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## **Standing Committee on the Status of Women**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, March 24, 2015**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc**



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• (1105)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP)):** Good morning everyone. Welcome to the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee, we are beginning a study on women in skilled trades and science, technology, engineering and mathematics occupations. Today marks the first meeting in our study.

Today, we're pleased to have with us, from the Department of Employment and Social Development, Jonathan Will, Director General of the Economic Policy Directorate; and Catherine Scott, Director General of the Labour Market Integration, Skills and Employment Branch. From the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, we have Maia Welbourne, Director General of Strategic Policy and Planning; Matthew Graham, Acting Director of the Immigration Branch; and Louis Dumas, Director of the Ottawa Case Processing Centre. From Status of Women Canada, we have Linda Savoie Senior Director General of the Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate. And lastly, from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, we have Janet Walden, Chief Operating Officer; and Serge Villemure, Director of the Scholarships and Fellowships Division.

Thank you all for joining us today. Each group will have 10 minutes for their presentation.

Starting us off will be the officials from the Department of Employment and Social Development.

[English]

**Mr. Jonathan Will (Director General, Economic Policy Directorate, Department of Employment and Social Development):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and distinguished members of the committee.

I'm here with my colleague, Catherine Scott, to speak to you about women in skilled trades and STEM occupations. Over the past few decades, Canadian women have made considerable progress and are world leaders in both educational attainment and labour market performance.

Looking first to education, as of 2013, 56% of new post-secondary graduates were women, outnumbering men at the college, undergraduate, and master's levels. While women continue to trail men in graduation at the doctoral level, this gap is closing. Today women make up just under half of Canada's Ph.D. graduates. Canada is a world leader in female participation in education with the highest

rate of post-secondary attainment among OECD countries for 25- to 64-year-old women in 2012.

[Translation]

Women have also made significant advances in the labour market. Over the past 30 years, the overall female employment rate has risen from 48% to 58%. Currently, women account for approximately 48% of all workers in Canada.

Internationally, Canadian women currently have the 5th highest labour force participation rate and the 7th highest employment rate in the OECD. While women have made significant advances, some areas of concern remain.

[English]

At the post-secondary level, women continue to be under-represented in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields, commonly referred to as STEM. In 2013 just over 30% of post-secondary students in STEM fields were women. Female under-representation is particularly acute in architecture, engineering and related technologies, and mathematics, computer, and information sciences. Women represent a slim majority in agriculture, natural resources and conservation, physical and life sciences, and technologies.

[Translation]

We also know that some young women are choosing not to pursue STEM fields of study—in other words, science, technology, engineering and math—despite outperforming their male counterparts in high school.

This situation has important economic implications for Canada. STEM skills are essential to productivity-enhancing innovation. If a significant portion of the population is not fully represented in the STEM talent pool, this could negatively affect Canada's ability to innovate and grow.

In addition, earnings in STEM occupations are typically higher than in non-STEM occupations.

[English]

ESDC projections show that the occupations expected to be in shortage over the next decade are more likely to have low rates of female participation than non-shortage occupations. Almost half of all occupations projected to be in shortage are male dominated, while only one-quarter are female dominated. The remaining quarter has a relatively equal mix of men and women. STEM and the skilled trades comprise 34% of the projected shortage occupations.

These findings clearly show that supporting employment in high-demand occupations and addressing the under-representation of women can be highly complementary priorities.

• (1110)

[Translation]

At ESDC, a number of recent measures have been taken to support employment in high-demand occupations, including STEM and the skilled trades.

A key means of addressing the under-representation of women is by supporting access to post-secondary education, a requirement for many occupations that represent non-traditional jobs for women.

[English]

The Canada student loans program provides financial assistance to post-secondary students with demonstrated financial need through the provision of loans and grants. Women make up 60% of the recipients.

ESDC is also helping young men and women to access post-secondary education through the support it provides to Pathways to Education, an organization with an established record of raising post-secondary enrolment among disadvantaged youth.

In addition to supporting access to post-secondary education, ESDC has a number of other measures in place to help Canadians develop job-relevant skills and find employment, including in high-demand occupations such as STEM and the skilled trades. ESDC has taken action to directly support job relevant skills development with the introduction of the Canada job grant, which links training directly to employment.

Over \$2 billion per year is provided to provinces and territories through the labour market development agreements to help unemployed Canadians quickly find and return to work, including support for women in apprenticeship training. The Government of Canada is committed to strengthening these agreements in consultation with provinces and territories to better align training with labour market demand.

[Translation]

ESDC has also taken steps to improve the quality of information for Canadians with respect to the labour market and apprenticeship.

The Job Bank and Working in Canada Web sites have been consolidated to offer Canadians a convenient single point of access for reliable information on job market trends, occupational profiles and job opportunities.

A new job alert system was launched in 2013 to provide Canadians with job market information up to twice daily.

[English]

Economic action plan 2014 invested \$11.8 million over two years and \$3.3 million per year on an ongoing basis to launch an enhanced job-matching service that is helping to ensure that Canadians are given the first chance at available jobs in their local area that match their skills.

ESDC is currently developing a web-based career tool to provide Canadians with better information about labour market outcomes by field of study. This will help to ensure that youth are able to make well-informed choices about learning and work. The main portal for learning information, CanLearn.ca, provides information and interactive tools to help Canadians pay, plan, and save for their post-secondary education.

In addition to its suite of programs, ESDC has asked the Council of Canadian Academies to study how well Canada is prepared to meet future demand for STEM skills.

These are just some of the ways that my department is helping to ensure that women can reach their potential in Canada's learning institutions and labour market.

My colleague Catherine Scott will now speak to the importance of women's participation in the skilled trades and some of the department's relevant programs and support.

**Ms. Catherine Scott (Director General, Labour Market Integration, Skills and Employment Branch, Department of Employment and Social Development):** In 2014, approximately 4.6 million Canadians worked in skilled trades that were designated for apprenticeship training, representing about one in four employed Canadians and about 17% of employed Canadian women. For the past few decades, women participating in apprenticeship systems have remained largely within the hairstyling and food services trades.

In 2012, female apprentices accounted for about 14% of all registered apprentices. This is up 40% from 2008, when there were fewer than 45,000 women apprentices. While the absolute number of women remains small, there are some encouraging signs of growth in some in-demand, rewarding, and non-traditional career choices for women.

[Translation]

Key among federal supports for apprentices are the apprenticeship grants, which encourage Canadians to pursue and complete apprenticeship training in Red Seal trades. Through these cash grants, apprentices receive up to \$4,000, which can be used to pay for tuition, tools or other training-related expenses.

Federal ad campaigns over the past few years have targeted women through the use of real-life testimonials of women who work in the trades and benefit from the apprenticeship grants.

Launched in January, the Canada apprentice loan allows apprentices registered in the Red Seal trades to apply for interest-free loans of up to \$4,000 per period of block release technical training.

• (1115)

[English]

The flexibility and innovation in apprenticeship technical training pilot project that was launched in budget 2014 will allow us to expand innovative approaches to apprenticeship training and support projects that will demonstrate improved accessibility to technical training for under-represented groups, including women.

Finally, the youth employment strategy, YES, is designed to help young Canadians gain the skills and experience needed to get into the workforce. In budget 2014, it was announced that the government will improve the YES to provide young Canadians with real-life work experience in high-demand fields, including the skilled trades.

We will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[Translation]

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

I will now ask the Department of Citizenship and Immigration officials to proceed with their 10-minute presentation.

[English]

**Mr. Matthew Graham (Acting Director, Immigration Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

My name is Matthew Graham. I am the acting director of permanent economic immigration policy within the immigration branch at Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

It is my privilege to be joined by Maia Welbourne, who is director general of strategic policy and planning at CIC and responsible for gender-based analysis writ large, as well as Louis Dumas, director of the case processing centre here in Ottawa. We are very pleased to appear before your committee in the context of your study on women in skilled trades and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics occupations.

[Translation]

At CIC, we recognize and value the contribution of female immigrants in our economy and our society. In fact, CIC is the only federal department with a legislative requirement to conduct gender-based analysis and report back to Parliament on the impact of its legislation, in this case, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Consequently, the department proactively incorporates gender and diversity analysis into policy and program development, and develops monitoring mechanisms, including mitigation strategies for potential negative impacts on particular groups such as women.

[English]

CIC's 2013 annual report to Parliament found that in terms of overall economic immigration, women are making gains as principal applicants. Across many of Canada's economic programs, the number of female principal applicants is consistent or slowly

increasing, suggesting that these programs are successfully recognizing the human capital of female immigrants.

The federal skilled workers program, which was modernized in 2013, selects applicants with human capital factors associated with long-term success and adaptability, including language, education, work experience, and previous work or study in Canada. The program has experienced a narrowing of the gender gap in terms of the relative number of women and men successfully applying through the program. The program has been successfully recognizing the skills and experiences of women as reflected through admissions to Canada. In 2004, women comprised only 26% of principal applicants, but this number has increased to 36% in 2014.

