dispatched every day for work. Is there any sense that if you're dispatched one day, the next day you're not? How does that work? Is there any consideration given to that?

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: Yes. In some instances, there are people who are called back the next day, but that is not the majority of the work. The majority of the work still is within the dispatch hall.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Let me ask you this. It's quite a picture that is painted with respect to working. There are 12 locals, if I'm correct...?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Yes, but engaged directly in longshore, there are fewer than that.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Okay. But of the 12 locals, then, there are no women on any of the locals as officers or on the executive. Have there ever been?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: There are women in Local—

Mr. Paul Calandra: Who have been elected?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Yes. Women have been elected in the past. The one who was on the Local 500 executive, Shirley Jaco, was one of the first women elected. She has moved on to a supervisory position. She's the only supervisor who is female. Like you say, that's—

Mr. Paul Calandra: Let me ask you this, then; it's more of an observer thing. When an instance as has been described is observed, are there any protocols in the union with respect to the union for how something is dealt with? If an instance of discrimination or something that would make somebody else uncomfortable is observed, what are the rules or what is the protocol that the union would follow to discipline a worker?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: On discipline, first off, what you have to do is you have to investigate the situation, the allegation. The person could go to the supervisor on the job, either a foreman or a superintendent, and report that they're being harassed on the job or—

Mr. Paul Calandra: What about those who are just on their way and even waiting to be dispatched?

Mr. Tom Dufresne: When they're waiting to be dispatched? Well, the BCMEA controls the dispatch in the Port of Vancouver. It's jointly administered. There's a business agent on duty. People could go up and complain to the business agent or to the dispatch staff, or they could call one of the officers.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I understand that, but do you not educate your members specifically on appropriate behaviour, on how to make other people feel comfortable? I'm not specifically talking about women, I guess, in this instance. I might be talking about minorities or any individuals who might otherwise feel uncomfortable approaching. I can tell you that I'd be uncomfortable with the situation that was described—

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Yes.

Mr. Paul Calandra: —but we're talking about women here. Within your guidelines, within the rules, how do you educate your members about what is appropriate behaviour and how they should act? I want to know how many members have been disciplined and what the punishments were if they have been disciplined. Let me just ask you those two questions.

• (1635)

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Okay. As to the number of people who have been disciplined, I'm not sure.

One of the most effective ways of ending discrimination is to address it right at the moment that it happens. For instance, on the complaints in the Port of Vancouver that were filed, there are currently two outstanding complaints that were filed jointly against the union and the BCMEA. But there's also an arbitration outstanding. We're waiting for the arbitrator's decision. That's a case that has cost the union, like I said, almost a million dollars.

Out on the Fraser River, we've had about three complaints filed there with the Human Rights Commission. They've been resolved; they've been mediated.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Let me just... Sorry, I'm looking more specifically at it with respect to the union and how it educates its members.

Ms. O'Donnell, perhaps you can jump in here as well. Have you been advised or have you been engaged to help educate the membership of the unions on how to behave better so that...? I don't want to specifically point.... Well, actually maybe I do, in this round. Is your specific mandate for how they can better behave, how they can make the environment more comfortable? What recommendations do you have? Have you reviewed some of the bylaws or anything else that the union has? Are the charters that make up their rules and regulations sufficient to address these issues?

I'll leave you with that.

The Chair: You have 30 seconds to answer that.

Ms. Susan O'Donnell: That's a big question.

It is part of my mandate with the union and with the CLC to try to develop better procedures in terms of education, but it is the employer's responsibility; the environment is the employer's responsibility. The employer has sole liability for the environment of harassment in the workplace.

Having said that—that's a legal proposition and somewhat mechanical—I will say that the union does take the position that we have some responsibility for the conduct of our members. One of the reasons that we want to do an audit is that we want to see what kinds of specific behaviours we need to concern ourselves with.

What I hear over here is that people are scared. I've heard that from other people, too, when they come into the process. Well, why are they scared? How are people conducting themselves? What programs can we design to stop it? That's part of my mandate.

But we have another problem and that is that human rights law is not punitive law. One of the big difficulties for unions and human rights law is that the employer—and not just this employer—often comes to harassment from a perspective of discipline, and then the

union is compelled to go in and grieve for the perpetrator. The complainant is forgotten. So what we want to do is design a program that helps our union members relearn how to conduct themselves in the workplace, and if—

The Chair: Ms. O'Donnell, can I just ask you to wrap it up?

Ms. Susan O'Donnell: Okay.

If punishment is necessary, I've been told that we can pull them off work for a day—

A voice: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...were saying something different.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

For the Bloc, Monsieur Desnoyers.

[*Translation*]

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

First of all, Mr. Vurdela, it seems to me that the argument regarding hiring families does not hold water. It makes no sense because the major railway companies—CN, CP, VIA—would not have become what they are if, at the time, families could not have been hired. That is why the railways became so strong and grew so big.

In the automobile sector, there was family hiring also. People held jobs for 25 or 30 years at that time. Today, perhaps things have changed, but I think that the argument is less and less obvious and valid. I think that the longshoremen have reached the point where they will have to put some policies into place. As far as I know, management rights are not a matter for the union. It must be the employer's responsibility, I assume. So when I say put policies in place so that women can go to work in that sector, there can be a great many options.

Earlier, Ms. O'Donnell raised the issue of daycares. Is the employer prepared to set up daycares in the workplace in order to make it easier for women to work there? I don't know if you are prepared to do so. I know that employers always bring up the costs involved, but witnesses from the oil and gas sector, which is growing significantly, told us about employers who have made all kinds of arrangements and accommodations for women.

I feel that the longshore needs arrangements of that kind and employers are in the best position to respond to that situation. Are they ready to do so? I do not think that the solution is to take 200 people and put them at the head of the line. That would not solve the problem. A process must be put in place to ensure that we eventually have a structure that allows women to be hired and makes the job easier for them at the same time. I could use the example of the automobile sector where, 15 years ago, there were only men. Today, because the union and the employer put policies in place, things are different. For example, with harassment, you emphasized that there should be a policy that could solve the problem without being punitive. I don't know if your collective agreement has such a policy, but this requires both the employer and the union to take on some of the responsibility. Both have to work on solving problems of harassment or discrimination.

I do not know if you want to set up structures to encourage daycares in the workplace, a non-discriminatory situation, and training for these women. I feel that major work is needed because not all women have easy access to your training programs. In fact, they may have children and may have to leave work earlier or arrive later.

We know that longshoremen's schedules are completely different from those in other occupations. The employer waits for the ships to arrive before calling people into work. If no ships arrive, no one is called. When the ship docks, they get out the list of workers and call them. Mr. Dufresne, you said earlier that you call people. So, as Ms. Marynuik was saying, it is not simply an issue of going to a place, Vancouver, for example, to get a job. You stated, and I would like to hear your comment on this, that you reach people by telephone. That means that they do not have to go to a specific place. That may be a solution to the problem that you raised. Mr. Dufresne said that that was they do.

I am throwing a lot of ideas your way at the same time. But I feel that the solutions are in your hands and both parties have to want to achieve results. Obviously, the employer has the resources, not the union, so when you want to set things up—

• (1640)

[*English*]

The Chair: Monsieur Desnoyers, you have one more minute, so if there's a question there, perhaps we can hear it.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: All right, could you answer those questions?

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Dufresne: I appreciate your input and your understanding of the issue. That's what we're saying. We're not opposed to dealing with it. We offered to work with the employer on some solutions, on a local-by-local basis, because one size does not fit all, right? The solution in one area is not necessarily the answer in Prince Rupert or in the north. That's why we say we need some programs.

It's like this. You can elect more women to Parliament, but if you don't show them how the parliamentary process works and give them the education and the ability to be part of the process, then you're not being truthful.