The provincial nominee program is an economic immigration program through which provinces and territories exercise their responsibility for immigration by nominating foreign nationals who they believe will meet their specific labour market needs. The number of admissions through the PNP has increased significantly over the past decade, and in that time, the percentage of women principal applicants admitted to Canada under the PNP has steadily increased from 21% in 2004 to 34% in 2014.

As you are aware, the government introduced the federal skilled trades program on January 2, 2013. This program was part of the overall transformation of Canada's economic system into a fast and flexible system focused on jobs, growth, and prosperity.

• (1120)

[Translation]

The federal skilled trades program was launched to facilitate the immigration of skilled tradespeople in response to the growing demand in certain industry sectors. Unlike the federal skilled worker program, it emphasizes practical training and work experience, rather than formal academic education, in recognition that this is the key to the employability of skilled tradespeople.

Skilled tradespeople can still apply through the federal skilled worker program but are now offered a new avenue to immigration that is more aligned with their career pathways.

[English]

The program is open to skilled tradespersons with work experience in the following national occupation classification skill level B occupational areas: industrial, electrical and construction trades; maintenance and equipment operation trades; supervisors and technical occupations in natural resources, agriculture, and related production; processing, manufacturing, and utilities supervisors and central control operators; chefs and cooks; and bakers and butchers.

The federal skilled trade program's pass/fail selection model is based on four selection criteria that are linked to a skilled tradesperson's ability to work in Canada. The four selection criteria include arranged employment or a certificate of qualification to practise their trade in the relevant province or territory, language skills, work experience, and education qualifications necessary to satisfy employment requirements.

[Translation]

The federal skilled trades program was designed to be gender-neutral. During its development, gender considerations were assessed around the impact of the program design. It was acknowledged that the two-year work experience requirement may be difficult to obtain for some women in their child-bearing years, as they may take short absences from the labour force to care for children.

[English]

To respond to women's more varied labour market patterns, this requirement was designed to be flexible, allowing applicants up to five years to obtain the two years of work experience required for the program. This approach allowed for a balance between being inclusive and recognizing the crucial importance of work experience in becoming economically established.

Since the inception of the federal skilled trades program, there has been a modest volume of applicants, both male and female. This is expected with every new program. As applicants learn the requirements of the program, intake generally increases over time. In 2014, 62 principal applicants were admitted through the program. While there were less than five women among those approved through the federal skilled trades program, 704 women in skilled trades occupations were admitted through Canada's other permanent resident economic immigration programs: the federal skilled worker program, the Canadian experience class, and the provincial nominee program.

Between 2010 and 2014, the number of women in skilled trades occupations admitted annually as permanent residents increased by 151%.

[Translation]

For those female immigrants with work experience in a science, engineering or mathematics occupation, they would be more likely to apply through the federal skilled worker program, the Canadian experience class or the provincial nominee program, as the programs are more tailored to knowledge-based workers.

[English]

In 2014, 2,016 female applicants working in an occupation in the natural and applied sciences were admitted to Canada. Further, the

proportion of women relative to total admissions in these occupations increased from 16% in 2010 to 18% in 2014. Of those working in these occupations, the majority immigrated through the federal skilled worker program.

When the federal skilled worker program was modernized in 2013, one of the eligibility requirements—one year of work experience within the last ten years—remained unchanged, as it was designed to be inclusive for women, who have more varied labour market patterns than men.

• (1125)

[Translation]

In addition, the relative weight of work experience on the points grid was reduced. This was done in part to help lessen the impact that caregiving responsibilities may have on the ability of women to earn points for work experience.

[English]

Madam Chair, I can assure you that CIC always strives to ensure our suite of economic immigration programs is accessible to immigrants regardless of gender.

We look forward to receiving the findings of this committee's study. We are pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Graham.

I will now ask Ms. Savoie, from Status of Women Canada, to give her 10-minute presentation.

Ms. Bateman, did you want to say something?

**Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC):** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

We received the first two witnesses' presentations in both official languages. But do we have the presentations of the next two witnesses?

**The Chair:** They aren't available right now, but once they are, we'll have them sent to you by email.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** That's efficient. Thank you. Still, it is too bad.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Bateman.

Ms. Savoie, you have 10 minutes.

[English]

**Ms. Linda Savoie (Senior Director General, Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate, Status of Women Canada):** Madam Chair, I am pleased to be here today on behalf of Status of Women Canada. We welcome your committee's timely study of women in skilled trades and the STEM occupations. It truly underscores the vital contribution that women make to the economic life of Canada.

In terms of the important role that women have in Canada's workplace, the good news is that in recent decades we've made considerable progress in workplace diversity. As my colleague from ESDC mentioned earlier, women now represent close to 50% of the Canadian workforce.

However, the same progress cannot be found for women's representation in skilled trades and STEM occupations. In 2011, men accounted for approximately 95% of all trade workers in Canada, and this proportion has not changed materially over the past two decades. As to the STEM occupations, women represent only some 22% of the workforce.

As we look to the future, Canada is facing a significant shortfall of tradespeople, since more than 25% of its workers are expected to retire over the next decade. Bringing women into the skilled trades can alleviate this labour force shortage that's anticipated in many sectors. As has been demonstrated by a number of studies, it can also help Canadian employers become more productive and globally competitive. Moreover, and to some degree more importantly, greater access for women to these well-paid positions will help women prosper, which in turn will benefit Canada's economy.

To increase the representation of women in some of these sectors, a number of challenges need to be addressed. The barriers to participation for women in the skilled trades along with technical and science-based occupations are complex, and they exist at various points on the path to education, training, employment, and advancement.

These barriers are found in curriculum development in elementary and secondary school, in college and university recruitment approaches, in hiring practices, and in workplace culture, to name just a few. For instance, in general, young women are still not being encouraged to consider the skilled trades or the STEM occupations as promising careers. Enlisting the support of parents and teachers can play an important role in helping young women see the full scope of these career opportunities.

In terms of the workplace, women working in these occupations report challenges such as inflexible schedules, few role models, an unwelcoming atmosphere, unsafe working conditions, or few advancement opportunities. It is also the case that some industries largely dependent on skilled trades workers and STEM professionals are not completely ready to consider hiring women or ready to be adjusting the workplace culture or its physical environment to welcome them.

[Translation]

To address these barriers, Status of Women Canada has undertaken a number of actions. For instance, our women's program funds

a number of projects intended to support women in skilled trades and technical professions.

Since 2007, over \$15 million has been invested in such projects. These are taking place in a variety of sectors ranging from mining, trucking and construction/building to communications and technology, science, engineering and energy—including oil and gas. And all these projects involve some form of collaboration between stakeholders such as industry/trade associations, industry human resource councils and other organizations.

In addition to projects, Status of Women Canada sponsored a knowledge exchange event, last year, to explore best practices to support women in the skilled trades and STEM.

The president of the Mining Association of Canada spoke about the need to get more women into mining. That position was echoed in a *Globe and Mail* article earlier this month, in which Goldcorp's vice-president of people referred to women as mining's untapped resource. She spoke to the need to address perceptions. Mining is no longer about going underground with a pick and axe. This is a highly technology-driven sector that can employ a range of professionals, from heavy equipment operators to engineers and technologists. Women can do all this and more, but they need to see how these sectors have changed in order to imagine themselves in these jobs.

● (1130)

Status of Women Canada also works with the provinces and territories. We are collaborating with the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum to develop a business case for women in the skilled trades and technical professions.

As a final example, in February 2014, Minister Leitch launched the Group of Leaders on Women in the Economy to look at ways to support women in the skilled trades and technical professions. In the coming weeks, the group will host a series of regional round tables to identify employer issues.

[English]

The initiatives that I've mentioned today reflect our recognition of the benefits of working with a wide variety of partners to support the advancement of women in skilled trades and technical professions as well as STEM-based careers.

I hope the information I've provided will be useful for your committee study and that it will spark your interest in meeting with some of the many very committed organizations that we have the privilege of working with on this issue.

I would be pleased to answer your questions. Merci.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Savoie.

We will now go to Janet Walden, from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. You have 10 minutes for your presentation.

[English]

**Ms. Janet Walden (Chief Operating Officer, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada):** Madam Chair, honourable members of the committee, thank you very much for this opportunity to speak with you today.

I'm joined by my colleague, Serge Villemure,

[Translation]

who is in charge of NSERC's scholarships and fellowships program.

[English]

I think my colleagues here have set the context very well. NSERC as an organization is responsible for the support of research and training in the sciences and engineering in this country, and so I will focus on that.