What we have to do is make it more inclusive, but also make it more friendly for women—and for men—and say, “Here, let's develop some processes”. So people can educate themselves and become better workers for the employer, but also better activists within the community.

The Chair: I'm going to give Ms. Marynuik 15 seconds.

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: Thank you.

I just want to address an issue you had touched upon, and that is day care. If there is a need and a requirement we will definitely be looking at that. We are going to look at every avenue, at everything that is required to make women successful on that waterfront.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll now go to the NDP and Ms. Leslie.

Welcome.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Mathysen sends her regards. She had to leave unexpectedly and asked me to substitute for her. My name is Megan Leslie and I'm the member of Parliament for Halifax.

Welcome.

My first question is for Ms. Byers. I was wondering if you could share with us the types of programs or policy recommendations that CLC has made to the ILWU.

Ms. Barbara Byers: We're in early discussions with the longshore union, obviously. We have our Pacific region staff working with the union. As well, once we have hired a new director for our women and human rights department, that person will obviously be engaged.

But I want to say that there is a tremendous amount of information available to any union, whether it's the longshore union or others, in terms of what has been developed, both by the CLC and by other unions. Earlier, reference was made to the changes in the Auto Workers. I remember early on when Carol Phillips was in a video about racism and sexism in the auto industry; that was used to educate their own members. It was a very powerful video and it's probably just as powerful today.

I was part of the group on the women's committee at the CLC that—too many years ago—brought a policy to the congress that said every CLC convention, conference, or educational session would begin with an anti-harassment statement. That spread through unions, through labour councils, and through federations of labour. It's just as much part of the agenda as anything else. A host of information and educational programs are available, developed both by the CLC and by our affiliates and federations, and they would be fully available for the longshore union.

As Susan O'Donnell has said, I think it's a matter of sitting down and asking, “What's our plan?” Because there will be the plan with the employer, but then there will also be the plan that the union wants to do with its own members—both women and men.

So there is a full range. As well, by the way, this committee may be interested to know that the CLC, along with the Canadian manufacturers' employers association, is ready to launch a women in non-traditional work website. I don't think it's quite up on the web yet. It includes sites for employers on the advantages of this and why they would want to do it, and for unions, and how both can work together to make sure it happens. It will be going up shortly; last week was our last conference call on whether the site was where we wanted it to be.

So there is that whole range, and I don't know if that fully answers your question, but there is a long list of tools and processes available. It's a matter of sitting down with the women in longshore and asking them where and how we want to start and what it is that they want most now. Is it about running for office? Is it about how to deal with complaints of harassment?

• (1645)

Ms. Megan Leslie: So it could be anything from dealing with harassment to child care?

Ms. Barbara Byers: It could be the whole range.

Some of us have been dealing with this for, again, too many years. I remember that many years ago when I was president of the government employees union, we dealt with similar issues in a provincial government department, where we sat down with that group of workers in the building and asked what we needed to do there—because education is needed on all sides. In that particular case, it was about someone who had very offensive calendars and pictures up in his office and who thought that was fine because it was his office. Well, it was an education not just for him, but also for the whole building.

Ms. Megan Leslie: So it seems like this model would apply regardless of the non-traditional workforce.

Ms. Barbara Byers: Absolutely. There's a lot of stuff that can be applied in both places. There are some things that are particular to non-traditional workforces, but there are more similarities in workplaces than there are differences.

The Chair: You have 30 seconds if you want to fit something in quickly.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Thirty seconds? No, that's okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to the Conservatives, with Madam Boucher.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Good afternoon, everyone. What we are hearing today is very interesting.