I'd like to start by talking about an alumna of the NSERC chairs for women in science and engineering program, Dr. Claire Deschênes. Dr. Deschênes is a professor of mechanical engineering at the Université Laval in Quebec City. She specializes in optimizing the performance of turbines used for hydro-power generation.

[Translation]

Dr. Deschênes is a highly seasoned and accomplished researcher who works effectively with industry. She is a senior faculty member, and from 1997 to 2006, Claire Deschênes was an NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering.

We all recognize that more women like Ms. Deschênes are needed in leadership positions. They are needed to serve as role models and mentors for the next generation. They are needed to encourage young women to consider careers in science and engineering.

NSERC launched the Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering program in 1996 to help achieve those objectives. In order to increase the participation of women in these fields, NSERC designates five chairs across the country. Industry partners are leveraged for funding. Not only do these industry partnerships provide access to funding, but, more importantly, they also make companies aware of the importance of gender diversity.

• (1135)

[English]

As an agency, NSERC seeks to invest in the best research and to create world firsts in knowledge. We seek to collaborate with industry so they can be the first to use and take this knowledge to market.

To be successful in these goals, we know we need to increase gender diversity and equity in science and engineering. I can assure you that we are not only concerned about this issue, but we've also been taking action together with our sister granting agencies and others to tackle this challenge.

As the 2012 report from the Council of Canadian Academies on gender-based issues in research points out, while we've made progress, much work remains. This is particularly evident in the areas of physical sciences, computer sciences, engineering, and mathematics.

Looking at this question, it's important to consider gender diversity issues in science and engineering from both the discipline perspective and in terms of the career progression of the individual.

While the trends may be similar in the loss of women from the research system as a whole, the increasing number of women participating in the life sciences tends to overshadow the depth of the problem we face in the more mathematics-intensive areas. For example, the CCA found that women accounted for just 24% of those pursuing bachelor's degrees in the mathematics-intensive sciences and engineering compared to 69% in the life sciences.

After the bachelor's level, the good news is that the percentage of women in the mathematics-intensive fields tends to remain fairly constant through Ph.D. and up to the level of the assistant professor. However, from the rank of assistant professor to full professor, there is a significant loss of women in these roles and therefore not only a loss of expertise, but also a loss of mentors for young women entering these fields.

[Translation]

The data of both the Council of Canadian Academies and NSERC show that making real progress is challenging if there aren't enough women from the outset. We need women to continue on in these fields, but we really need to increase the number of female graduates, particularly in mathematics-oriented fields. That means catching the imagination of young women before they undertake post-secondary studies.

[English]

A second conclusion that I think we've all reached is that there's no single simple solution. To make progress requires a dynamic, multi-dimensional approach involving changes to our social and institutional systems.

As I noted earlier, NSERC's role is to ensure that Canada is generating the creative ideas and talent that our country needs to succeed. As a result, over the years NSERC has progressively introduced a number of programs and policies to try to address the under-representation of women throughout various stages of the academic career path.

From 1991 to 2008, NSERC ran the women's faculty awards program, which promoted the increase of women in faculty positions in Canadian universities at a time when universities were hiring at a slower pace. In 1996, as I mentioned, we introduced the chairs for women in science and engineering. In 2011, we adopted a policy statement on gender equality, stating that all Canadians should have equal opportunity to participate in science and engineering. This commits us to monitoring for gender bias in our peer review processes.

To increase the flow of women into faculty positions, we introduced measures to ease the transition through the post-doctoral stage. For example, we introduced allowances for parental benefits to make it easier for students and post-doctoral fellows to maintain their research programs while starting families. To reduce the loss of women during the assistant to full professor progression, our grantees can request an extension of the term of their grant for up to two years for maternity or parental leave.



[*Translation*]

These measures are beneficial because they help reduce the number of women who give up this career path. They do not, however, help increase the number of women who pursue a post-secondary education in science or engineering. In that respect, NSERC's Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering play a critical role. These accomplished researchers spend up to 50% of their time reaching out to young women whom they guide and mentor. Nevertheless, the number of young women that the chairs can have an impact on is limited. NSERC's PromoScience program targets a much larger and more diverse pool of young people.

• (1140)

[*English*]

By supporting science promotion groups across the country that have the feet on the ground to reach kindergarten to grade 12 students directly, we extend our outreach and our impact.

I would like to add that we were extremely pleased that the Government of Canada recognized the importance of PromoScience in the recently updated science, technology and innovation strategy.

As I conclude my opening remarks, I would like to mention a couple of broader actions that NSERC is involved in, in terms of increasing gender diversity.

In 2013, we co-organized the third gender summit for North America. The event brought together more than 600 participants from over 30 countries, and was dedicated to addressing the barriers faced by women in science and engineering and sharing best practices. The result is a multi-stakeholder gender road map that outlines actions that must be taken collectively to achieve greater diversity in the STEM fields.

NSERC also recently joined the departmental action plan on gender-based analysis and is working with Status of Women Canada to implement this framework within our organization.

[*Translation*]

I am also proud to say that women make up 67% of NSERC's workforce and are active at every level within the organization. In fact, our executive team is 50% female. So, as you can see, one of NSERC's core priorities is to encourage women to pursue careers in science and engineering, and that includes within the organization, itself.

[*English*]

We are committed to increasing women's participation in STEM fields, facilitating the accommodation of career and family, and nurturing mentorship.

At the end of the day, true gender diversity and equity helps increase overall excellence in science and engineering, giving Canada a competitive advantage.

In closing, I would like to formally invite all members of this committee to an event that we'll be holding on June 8 on Parliament Hill that will showcase some of Canada's leading women in science and engineering. At the event you will have the opportunity to meet incredibly talented researchers, including Dr. Claire Deschênes, who I described at the beginning of my remarks.

I hope that you will be able to attend.

Thank you, and we look forward to your questions.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Walden.

We will now begin the question-and-answer period. Ms. Truppe will lead us off for seven minutes.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC):** Madam Chair, I would like to thank everyone for being here and giving such great presentations on everything that we're trying to do for women and girls.

I want to mention to Janet that for NSERC, PromoScience is a great program. The minister just made an announcement in London from the London Children's Museum. It was so cute. We got to see all the different interactive ways they're trying to engage young kids. There were a lot of girls there, which was really good, to be interested in these types of new activity. I thought it was really great.

Also, I hosted round tables in the last couple of years on how to get more girls into skilled trades. It was really interesting hearing the feedback that we received too. Some of the feedback that we received was mentioned today as well.

First my questions will be for Jonathan.

You mentioned the under-representation in the STEM fields. At the post-secondary level, I think you said that women continue to be under-represented in STEM and there's female under-representation particularly in the engineering and related technologies, math, computer, and information sciences. We know that a lot of young women aren't choosing to pursue the STEM fields of study, despite outperforming their male counterparts. Why is that in your opinion? Why is it that we can't get these young girls, or older girls even, interested in STEM? They do really well as doctors and lawyers so they're not under-represented there, but they are under-represented in these fields. In your opinion, why is that?

• (1145)

**Mr. Jonathan Will:** Thank you very much for the question.

Researchers are conflicted about why women are under-represented in STEM occupations, but a number of potential issues have been identified.

Female students showed lower self-confidence in their mathematics abilities across OECD countries compared to male students. In Canada according to StatsCan research even young women with a high level of mathematical ability are far less likely to enter STEM fields than men with lower mathematical abilities. This suggests that additional factors such as cultural expectations, work-life balance concerns, workplace characteristics, or differences in interest may be at play.

For women who do complete STEM degrees most choose science or biology programs rather than mathematics, computer science, or engineering, which pay higher wages on average. While women continue to be under-represented among STEM graduates, their numbers are growing. In 2011, 34% of all STEM degree holders age 25 to 34 were women compared to only 23% of STEM graduates age 55 to 64.

Concerning the skilled trades, employment in the skilled trades is perceived by some as low paid, low skilled, and low prestige. ESDC research identified a common perception that women lack the physical strength to pursue trades work.

Female secondary students reported higher parental expectations of educational success than males where educational success was commonly defined as achieving a post-secondary degree. In a survey of post-secondary students in Canada, 28% of male students responded that they've considered pursuing a career in the trades compared to only 8% of women.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** You're right. What I found at some of the round tables was that the parents had a higher expectation. When you were talking about the expectations that they complete university, forgetting even the fact that—I think you were referring to maybe no post-secondary—even if they go to college to take the skilled trade, that still in their minds wasn't acceptable. It was like, “Oh my God, my kid graduated from college as opposed to university”, yet they're probably making a lot more money than some of the ones who have finished university, because they can't get jobs in their fields, where these are specifically designed.

You had mentioned that ESDC projections show that the occupations expected to be in shortage over the next decade are much more likely to have low rates of female participation than non-shortage. What type of occupations were you referring to? Could you give us a couple of examples?

**Mr. Jonathan Will:** In terms of male-occupied sectors where there is projected to be a shortage, they would be information systems and data processing managers, civil engineers, a significant number of types of engineers, firefighters, welders, oil and gas well drillers, industrial and power system electricians, and software engineers.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** That's interesting. Thank you.

You mentioned that the job bank and working in Canada websites have been consolidated, which I thought was great. Do you have the new consolidated website for that, by chance, just so we have it for the record? If not, you can send that in.

**Mr. Jonathan Will:** It's jobs.gc.ca.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Jobs.gc.ca. Okay.

Ms. Scott mentioned, “For the past few decades, women participating in apprenticeship systems have remained largely within the hairstyling and food services trades,” which we found as well. Do you have any thoughts on how we can change this?

This is not our jurisdiction, but what we found at the round tables is that guidance counsellors are certainly not mentioning skilled trades at all, or any other trade, certainly not STEM too much. Then the students don't know what to take and they don't know what to do, and maybe they don't really excel in something that they can

continue for the next four years. I found even talking to the students, that they weren't usually mentioned, nor did the parents a lot of times. I don't know if that's also in the school system, as well as the parents not encouraging the children to pursue that. Do you have any thoughts on that?

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** Sure. I think when we look at why youth in general are not attracted to the skilled trades, certainly that's key. It's the lack of exposure in the school system, and guidance counsellors may be directing both young men and women toward more traditional occupations.

We did a national apprenticeship survey in 2007 and looked at some of the reasons. Certainly, when you look at young women, one of the keys for young women who were attracted to the trades was that they had a role model or a family member who was already in the trades. That's key, I think, as well as exposure within the school system.

• (1150)

[Translation]

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

Ms. Freeman, you may go ahead for seven minutes.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

I think it's important that we're talking about STEM, encouraging women in STEM, and talking about education and training, and mentorship in those roles. I do think that's important, but I'm going to concentrate a little bit wider.

My questions are really directed to you, Madam Savoie, and Status of Women Canada.

You mentioned that it's obviously complex, encouraging young girls and women to pursue these career paths. I'm wondering whether in your department, or across departments, there's a look at more generally systemic barriers like poverty, like the fact that women still do the majority of unpaid work—raising children and things like that—which is affecting not only whether girls are going into these fields, but also specifically whether they're moving up in them, whether they're making as much money in these fields.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Thank you for the question.

Clearly, maybe not so much for girls making these choices but for women who are looking at career options—women who are looking either at entering a non-traditional occupation or at staying in a non-traditional occupation—there are some challenges around the inflexibility of work schedules, for instance. As part of most of our projects, and in our conversations with the groups we work with, it's commonly reported that there are some challenges for women, not necessarily in travelling to remote areas but in getting sufficient advance notice to be able to go to that remote area, right? The flexibility needs to be built into the workplace.

The responsibilities for child care, and even elder care, are still primarily with women, as we all have heard and as many studies demonstrate. This is also a factor that affects women's choices and the ability to meet inflexible workplace requirements. Access to child care if you're a shift worker is repeatedly also brought forward by the groups we work with that are trying to enhance the opportunities for women in these fields.

It's quite correct that a number of initiatives are looking at these. Most of our projects always require groups to work collaboratively to bring the range of participants in the issue to the table. They will bring together employers, unions, and community groups. We have some innovative piloting of child care shift-work options that is being tested out west. A number of initiatives are under way, and we're trying to identify the best practices and ultimately share those.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** That's interesting. I'm wondering what data we have that's gender specific. Do we have any data around unpaid work, the share of unpaid work, and the women working in these fields versus those who work in services or other fields?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** I'm not aware of very extensive segmentation of the data for unpaid work that would go into the division of whether the women doing the unpaid work are in trades or in more traditional occupations. There is extensive data that exists through StatsCan or the publication "Women in Canada" that speaks to the very significant share of unpaid work that women are shouldering in the country.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Then we'll make sure to ask StatsCan to submit that to the committee.

Do we do extensive gender budgeting in the Canadian government?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That would be the responsibility of the Department of Finance, and of course these are not documents that we would be privy to. Our role would be more to advise them if they felt they had a capacity-building requirement.

• (1155)

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Okay. That's what I was wondering. How would you be involved in looking at making sure that programming across departments is eliminating a gender bias in programs that exist across the department? Would you be involved in that at all?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Well, we're truly there as a resource, but as you've seen, I'm sandwiched between colleagues in departments that are extremely savvy at gender-based analysis. It's part of each department's mandate to develop that expertise and to take on the responsibility of doing that thorough analysis.

We're there to offer support and to offer some tools. For instance, we have an online tool that is quite popular. Recently, I believe it was last year, we updated it to make sure that there were more science and technology case studies associated to it, to ensure that these fields don't feel that they're not committed to and shouldn't be interested in gender-based analysis.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Do you know if there's any kind of mandatory pre-screening checking so that there would be an analysis done? I'm thinking specifically of the changes to employment insurance, which civil society and women's organizations found made access to it disproportionately more difficult for women, and that access was already problematic. Is there anything in the

government that forces a check? Would Status of Women be involved in that?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** There is a requirement for gender-based analysis to be conducted of policies and programs. Again, our role is to advise and to provide support if the department needs it to build the capacity across the federal government. Again, the responsibility for each department lies within that department.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** That's interesting. It would be interesting to see greater sort of working.... Maybe the other departments could speak to this a little bit. I think it's very important, because obviously the way we decide to do our programming and the way we construct our budgets greatly affect Canadian society. If we're cutting jobs in the public service, where for women and men the pay gap is smaller and where women do tend to work in non-traditional employment—

**The Chair:** Ms. Freeman, is there a question?

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Yes, there's a question.

**The Chair:** Continue very briefly just to get an answer to the same question you asked Ms. Savoie.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Are there coordinated actions across departments to eliminate the gender bias in programming and in budgeting?

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead very briefly, Madam Welbourne.

**Ms. Maia Welbourne (Director General, Strategic Policy and Planning, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** Maybe I'll speak quickly to some of the initiatives that are in place at the Government of Canada level led by Status of Women Canada and then take a little look at CIC's experience with gender-based analysis.

There is a departmental action plan that applies across the Government of Canada.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. The answer is yes, there is.

Sorry. You can expand later on.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Maybe they could each respond specifically to the committee in writing. Would that be possible, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** Very briefly, if there is such a process, you could submit information on it to the clerk, please.

Thank you very much.

Madam O'Neill Gordon, for seven minutes.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** I want to welcome all of you and tell you how important these studies and facts are to our important study. I thank all of you for your presentations. We certainly realize there are many barriers and challenges out there for women to get into the field of the trades.

I think one of the things Jonathan—and probably all of us—mentioned is the importance of getting it started at an early age. The earlier we get this started, the better it is.

What are some of the things we are doing now to trigger this interest at a young age?

**Mr. Jonathan Will:** One thing Employment and Social Development Canada is doing is developing a career choice tool that will provide information to young men and women, guidance counsellors, parents, and other influencers to provide them with information about the employment outcomes and wage outcomes of people who pursue certain courses of study and enter into certain fields and trades.

We feel this is important information to provide to help inform men and women about choices they may make. This information is more valuable to individuals who might not have considered a course of action. We hope making this data available will provide a better sense to young Canadians about their opportunities in various fields.

• (1200)

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** Do you have something to contribute, Catherine?

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** Sure. I can mention the apprenticeship grants program. This is a program that seeks to remove any financial barriers individuals may face when they are entering into apprenticeship training. It provides individuals with up to \$4,000 in grants over the course of their apprenticeship: \$2,000 in incentive grants as they progress, and another \$2,000 for a completion grant once they finish their apprenticeship training.

Over 500,000 apprenticeship grants have been issued since the program was launched, and the program is seen as one that addresses some of the financial barriers apprentices may face in terms of buying tools or paying for tuition fees. The money can even be used for things like child care as well.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** That is a very important initiative and a very important message to get out there, as my colleague said, to parents, because parents are always the ones who are really worried about the costs and about where students can go for loans. We know that for post-secondary education there are loans available, but hearing about something like this is very positive and upbeat for young women and their parents so they will know where they can go for this funding.

My next question is about scholarships that are available. Those are certainly a big draw for young people. I was also wondering if we ever ask businesses to sponsor these people. Doing that would help people reduce their costs and give people hands-on experience, and at the same time businesses would be receiving assistance from these people working.

I'm wondering where we can go with that. Does anyone want to answer that?

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** If you look at the youth employment strategy, that's certainly one of the key goals: to provide wage subsidies for employers so that they can take on young people who are looking for experience. There have been investments in the last budget through the youth employment strategy to realign the program so that young people can get real-life work experiences in some of the high-demand fields. So there was an additional investment announced of \$40 million through the career focus program, specifically to allow young people to get work experiences and real-life hands-on training.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** Did you say there's a budget of \$40 million?