Unions and workers aside, this is what I would like to know. When you employ women and you want women to go into non-traditional occupations, how do you sell them those jobs? Is there a gender-based approach or do you sell them on being equal to men and say that you need such and such a kind of worker without referring to the person's gender, always bearing in mind that women are capable of doing a non-traditional job? Would you agree that, often, we have a negative image of women in non-traditional occupations? Has the time not come to change things? There is always the issue of education as well. Often, we face closed doors. Is it men who are unwilling to change or it is an issue of education?

• (1650)

[*English*]

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: May I answer that?

I think it's a matter of both. It's a matter of men not being aware and it's also a matter of education.

I have come from an industry that was male-dominated. We did an awareness campaign to attract women into the industry. We made it

known what the work hours were like and how these work hours suited women in being able to choose them, and what salaries were there for those positions. It's all part and parcel of attracting women into the workplace. Along with that, though, in attracting women, you have to make sure that the education is done first.

Someone pointed out that there would be no worse travesty than bringing these women into a work area where men still treat them in a harassing and intimidating manner; there would be no point. So education really is the first thing to happen in attracting more women. Then, part and parcel of that is the salary, along with education for women as to what the work is like and what the benefits are for a woman entering the industry.

Ms. Barbara Byers: Tom and I are going to arm-wrestle over this, but I won the first pass.

The Chair: Why am I not surprised?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Barbara Byers: I think what you're pointing out is that we need to be able to create the atmosphere where, for example, we're encouraging young women to go into non-traditional work. I sit on the board of the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum. A few years ago, we did a study for equality-seeking groups about barriers to non-traditional work, to the apprenticeship trades. That information is available. The website that I just talked about is available.

A couple of years ago, the Ontario Federation of Labour had a very vibrant conference on women and non-traditional work, and this is about changing attitudes. I remember that one of the women who got up was an electrician. She talked about not just the discrimination she got from men, but also how when she went into a work site to work on something... In the particular case she raised, it was a bank, and the woman bank manager—and we would celebrate the fact that there are women bank managers now—didn't believe that she could do the job and sent up a male teller, who didn't know anything about electrical work, to supervise her.

So we have a long way to go, sisters, on our work, and on our work with the men as well.

Tom, you get the last little bit.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Go ahead, Susan. I'll be after—

Ms. Barbara Byers: I see we got him—

Ms. Susan O'Donnell: I arm-wrestled the other arm.

The Chair: You need to know that you now have only three-quarters of a minute.

Ms. Susan O'Donnell: Okay. Very quickly, my experience is a little different, because I go into a lot of places of work to help. In small communities, in mills, for instance, women want to go in there for the money, right, because it's really, really good money.

So what you have to do is go into places where women are and send women who do that work to where women are. You have to go to the local community college and say that you need to sit down together and design a course that will make women successful as welders or whatever, you have to promote it like heck, and then go into an equal pulling-in program. It's the same for men. Many years ago, we had to talk in unions about how men should be proud of being blue-collar workers. I think we need to do a program where women should be proud of becoming blue-collar workers. I've seen it being very successful.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: One of the women who works on the waterfront as a heavy-duty mechanic is the first female Red Seal heavy-duty mechanic in Canada. She works in the Port of Vancouver at DP World. Also, her partner was the first female heavy-duty mechanic instructor in Canada.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dufresne. You snuck in there when I wasn't looking.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: Thank you.

The Chair: I think we need to do some work as a committee, so we will not have a third round. There just isn't any time for it. We have about five minutes to go before we move on.

I want to thank everyone for coming today. Normally the chair may ask a question when everyone else has had their opportunity, and we do have a little bit of time. I'm going to ask a question because I've listened, and I think what we've done here is a he-said-she-said thing.

At the end of the day, what I wish to know is simply this. What if, as Ms. Byers and Ms. O'Donnell said, you go out there and encourage women come into non-traditional work, you give them all the information, and tell them what the pay structures are, etc., as Ms. Marynuik said, and you say to them, come on, let's get in here, you should be proud to go into this kind of job...? However, I have heard there is already an extraordinarily long list and that list is primarily male, and there are two lists. One is the union list and one is the casual list. How do you get women to go in when there is absolutely no way to get them in?