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** That was announced in the last budget, an additional \$40 million to the youth employment strategy.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** We certainly can make use of that money.

Does anybody else have anything to add?

**Ms. Janet Walden:** I would say start right at the beginning sparking kids' interest in science, such as seeing what experiments can do for you and generating excitement around research, science, and engineering. That has to be the starting point. We do support a program called PromoScience that reaches out to a huge base of people. Just our single grant to Actua alone touches 225,000 students, young people across the country. I think it's the hands-on right at the beginning that is important.

In terms of your second question about the industry, about a third of NSERC's budget is in partnership with industry. These students are trained—and these are young males and females, actually—in collaboration with industry, so they get exposure to the industry. It's very important from the industry perspective to see these mixed groups and how they interact and the different perspectives that young women and young men bring to research challenges. As I say, about a third of our budget is focused on working in partnership between the academic sector and industry, so these students get terrific exposure to potential careers and to how industry actually works, which is very important for women in particular, because often they have a misperception about what those careers actually entail.

• (1205)

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** When women get out in these businesses and are working hands-on, not only will the women see a difference but the people who have hired them will also be able to promote their ideas and see different things that they can do, as well as just having men. It's a worthwhile cause all around. I really appreciate your information in that area.

How much do I have? Is that it?

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Madam O'Neill Gordon.

[Translation]

It is now over to Mr. Casey, who also has seven minutes.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Witnesses, I know how hard you prepare for these committee meetings, so I think I owe you an apology first of all for coming late, and second, for not being Kirsty Duncan.

Kirsty is speaking in the House, so if this day had unfolded as it should have, you would have had someone with a doctorate in a science background, who is a Nobel prize winner, asking you very penetrating and incisive questions. Instead you got me, but just allow me to muddle through.

Ms. Walden, I did get to hear all of your presentation, and I was interested in your reference to a conference attended by 30 countries. As we embark on this study, it seems to me that, rather than reinventing the wheel, we should be looking probably internationally and possibly provincially for best practices. In terms of gender diversity in the areas that are under consideration here, who is doing the best job in the international community? What can and should we do?

**Ms. Janet Walden:** That is a very good question.

Actually most of the developed world is in a similar situation to us in that we don't see enough women coming in, particularly, as I said, to the physical sciences, chemistry, engineering, computer sciences, etc. I think to some extent a lot of us are struggling. The U.S. has a program called Advance, in which they've made some interesting investments, but I think it's probably too early to say whether or not those are successful. I think right now much of the developed world is piloting, experimenting, and trying to find effective ways.

For example, we had our chairs for women in science and engineering summit in the U.S. in 2013, which was the summit you were referring to. It was co-hosted by NIH, NSF, CONACYT, which is the Mexican funding authority, us, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, also in Canada. When we held that summit, our five chairs for women in science and engineering were looked at actually as a best practice and as a model that a number of countries were going to be following up on after the summit, and are following up on.

I'm going to ask Serge if he has anything he'd like to add.

**Mr. Serge Villemure (Director, Scholarships and Fellowships Division, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada):** Thank you very much.

I have just a few things to add in terms of the international community.

As Ms. Walden mentioned, we're basically all at the same place with respect to judging what the next steps are in the STEM area as granting agencies with respect to advancing gender equity in research. From the Washington summit in November 2013, a road map was published that basically is still in advanced draft form to try to get multi-stakeholders to endorse it and to work together to try to reach the goals.

As to your question about who's doing the best job, it's very hard to say. Every country is at the same place, except that at the European Commission, with their Horizon 2020 programs for research, they have started to include diversity and gender equity in the research content. That means they're asking researchers to really

document their research results, and if and how they differ for both men and women.

As an international community, there is a lot to do, but as Ms. Walden said, we're at about the same place.

• (1210)

**Mr. Sean Casey:** With regard to the Horizon 2020 program in the EU, is there an equivalent in Canada, or should there be?

**Ms. Janet Walden:** This is a mammoth program, at I think €79 billion. The EU has come together to decide, under one umbrella, research priorities. They've taken a pretty bold step, as Serge has said, to require looking at balancing in teams of researchers that come forward and students who are being trained under the umbrellas of these initiatives, and also to consider the research itself from a perspective that sometimes we tend to focus more on the male-oriented or gender-neutral research as opposed to looking at the differences between research that might be in the women's world versus the men's world.

For example, there is a project ongoing about voice recognition. Well, it's clear that in voice recognition, the frequency range that I speak in and the frequency range that you speak in will be quite different. If we only focus on the frequency range that you focus on, then there's a whole segment of the community who will be left out.

Looking at research, again, it's right at the research project level, it's at the research collaboration level, and as I say, I think from that perspective, Horizon 2020, which includes all of the EU countries, is a really bold step for them. I think if Canadians want to participate, these will be the rules they will participate under. I can tell you that Canadians are very interested in participating in the Horizon 2020 programs.

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Thank you.

If I can now take it from the international to the national, I come from Prince Edward Island where employment, regardless of gender, regardless of field, is a challenge. With Canada being such a diverse country, I expect that the challenges are more acute in the various regions.

This question is probably for the folks from ESDC—

**The Chair:** Be very brief, Mr. Casey.

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Okay.

In your experience in terms of the regions of Canada and the magnitude of the problem we are studying in the various regions, are some doing a better job than others, and why?

**The Chair:** Be very, very brief, please, Ms. Scott.

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** In terms of apprenticeship training, it is a provincial-territorial responsibility, but we do know that a number of provinces....

In terms of demand for skilled trades workers, certainly that demand has been focused in western Canada in recent years. A number of the provincial governments have put in place measures to develop and enhance their pre-apprenticeship training systems, as well as to put in place initiatives to encourage more women to enter into the skilled trades.

If you look across the board, many provincial programs do exist, and some of those are funded through federal transfers.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[Translation]

It is now Mr. Barlow's turn, for five minutes.

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow (Macleod, CPC):** Mr. Will, first of all, I really appreciated your answer to the previous question about what we're going to do to encourage or improve promotion and awareness at the younger ages. We had a lot of discussion regarding that very issue in a previous study we did.

On that, I'd like to bring up a statement by JudyLynn Archer of Women Building Futures in Edmonton. She said that women who go through the program and look at getting into skilled trades can see a salary increase of 127% over their previous job. Her quote was that it's income that most women would only "dream about".

I'm wondering, would the salary part of it and the opportunities there be part of that promotional project and material that you'll be putting out?

**Mr. Jonathan Will:** The career choice tool does show earnings and employment rates by field of study, including apprenticeships, certifications and whatnot. It would include that information.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Perfect.

I know when you drill down to it that education is a provincial issue, but I look at some of the composite high schools, skills Canada program, and things like that, where high school students get to compete regionally, provincially, nationally, in construction, welding, and those kinds of things.

Is there any discussion in terms of partnerships with the provinces to address curriculum at the school level to help raise awareness of these kinds of opportunities?

•(1215)

**Mr. Jonathan Will:** I am not aware of any joint work with the provinces. Both levels of government do make significant investments in the area. I'm just not currently aware....

We could get back to you on that.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Okay. Thank you.

I want to go back to one of your earlier comments in your presentation.

You said that women have a slim majority in some careers. There were two that you mentioned that were quite interesting. One was agriculture, and the other one was natural resources.

I have a very rural riding in southern Alberta. We battle constantly to try to keep people interested in the agricultural industry and keep young people on the farms or involved in value-added agribusiness and innovation.

Are there any specifics on what agriculture careers women seem to be pursuing? I just found that to be a pleasant surprise.

**Mr. Jonathan Will:** The aggregate data that Statistics Canada provides in terms of the ready access does not cause more level of

disaggregation of that data. When Statistics Canada comes, perhaps you could ask them to look at more specific disaggregated data that could get to the answer of your question.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Great. Thank you.

Mr. Graham, you've had a nice easy ride of it so far. I want to get you involved here.

I just had a great experience with a constituent in my riding. She is a young lady from Scotland going into a heavy-duty mechanic's position. She applied through the express entry program and was given an invitation to apply for a permanent residency 24 hours after she applied.

You didn't have a chance to talk about the express entry program, but can you talk a bit about that and some of the advantages that's going to have? The focus of the express entry is to address areas in skilled labour where there is a void and we have a labour crunch.

Can you talk a bit about express entry, please?

**Mr. Matthew Graham:** Well, actually I'll continue my easy ride and pass the question on to Maia Welbourne who is in charge of this.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Maia Welbourne:** Good attempt.

Yes, it's my branch that has led on the policy development leading to express entry.

Express entry, as a system, was designed to be gender neutral, applying that GBA lens as we did through the policy development process.

There is no question that it is also designed to target those individuals who have expressed an interest in coming to Canada who have the skills and aptitudes in need by the labour market. Under the system, a qualifying job offer essentially guarantees that an individual is invited to apply for permanent residence. That's great to hear that this individual was invited to apply just 24 hours after she made her initial submission to the system.