There is no room for them. As we used to say in the old days, there is this very thick layer of men to get through before they can get there. What is the practical solution to this? Because we would like to see women move into non-traditional work and I would like to hear a quick practical solution. I'll let one person from that side answer quickly, and then one person from this side. Let's go.

Tom.

•(1655)

Mr. Tom Dufresne: What we're saying is to address it on a local-by-local basis. We're prepared to sit down with the employer on a local-by-local basis and address it.

As I said, on the Fraser River, there are 286 people on the list. Eighty-three of those people are women. They deserve their chance to come into this workforce. Some of them on that list have been waiting for three years now to get a job. They've been sitting there hoping they'll get one of those jobs. Exhaust that list and then do hiring on a fifty-fifty basis.

We also participate in a thing called TranspoCity.ca, which is part of WESTAC, a group we belong to. There's a website that holds all non-traditional jobs. It's something you might want to view.

Another thing we do is to go into high schools and what have you and talk to people, as Sister O'Donnell was saying, to try to encourage not only women, but minorities and people in general. If you remember, during the dot-com craze, everybody wanted to be inventing video games; nobody wanted to repair cars, telephones, and what have you. So we had to get people interested once again in the trades, which is where the expansion of our economy is going to go, in servicing those things. We're prepared to do it. We'll sit down.

I just wouldn't want to see this committee used to get something for somebody that they're not entitled to and used as a smokescreen; I think you should feel insulted if that happens. Thank you.

The Chair: I don't think that's what this committee is about. We've talked to many other non-traditional workplaces. We're just asking simple questions here: how do you get women in if you have a long list? You've suggested finishing up the list as it is. That's a reasonable suggestion.

Perhaps the BCMEA could answer this, too.

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: Yes, thank you. I'd like to answer that.

I think the simple answer is to abolish the lists. There is no requirement to keep those lists. If there are women on those lists, there is nothing preventing them from reapplying. As an example, Mr. Dufresne cites a list from Local 502. That list has remained since 2006. It is four years old. Why would we want to maintain that list and work off it? It makes no sense.

We at the BCMEA would want to abolish all the lists, start anew, and recruit. If those women who were on the lists so desire to apply, they are more than welcome to apply. Thank you.

The Chair: But there are union members on that list.

Mr. Greg Vurdela: No, there are none, Dr. Fry.

The Chair: No, there are none. All right. I see.

These are just people who are asking for work.

Ms. Eleanor Marynuik: Exactly.

Mr. Greg Vurdela: That's correct.

Mr. Tom Dufresne: The other thing, as I said, is that a lot of the office staff, if they're in the ILWU, are all earning approximately \$30 an hour or more. If they're working as non-union workers for the employer, a lot of them are making about \$15 an hour. So if they let them join the union, we'll improve their way of life immensely.

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

I want to thank everyone for coming today. It was very interesting. If any of you, as I said, would like to read the Vince Ready report, which has to deal with the environment on this particular waterfront, I would ask you to look at it.

Thank you very much for coming. I'm going to suspend for one minute.

We need to get this finished today. Thank you.

- _____ (Pause) _____
-
- (1700)

The Chair: We're going to resume with our business. We're currently dealing with the motion.

As you know, Madam Demers had a motion on the table, which we were discussing. Do you want me to read the motion or do you remember it?

An hon. member: We remember.

The Chair: You remember it well? All right.

However, I understand that Madam Boucher brought in an amendment to the motion. We should deal with the amendment now. It's going to be the first thing we do.

Madam Boucher.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Madam Chair, I would like to withdraw my amendment, if everyone agrees.

[English]

The Chair: Okay. You are definitely not bringing it?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Not this one.

The Chair: Okay. So we're going to go right back to discuss the original motion by Madam Demers. We were in the middle of discussing the motion. We've discussed this motion ad nauseam.