We're also looking at processing service standards of six months in 80% of cases, a significant enhancement of our processing times, which means that individuals who aren't already in the country, as she may have been, are able to come to Canada even faster than before.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Barlow, but you're out of time.

It is now over to Ms. Liu for five minutes.

[English]

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Thank you for your testimony. It's very informative.

I'd like to focus my questions on the financing of research, so I'll be directing them to Ms. Walden.

I looked at a study that was carried out in 2010 among Quebec universities that showed that men are better financed than women in terms of their research in the STEM fields. I also notice there's a study on tenures and funding allocated by the tri-council that showed that on average women and men obtained about the same funding for their research.

It seems that there's a difference in funding between men and women in terms of the private sector, and that might be something we should look at. From that, maybe we can deduce that the private sector is more prone to financing research that's more male dominant, such as engineering and computer programming.

Is that a conclusion that you've looked at in the past?

**Ms. Janet Walden:** Within our fields of science and engineering, our success rates for women and men are about the same.

You need to disaggregate a little bit the data on the research funding of women versus men, because we have more women who are at the assistant and associate professor level, closer to the entry level, and fewer at the full professor level. When you aggregate all of the data, it looks like their research is funded at a level slightly lower than that of men, but as I say, you need to disaggregate that in a certain way and look at it differently.

In the industry funding part of our industry programs, we have a pretty broad mix of science and engineering across the board. Again, the challenge that we see is that at the full professor level there are much fewer women than men in the science and engineering fields.

In particular, as you mentioned, fields such as civil, mechanical, chemical, and mining engineering, etc., tend to be very strong in terms of the business sectors and financing of research. Women faculty at the full professor level are about 9%.

• (1220)

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** That's a very small number.

**Ms. Janet Walden:** You see a small number. Again, this is an area where we have some work to do to open those doors.

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Would you have any numbers, or do you know if there has been a study carried out on Mitacs scholarships and whether or not there is a difference in the number of Mitacs scholarships given to women versus men?

**Ms. Janet Walden:** Mitacs is a separately incorporated body from NSERC and would have its own statistics on male and female representation. I can tell you, though, that in our programs, roughly 41% of our undergraduates financed are women, and about 39% at the master's and Ph.D. level.

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Thank you.

Madam Savoie, I was made aware of a report produced by a working group on equal pay that was tabled in 2004 and published. Has there been any work on the recommendations that were carried out following the tabling of that report?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Could you be more specific about which report we are talking about?

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** This is a report that came out in 2004, produced by the working group on pay equity. The report produced various recommendations.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** I'd have to get back to you on that. There is a lot of work being done on pay equity issues across the various levels of government. I'll refer to those specific recommendations, and I can commit to getting back to you on that.

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Great. If you could table your answer with the clerk, that would be appreciated.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Sure. With pleasure.

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Ms. Walden, I believe you also mentioned the women's faculty awards program, and you spoke about it favourably. We know that the last competition was held in 2008. Do you believe that is something we should look at bringing back and funding again?

**Ms. Janet Walden:** That program was in place, as I noted, when universities were hiring at a lower pace than they are right now. I think there are a lot of pluses and minuses with programs like that. There were certainly some careers launched as a result of it, but I would say there were also some issues around whether or not these particular positions were received within the universities at an equal stature to a regular assistant professor hiring.

Ultimately, we determined that we were in a situation where the universities were hiring much more. We saw many more women being hired, and we didn't want to have a stigma associated with these faculty positions. We moved on to feeding the pipeline more and removing barriers, as opposed to creating specialized positions.

[*Translation*]

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

Ms. Perkins, you may go ahead for five minutes.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Pat Perkins (Whitby—Oshawa, CPC):** First of all, I'd like to say how pleased I am with the work you've all been doing. All of you need to be congratulated for the methods you're using and the amount of energy you've dedicated to this. I think it's very important, and you've been truly quite remarkable.

I have two questions. I know the work that Citizenship and Immigration had been doing is tremendously valuable to round everything out, but unfortunately I don't have a question for you.

My question is for the other three, Madam Chair.

My first question is about the graduating age from high school to university. In the province of Ontario, graduates are generally 17 years of age, and we're asking people to make life choices about what education stream they're going to pursue. I'm wondering if any studies would make any determination about what the optimal age might be for females versus males to ask that question.

My second question is, how do we pique the interest of folks in the guidance counselling streams and the staff and teachers within high schools in allowing these young women to grow differently?

For example, we have a school in my riding that has what they call a SWAT club, science women are tops. That's their club and it's very well attended. They have a robotics group and all those sorts of things. There's another group, a national group called FIRST Robotics. They're engaging with high schools, trying to get them to put robotics teams together. I know the federal government has been funding them. They just had an event at Durham College, University of Ontario Institute of Technology a week ago, where they were choosing the finalists who were going to go to the United States for the final competition.

There are some great things out there. I'd like to see how we incorporate them all, how we bring them together, looking at that age, looking at the teachers, and looking at what else is out there. How do we bring it together?

Those are my questions, Madam Chair. Three witnesses can answer.

• (1225)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Ms. Savoie, did you want to say something?

[English]

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** *Certainement.* In working with our stakeholders who have extensive expertise on this, to your point about the opportune moment to expose the girls to these possibilities, there seems to be a fair bit of interest from girls between the fifth and ninth grades. As you know, we don't have the levers to be involved in schools specifically, but we do work with partners like Actua, which my colleague Janet Walden mentioned earlier, which create these opportunities for girls outside school hours and often in collaboration with the school system, such as camps, summer camps, and events that girls can participate in to trigger their interest. A lot of very interesting work is happening out there at that level. A lot of it is focusing on that age group, but I know there are initiatives on either side of those age groups.

In terms of guidance counsellors, that is very much a provincial area of jurisdiction, but then again, one of the projects we've received recently that Status of Women will be funding is occurring in Montreal and is specifically targeting guidance counsellors in a high school. It's in my old stomping grounds, but there's no relation to the project arriving as a result of that. The local Y is driving this project, working with a small group of guidance counsellors, to try to identify what the barriers are right now, what do they not know that they should know to be able to provide proper guidance to girls.

There are a lot of initiatives on that front happening across the country, and we'll hopefully see some pick-up and changes in the trends as a result.

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

[Translation]

Time is up. The witnesses can finish their answers as we continue.

Ms. Crockatt, you have five minutes. Please go ahead.

[English]

**Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC):** I want to tell all of you that this is a whole bunch of Kodak moments going on here to have all of you together speaking about this with one voice. I think there is a very strong message here that we have to reach young girls in elementary school, excite them about career possibilities, and get the guidance counsellors and the curriculum all working together. I think we've heard that in pieces before, but I never got it as clearly as I got it from all of you here today. I really want to thank you for that.

I'm going to ask every single member of the panel this. I'm sitting here and trying to tweet, because I know we're reaching young girls on Twitter, right? I'm thinking, do we put Justin Bieber in the hashtag to get to them?

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** These guys nixed it, by the way.

I want to ask every one of you, how do we get to the young girls? I'll work my way around the table. Are there any innovative ideas? I mean, we're in an innovative field. We're trying to do things differently. Try to see if you can give me one strong recommendation about how we reach those young girls.

Janet.

• (1230)

**Ms. Janet Walden:** I think Madam Savoie gave a very good overview. There are a lot of organizations doing a lot of really exciting things, but I think the most important thing is the hands-on direct contact.

As I say, we have a lot of organizations out there doing that, but it's really seeing, touching, and doing science and engineering that's going to get kids.... I don't think there's an age. I think that from kindergarten right through to high school.... At the high school level, what we have to make sure of is that our science teachers are as excited and as knowledgeable about science as our students are.

I think there are a lot of external forces that can be brought to bear in terms of science camps or whatever, but it's the hands-on contact outside the classroom and then inside the classroom that's important to carry on that enthusiasm. Good science teacher education coming out of the universities is really important as well.

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** Okay.

Madam Savoie, it's nice to see you.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Thank you.

I totally agree that hands-on experience is an absolute necessity.

Stakeholders whom I deal with on this issue will tell you that parental influence is huge. Role models and parents are of very significant importance to get the young girls' mindsets to change.

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** Are we doing anything specific in this way in Status of Women that you can point to, or would you?



**Ms. Linda Savoie:** I believe we have some of our projects focusing on involving the mothers, for instance, in some of these science-based or trades-based discovery awareness types of initiatives. They're trying to bring in the parent, and specifically the mother, because they know that will have a great influence. We're working with a number of organizations right now that are targeting the younger women. As I mentioned, there are organizations such as Actua that are doing fabulous work, and also the Ys, so there is a lot happening out there.

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** Thanks.

Mr. Graham.