Sylvie.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: We discussed it but I have another amendment I would like to make to Ms. Demers' motion, if everyone is willing.

[English]

The Chair: Would you like to speak to it?

An hon. member: *Non, on ne veut pas.*

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I will say it anyway.

The amendment is that the committee study maternal and infant health in all its aspects.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Madam Demers, do you have a friendly amendment?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: You would be able to invite your Quebec civil society.

Ms. Nicole Demers: I would be pleased to, madam. But I was only thinking of two meetings. Were you thinking of more meetings than that?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes, I want us to study maternal and infant health in all its aspects.

Ms. Nicole Demers: I would be very pleased to accept your amendment to my motion, madam.

[English]

The Chair: I just want to point out to the committee that we had discussed it. Madam Demers had suggested two meetings only.

This committee is going to have to decide if we'll move into a full study—and I don't know how long it would take—while we already have a pending study, for travel, on violence against aboriginal women. I'm going to let the committee make the decision about what to do. If we accept a full study, we're then going to have to decide as a committee whether to postpone our pending study until we have finished the study on maternal health. If I recall correctly, the timeline was for the G8 in June, which means that we have to do this one before the study on aboriginal violence. I'm just telling the committee this so that as we discuss it you're fully aware of where we're going here.

Now, Madam Demers, you said you have no problem with the amendment.

Sylvie, do you want to tell me this quickly? How would your friendly amendment read?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I am sorry. It would read as follows: "That the committee study maternal and infant health in all its aspects."

[English]

The Chair: This does not contain a timeline for the G8, Madam Demers. Are you happy with this?

• (1705)

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: No, I am not happy that there is no specific timeline. I wanted to be able to report to the government before June when we will be hosting the G8. That was the goal of the meeting. We also asked to meet with the ministers. That could be one meeting, but I do not see how we can do this in one or two meetings. It is impossible.

[English]

The Chair: I know.

Sylvie, if you bring this forward as it stands alone, it's a completely new motion. But if you add it as an amendment to the first part of Madam Demers' motion, it could read:

[Translation]

That the committee study maternal and infant health in all its aspects and make it a priority during the G8 meeting in June, which Canada will be hosting.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: "In all its aspects", that says everything.

[English]

The Chair: Okay: “in all its aspects”.

So what you're really doing is introducing a completely new motion. I'm sorry, but this is not a friendly amendment, Sylvie. This is a completely new motion.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: This is a new motion. We are not talking about the G8 anymore.

[English]

The Chair: It's not an amendment.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Following the announcement—

[English]

The Chair: So in many ways, if this is a completely new motion, I cannot entertain it until we have discussed the motion on the table.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Madam Chair, at the moment, we are jumping from one language to the other. So let us begin in French and things will work better.

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: The motion would read as follows:

That the committee study the maternal and infant health in all its aspects following the government's announcement to make its health strategy a priority at the G8 in June, which Canada will be hosting.

[English]

The Chair: Now it's an amendment.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Now it's an amendment?

The Chair: Yes. So let us discuss this.

You've said that it's a friendly amendment and Nicole had suggested that she would accept it.

Do you accept it now?

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, I would be pleased to agree to this if I had some idea of the time required to do it. I want to make sure we do the study on violence we had decided to do. When I moved my two motions on maternal and infant health, they would have required no more than two meetings. Now a much broader motion is being put forward. I'm concerned by the fact that it would require more than two meetings because I do not know how we will be able to assess all aspects of maternal and infant health in two meetings.

[English]

The Chair: Well, then, you are not accepting the motion, because the motion says “following the government's announcement to make maternal and child health a priority at the G8”, so to appear “following” does not really give a timeline.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Madam Chair?

The Chair: Mr. Calandra, I really don't want to proceed with entertaining any other discussion unless I'm sure that Ms. Demers accepts this as a friendly amendment. If she doesn't, we will then discuss the amendment per se, and not the amended motion.