**Mr. Matthew Graham:** The largest part of CIC's budget is spent on settlement and immigration services for immigrants and newcomers to Canada. I think that to do justice to your question, we'd like to take it back.... Because none of us is responsible for that area of our department, perhaps we'll take our question back and take a look at what we are doing for the language services and the other types of employment and integration services that we offer to newcomers.

Are there aspects of it that are focused on ensuring that the children of the immigrants who come to Canada and the children who are coming to Canada with their families are exposed to the opportunities that we want all of them to have? Perhaps we'll take that question back and respond in writing.

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** If I could just comment, I just took a look through the Canada research chairs, and very many of them are names that are new Canadians, so they're doing a better job in other countries of getting their girls interested in science and technology, it appears on the surface. Maybe we could learn from them.

Mr. Dumas.

**Mr. Louis Dumas (Director, Case Processing Centre - Ottawa, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** Thank you for the question. I always enjoy soul-searching questions like this.

I come from the more operational side of CIC. I'm in the business of selecting immigrants. What I like about CIC at the moment is that we offer a number of avenues for young girls, let's say, or younger women to come to Canada. We've talked about the federal skilled trades program. We've talked about the federal skilled worker program and even the Canadian experience class. I think it's very important that we offer, as we say in French, *une panoplie*, a wide range of different opportunities to come and join our society.

As well, I think Mr. Barlow mentioned express entry. I think it's very important that we are able to respond very quickly to the demands of potential immigrants to Canada. Through express entry, I think we're in a very good position to do that.

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

[Translation]

Mr. Casey, your turn for five minutes.

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** Madam Chair, seeing how my time has been cut off, could the other three submit an answer if they have one for us?

• (1235)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. Very good.

[English]

**Mr. Sean Casey:** I have a question for you, Madam Savoie.

We hear from time to time some frustration with trying to access government employment programs, the most recent example being the Canada job grant. I heard an answer from Ms. Scott earlier that would contest what I'm about to put to you, but I don't want to get into a debate about that. I want to elevate it to the policy development level.

One of the things we've heard is there was a lack of flexibility within the Canada job grant program to accommodate the fact that it's still women who do the majority of the caregiving. That limited the opportunity for some women to participate in that particular program. My question for you is not to get into a debate about that, because I suspect if I left it at that level we probably would.

Status of Women Canada, could you explain to me the role you have when these programs are being developed in terms of thinking through these flexibility and access issues that are more predominant among women? That's my question for you. Where is Status of Women in the policy development process as it pertains to addressing the barriers that we're studying?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Each department, as it designs policies and programs, has the sole responsibility for ensuring that they meet all of the Government of Canada's requirements, including gender-based analysis. We do not have a role unless we were to be called upon to provide some advice and to provide some resources. As I was mentioning earlier, the capacity within a large number of federal departments is significantly in place to do this type of analysis.

Our role is more to increase the general capacity across the federal government, not to work with specific policy program development. We do boot camps, GBA boot camps we call them, where we invite federal colleagues to come and examine a specific issue to further their knowledge of gender-based analysis. The responsibility for each policy and program of a specific department rests with them. They're accountable for the GBA.

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Is it for Status of Women Canada to take a proactive role where they see deficiencies in program design at any level to put their hand up and say, "Hey, what about this?", or is that, as you indicated, something that's left within individual departments?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** We don't have a role of being an auditor, but the Government of Canada's auditor examined the implementation of GBA in a number of institutions a few years ago. That would be their role. As well, central agencies have a role to ensure that the requirements to do the gender-based analysis is conducted.

We do not have a watchdog role, but again at times we're solicited for advice and for support. We do speak with our colleagues across the federal family all the time in many interdepartmental working groups. We're always advocating for a thorough gender-based analysis wherever we go.

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Thank you.

I have no further questions.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Casey.

It is now over to Ms. Bateman for seven minutes.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you to all of our witnesses today.

The numbers that you quoted, Madam Savoie, at the start: skilled trades, 5% women, so that means 95% male; STEM, 22% women, 78% male. Wow, but all is not lost, because I'm a chartered accountant and I remember in 1905....

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** No, it was the early eighties when I got my CA designation. I was hired after business school by Pricewaterhouse. They hired 12 people that year and I was the only female. That industry has changed markedly over the last number of decades and these will too.

I think it's so important—and I echo all of my colleagues' comments about the importance of involving young women early—because if we don't take a long-term view of this, all of us...and I'm all for breaking down the silos of which you speak, madam.

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

I can't stand

[*English*]

silos. We have to work together. We have to make sure that this happens, and we have to engage young women.

I speak as a mother. My youngest, a daughter, is in grade 11. She's in the IB, international baccalaureate, program, and I think she's just one of two women in the physics class. The advanced math is equally sparse, although it's a little better. I think without a focused outreach....

Could I ask, first, Mr. Will, that your website with all the links be sent to the

[*Translation*]

clerk of the committee because it's very important for us to have that information.

[*English*]

We have to use that, not only with our families, but with all of our constituents, who are our families, and we have to make sure that this tool, which sounds wonderful, is widely marketed. I am so pleased.

I think, Ms. Scott, you talked earlier about YES, the youth employment strategy. Was it \$40 million we invested in last year's budget in that incremental investment in youth?

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** That's right. That was an investment specifically into economic high demand occupations—

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** The economic action plan 2014. That's great.

On the apprenticeship program, I have to double-check with you because we just introduced that last year. It was 2014, right?

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** The Canada apprentice loan?

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Did you say 500,000 applicants have been processed?

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** The apprenticeship grants were launched initially in 2007, so there's been over 500,000 apprenticeship grants.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** But we increased it with the Red Seal. We did more. We started the apprenticeship grants in 2007 and we increased it last year in economic action plan 2014, with—

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** The Canada apprentice loan....

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** —okay, the loan. So you were referring to the grant program that we started in 2007, and the 500,000 young people who have taken advantage of that? That's an outstanding accomplishment. I'm so glad.

Is there more required? Do we need to do more of that for young people?

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** That was certainly the thinking behind the launch of the Canada apprentice loan. It ensured that there was additional funding available so that when individuals, at those peak times, were leaving the workplace to go on their technical training as apprentices and returning to the college system for that 8 to 10 weeks each year they would have that financial flexibility.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** That there were 500,000 young people helped through that blows my mind. That's wonderful, just wonderful. Hopefully, this is going to change, the way the chartered accountancy profession changed.

Madam Savoie, you mentioned in the YMCA-YWCA program that was in Montreal there was an opportunity to share with families. What was that program?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That one was where they were working with guidance counsellors.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** If we want to make an impact working with guidance counsellors—and all of us think our riding is the most important; it doesn't matter which side of the House you're on, you feel that—is part of your process at Status of Women to share the accomplishments of that one project, that YMCA-YWCA project that's based in Montreal, with all of the YMCAs and YWCAs across Canada? That would actually be helpful and use dollars that we've already invested, I think, wisely, but we should be getting more bang for the buck on that. Can we do that?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Our approach.... That project is just beginning, so as it unfolds over the next—

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Yes, but it's going to end at some point.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:**—three years, what will happen is it's part of a cluster of projects addressing the same issue. The best practices will be assessed.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** What's our best practice for sharing those best practices when we figure them out? It's more economical if everybody doesn't have to learn how to walk.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** I totally agree. One of the things we're trying to develop is a knowledge dissemination strategy now that we have these clusters—

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Can you get that information on knowledge dissemination back to this committee on that particular issue and on that particular project?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Sure.

•(1245)

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** My colleagues have all remarked that there is a dearth of guidance counsellors who are actually and actively encouraging young women who are capable to engage in the less traditional fields. That would be very helpful, because then we can save the money on doing it again, and have it make sense.

I would also like some stats.

CIC, thank you so much for being here today.

I want you to know that when I was with Susan Truppe, actually we found out that women welders are more precise and more capable and more accurate. Their accuracy is significant. I'm happy to report...we didn't get 24-hour service, but it was, I believe, 10 days. There was a young woman who is a welder who got the express entry.

Again, could we get some information on the successes of express entry? I think this is a program that really is making a difference and it's helping businesses.

[Translation]

It's very important in terms of creating jobs and growing the economy.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Bateman.

I'm going to let Mr. Graham answer that quickly.

**Ms. Maia Welbourne:** If I may, Madam Chair, I will answer that.

**The Chair:** Ms. Welbourne, you may go ahead.

[English]

**Ms. Maia Welbourne:** We would be delighted to provide stats.

It's a relatively new system. It's only been operating since January 1, but what we know so far we'd be happy to share.

**The Chair:** Excellent. I love those answers.

[Translation]

Thank you very much, Ms. Welbourne.

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

[English]

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** I've discovered this report done by the status of women committee in 2010 actually. It was in the third

session of the 40th Parliament. It's called "Building the Pipeline: Increasing the Participation of Women in Non-Traditional Occupations".