If you accept it as an amendment, then we have an amended motion. If you don't, then we have to vote on the amendment as it's written here.

I know that you were asking about the timeline, Madam Boucher.

Before I go to Mr. Calandra, do you have any statement on the timeline?

• (1710)

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I sincerely believe it could take two to three weeks. So we could alternate between our studies as we had done during the last session, with our study on violence against aboriginal women one day and the issue of maternal and infant health the other. It is a bit like what we did with the two studies before Christmas.

[English]

The Chair: All right. We have a suggestion as to how this would go.

Madam Demers, I need your okay. Are you accepting this? If not, we have to deal with the amendment.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, I would be inclined to accept that.

[English]

The Chair: You accept. All right. So what we have now is an amended motion.

Mr. Calandra, we're going to go to an amended motion. Is this pertinent to that?

Mr. Paul Calandra: No. It was the same thing that Ms. Boucher said, so I'm good.

The Chair: Okay. So now that we have an amended motion, the amended motion reads:

[Translation]

That the committee study maternal and infant health in all its aspects following the government's announcement to make maternal and infant health a priority at the G8 in June that Canada will be hosting.

[English]

Are you fine with that?

I'll read it in English. It reads: “That the Committee study maternal and infant health in all of its aspects following the government's announcement to make maternal and child health a priority at the G8 in June that Canada will be hosting”.

Now we will entertain discussion on this motion. If you don't wish any further discussion, I'll call the question.

Yes, Cathy.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think it might be worthwhile to have some discussion. Certainly, from your background as a physician, you realize that maternal and child health is a massive topic for discussion. If we do it, we need to do it properly. That is my only recommendation. I think we will perhaps be looking at progressing much more slowly on our other study if we do this properly.

The Chair: There is also the question of whether we will accept that it be done alternately; that we would do the aboriginal study, then we would come to this, then we would do the aboriginal one, and then we would come to this. Because if that's how you're going to do it, it can take as long as you like, really, until the fall. I would like to suggest that it will take time to do it in all of its aspects.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, it is imperative that we complete the study before June so we may present our findings. So, we have the remainder of April and the month of May. If we cannot agree on that, there is no point. I am well aware of the fact that a study of all aspects of maternal and infant health is a great deal of work. It is probably something that even doctors—

[English]

The Chair: Cathy raised a very good point. The interesting thing here is that there is no timeline in your motion saying that it has to be done before June. The motion just says “following the government's announcement” and to make this “a priority at the G8 in June”. It doesn't give you a timeline that it has to finish before that. You're just saying that the government made their timeline for the purposes of the G8, and as a result of that, we want to study it.

I just want to explain to you what the motion, as written, means, so that you can be sure when you vote that you know what you're voting for. I think that Madam Demers is suggesting that this must be finished before the G8 in June. So this is a totally different motion. This is not the motion we're discussing. I don't want to get into semantics too much here, but what it means is what it means.

An hon. member: Does it need 48 hours' notice?

The Chair: No, this is a motion that we've always had here. We debated it last time, and we gave it up. This is a friendly amendment, which has been accepted.

Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Can we deal with the amendment? Then, perhaps, if she wants to suggest an amendment, we'll do a timeline so that you get the timeline before the G8, if that's what you want. I think we could accept that.

• (1715)

The Chair: We're not debating the amendment.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Let's do that, then. Are you okay with that?

The Chair: Yes, that's fine.

Nicole, would you like to out an amendment to this amended motion?

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: So long as we are done before the month of May. That is the amendment I would like to add, that we complete our work before the end of May.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: That was not written In the original recommendation.

Ms. Nicole Demers: That is because I had written the G8.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: So had we. I added it.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Yes, but you want to do the study. It is not written—

[English]

The Chair: Excuse me. As the committee is discussing this, for your information I would like the committee to know that in the next two weeks in April, we already have people coming in. In the four weeks in May, we have one week to consider the report on non-traditional jobs. Then we have two weeks of travel. Then we have a break week. Then we were going to have two weeks of travel.

If you wish to do this, you may remove the two weeks of travel from the middle of May and just plug in there your two weeks for this study. As for “in all of its aspects”, it's not going to occur in two weeks of study. I just want you to know that.

Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Madam Chair, this is through you to Madam Demers, because she seems pretty passionate that we should have this done before the G8 and I think—

The Chair: Yes. So we really only have two weeks.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Yes. I would suggest that we do that, then, if everybody else... I would suggest that we study it during those two weeks and issue a report before the G8. That way, it's of some use. Then we go from there.

If we deal with Madam Boucher's amendment, and then perhaps to just give ourselves some comfort on the timing—or we can amend it right now—you can amend it so that it states that during those two weeks we will deal with this specific topic. That way we can have it done. Otherwise, you're right, in that there's no point in doing it if it's... We know that we're not going to solve all the problems, but at least we can have something done before the G8, if Madam Demers is comfortable with that.

The Chair: However, Madam Demers, if we're going to say “*dans tous ses aspects*”, then you can't do it in two weeks. We'll just have to decide if we're going to take that out—

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: No, I want us to add “in all its aspects”. I want us to study all aspects.

[English]

The Chair: Okay. Well, then, we have a problem.

All right. May I suggest, then, that we do not necessarily have a friendly amendment? Let us discuss this as a new motion. It's not a friendly amendment anymore.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Was it not already accepted as...?

The Chair: It was accepted, but everyone felt they had a timeline. I've just given you... The analyst just told me that we only have those two weeks to do it before June, so now that you know this, do we want to look at this as not an appropriate motion anymore and say that it has to be dealt with as an amendment on its own? Then we'll deal with the amendment and then go back to Madam Demers' motion.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: This is very simple, Madam Chair, but I am getting the impression that it has become quite complicated. That is disturbing. You know how passionate I am about this issue.

Ms. Boucher, you wanted to say something on the subject. Do you have an amendment to make to your amendment?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: No, but I would like to know two things.

If we remove “in all its aspects”, how would it read? I do not have it properly written in front of me.

The Chair: If we remove “in all its aspects”, it would read as follows: “That the committee study maternal and child health following the government's announcement to make maternal and child health a priority at the G8 in June that Canada will be hosting as long as this is done before the end of May”.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I will quit complicating things.

• (1720)

[English]

The Chair: Are you okay with that?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes.

[English]

I am okay with that.

The Chair: Good. Now we have an amended motion. I'm going to read the amended motion. I just read it in French. Now I'll read it in English: “That the Committee study maternal and child health following the government's announcement to make maternal and child health a priority at the G8 in June that Canada will be hosting, as long as this is done before the end of May”.

We now have a motion.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, I completely agree with this motion.

[English]

The Chair: That's good. Now I will call the question if there is no further debate. Those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The motion is carried—unanimously, I might note.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, I would like to point out for the record that this is a first for the committee. It is the first time this year that the committee has unanimously passed a motion. I am very pleased.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: The lady is pleased, and I am pleased that she is pleased.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Demers. That's very kind of you.

Now that we have passed that motion, I'd like to move quickly to the next one. We have another motion, which I had been given notice of on March 29. It's from Madam Demers and it says:

[Translation]

That the committee send the report entitled “Women and Pension Security” to the federal Minister of Finance, who is involved in Canada-wide consultations on the pension system, before the federal-provincial finance ministers' meeting scheduled for this coming May.

[English]

I will read it in English: “That the Committee send the report entitled Women and Pension Security to the federal Minister of Finance, who is involved in Canada-wide consultations on the pension system, before the federal-provincial finance ministers' meeting scheduled for this coming May.

Shall I call the question? Is there discussion? Seeing none, those in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: This is the second motion unanimously carried. That's very good.

Now I'm going to ask that we suspend for a quick second so that we can go in camera.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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