Who can I speak to about this? Are we aware of this report generally across departments?

I think I see Madam Savoie is...generally as well. I don't know if it's something that I can direct my questions to. Is there anyone else?

We'll talk about this specifically.

Some of the recommendations in here are very interesting around implementing.... I'll just read out the first one, which is: "The Committee recommends that all federal government publicity relating to training and jobs undergo a gender-based analysis on an ongoing basis to ensure that women are portrayed in a wide range of non-traditional jobs."

Is that something that's been implemented?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** You will note that the vast majority of those recommendations fall within the mandate of ESDC, so I have to pass the buck, I'm sorry.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Has that been implemented?

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** There's been a considerable amount of advertising and outreach related to some of the initiatives around apprenticeship training. Certainly, if you look at the five advertising campaigns that have been run over the past few years, we have made a particular effort to focus on portraying women in non-traditional trades.

As you may recall, last year in the 2014 campaign, we had a testimonial from Valerie who was an apprentice from the Toronto area, now actually a journeyman working for the Toronto District School Board as a HVAC journeyman. I would say as well, if you take a look at the ESDC website, we've done a number of YouTube testimonials with young women who are in non-traditional trades as journeymen as well. For example, on the website we have videos of a woman who is a bricklayer and another who is an automotive service technician. There's been an awful lot of focus on that in the last few years in the department.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Do you think that has had an effect? Is there data to show that has had an effect on the recruitment of women in non-traditional employment?

**Ms. Catherine Scott:** Certainly. The latest statistics we have are from 2012. These are statistics released annually by Statistics Canada. Certainly, we have seen some growth in some of the non-traditional trades. If you look at some of the top Red Seal trades in the construction sector, the numbers are still very small overall, but if you look over the past five years, for example for steamfitter-pipefitter, there's been an 80% growth in the number of women apprentices. It's the same with industrial mechanic, a 75% growth; plumber, a 60% growth. There is some slow change that we are seeing.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** That's good news.

One of the other recommendations is: "The Committee recommends that the federal government promote the integration of women and other disadvantaged groups into non-traditional occupations by requiring gender equity provisions in federally funded building and infrastructure agreements."

Has that been implemented, or can anyone speak to that?

• (1250)

**Ms. Janet Walden:** Of course, we don't do building and infrastructure, but I can say that from an NSERC perspective we have certainly, as I mentioned, got an equity statement now. We post all of our results in terms of gender to ensure there's no bias. We've put in place provisions for parental leave as well as extensions for our grants. As I said earlier, we work with our sister granting agencies and have joined recently the GBA. We're moving ahead and are very active participants in the working groups that Madam Savoie has talked about.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Let me just add something not related to building infrastructure agreements. As you're aware, our minister is also the Minister of Labour and Labour has a program in place to specifically address barriers to equity. It's called Workplace Opportunities: Removing Barriers to Equity. They fund various initiatives to specifically address those types of inequities.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** That's good news. I do feel as though there are some in here that haven't been implemented. One of them, "The committee recommends that the federal government strengthen the special benefits provisions of the Employment Insurance program, to provide greater coverage for caring for family members, and work with its provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure that labour codes and practices reflect the need for work-life balance." I don't know if you would have anything to add in there.

I think what might be interesting is if those of you who have been specifically involved in this report would maybe submit to the committee how you feel those recommendations have been implemented. I think it would be helpful as a starting point for this study to see what's been done and where we still need to be going.

With that, I'm going to throw over my time for questions to my colleague, Ms. Liu. Mr. Casey actually brought up one of the questions I had on gendered work, so I'll just give her the rest.

**The Chair:** You have a minute and a half.

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** The federal government has a week for science and technology in which we do many programs, as was mentioned previously by some of my colleagues. Is there more we could be doing to expand the awareness around the science and technology week? Is there more we can be doing to specifically target the programming for this week towards girls and young women?

**Ms. Janet Walden:** I'm not sure I fully get what you're asking here.

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Is there more we could be doing in terms of our programming in schools to target girls and women, specifically with regard to the science and technology awareness week that's held every year?

**Ms. Janet Walden:** The science and technology week....

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Perhaps you can get back to us on that.

Mr. Casey asked whether we are looking for any international models in terms of encouraging science and technology and the participation of women in science and technology fields. As I just said, in my research I found out that South Korea has actually developed a law promoting and supporting female researchers and technicians. They've actually put into place quotas to encourage the participation of women in the workforce. Has there been any study of international participation models?

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Liu.

Since Ms. Liu mentioned the point about international involvement, perhaps you could provide the clerk a brief answer talking about Southeast Asia and countries at the international level. Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Ms. Truppe, I'm not exactly sure how much time you're going to have.

[English]

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If there is time, I'm going to be splitting my time with Madam O'Neill Gordon.

My first question would be for Linda Savoie.

Linda, you mentioned women leaders and the economy and you said that women leaders, I think it was, were going to host round tables within the next few weeks. Could you tell us a bit more about that and what you hope the outcome will be? What exactly will they be doing?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** From this we hope to get some employers' perspectives, because we're hearing from a wide range of stakeholders. We're trying to zero in on employers' concerns, their assessment of the situation, and their suggestions with regard to best practices or gaps that they need assistance with. Those are the early objectives of these coming round tables.

• (1255)

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Thank you.

Who will be participating? Will it be all women at this round table or are you getting feedback from a mixture of men and women?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** There will be a mixture of folks who are pretty much leaders in their industry and those who have an interest in exploring how women can be better integrated into their employment.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Thank you.

My next question is for CIC.

I think you were referring to the federal skilled trades program, and I think that was the one where you said there was 67%, less than 5% were women, and 704 women were permitted to go into the other programs. Is there any plan to change anything in the federal skilled trades program to get more women? Was that the right program? Was that the one that had the—

**Mr. Matthew Graham:** That's the one. Just to clarify, the numbers were, I believe, that 62 have come in through the program.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Oh, it was 62 women, not per cent. Okay.

**Mr. Matthew Graham:** Those were absolute numbers, not percentages.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** They were not percentages, but less than 5%. Okay.

**Mr. Matthew Graham:** Yes, actually it was fewer than five women.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** That's right.

**Mr. Matthew Graham:** The federal skilled trades program is a relatively new program, launched in January 2013. The take-up has been slow.

It should be noted that tradespersons, as I mentioned in my remarks, can come in through other programs as well, for example, the federal skilled worker program for those who are already in Canada, pursuing a job in Canada as temporary foreign workers. The Canadian experience class is an ideal program for them to use as a pathway to permanency. In the federal skilled trades program, I think as time goes by we'll continue to monitor the number of admissions through the program and determine whether or not there are changes that need to be made in the selection criteria that could further advantage tradespersons coming in through the program.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Thank you.

What was the percentage of women in the federal skilled worker program, if you know off the top of your head? If not—

**Mr. Matthew Graham:** Sorry, in the federal skilled worker program, did you ask the percentage of women coming through?

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Yes. I think I probably missed it, but if you don't have it off the top of your head, that's okay.

**Mr. Matthew Graham:** It's about one-third, according to Monsieur Dumas.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Okay, great. Thank you.

My final question will be for Janet Walden.

I think you mentioned that the Council of Canadian Academies said it is difficult to progress if there aren't a lot of women, and we need to increase the pool. Have you any quick thoughts or suggestions for how we would increase that pool?

**Ms. Janet Walden:** I think we've been having a conversation around that today in terms of it really being about getting young

women interested in science before they make their final choices to stop taking math, or physics, or chemistry, at the end of high school. It's really about getting young women earlier in their careers, before they enter post-secondary education.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Thank you.

Madam O'Neill, go ahead.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** My question is one I had from before, for Linda Savoie.

In your statement you mentioned that technology now has become such a big part of our workload out there, and that there are so many different trades now that women could be advised to enter. I'm wondering if you could give us an outline as to what trades you see out there now that women can really reach out to as a result of technology.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** We've been working, for instance, with the Information and Communications Technology Council, and some of the observations it has made are quite interesting.

The range of opportunities for women tends to be underestimated by the young women, who seem to zero in on these technologies in the more traditional perceptions, sometimes environments that they feel are not responding to their need or their desire to do something meaningful. So it's trying to reframe the conversations around technology.

We know there is a very large number of women, for instance, who are in the health sector. Technology plays a very, very important role in the health sector, so by reframing where technology actually has a role to play, it's trying to encourage the presence of more women and young women.

In terms of technology, it's very pervasive. It's everywhere. It's just reframing the perception so that people stop thinking of it in terms of a big computer, a dark room, and a bunch of people with glasses doing just that and not interacting with others.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. O'Neill Gordon.

I would also like to thank all the witnesses for taking the time to meet with us today and sharing their expertise as we begin our study.

The meeting is adjourned.





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