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## **Standing Committee on Finance**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, March 27, 2014**

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**Chair**

**Mr. James Rajotte**



## Standing Committee on Finance

Thursday, March 27, 2014

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC)):** I call this meeting to order. This is meeting number 25 of the Standing Committee on Finance. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), our orders of the day include continuing our study of youth employment in Canada.

We're very pleased to have our witnesses with us here today. First of all, from the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, we have the national director, Mr. Jonathan Champagne. We have, from the Canadian Intern Association, the president, Claire Seaborn.

[Translation]

We also have with us the Director General of the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française, Mr. Sylvain Groulx.

[English]

From Mitacs, we have the vice-president, Mr. Robert Annan. From Polytechnics Canada, we have back again before the committee Ms. Nobina Robinson, the CEO. Welcome back. And we are expecting the University of Toronto Students' Union. We hope to have them here during the proceedings. Welcome to all of you. Thank you for being with us here today.

You each have five minutes maximum for an opening statement. After that, we'll have questions from members.

We'll begin with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations.

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne (National Director, Canadian Alliance of Student Associations):** Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, members of Parliament, fellow presenters, and guests.

I would like to extend the gratitude of students and youth from across the country for the action being taken to study the issue of youth employment. It is my pleasure to be here representing the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. CASA consists of 24 member associations that represent 300,000 students at universities and colleges across Canada.

It will come as no surprise that today's students are concerned about finding a job after graduation. After all, students have primarily pursued post-secondary to get a leg up when entering the labour force. Unfortunately, many graduates either already know or will quickly find out that a successful transition from school to the workplace is not an easy one. This transition requires not just academic credentials but, increasingly, work experience too. A recent report from TD Economics indicated that, cumulatively,

Canadian youth impacted by poor transitions to the workplace will lose over \$23 billion in earnings over the next 18 years.

The added benefits of advanced education and training are clear. In 2012 there was an 11-point gap in the employment rate between youth who had completed high school and those who had completed some form of post-secondary education.

That being said, there are policies in place that are barriers for students to successfully transition into the workplace. Increasingly, students work while studying to help make ends meet. The amount of federal financial assistance available to students has remained the same for nearly a decade and the cost of an education has not.

Those who receive student loans are only allowed to earn up to \$100 per week while studying before they start to have their financial assistance clawed back. Nearly six in ten upper-year students work an average of 18 hours per week. Whether it be part-time work, co-ops, internships, or other forms of work-integrated learning, penalizing students and creating disincentives for working is unfair and unnecessary. Removing these limits will create an environment that will help young people make the transition to lasting, meaningful, and gainful employment.

Poorly integrated new entrants, PINEs, as you might be aware, are a class of youth who have the skills and qualifications that make them employable but who frequently find themselves moving between temporary jobs and unemployment without being able to gain a foothold, even when the economy is growing. This is a big problem. Unfortunately, we lack the labour market data and information to be able to grasp the gravity of the situation. Recent graduates working in precarious and low-wage jobs continue to be grouped statistically with those who have secure, well-paying jobs. Better access to better information will result in better policy for government, better training for youth, and better hiring for employers.

CASA believes that a key destabilizing feature of Canada's employment landscape, one that is particularly troubling for youth, is the presence of unpaid internships. Vacant positions that should be filled by entry-level workers are instead being filled by individuals who can afford to work without compensation. This is especially troubling in a country desperate to build employment opportunities for youth. While this issue will be discussed further by other witnesses, all orders of government should immediately act to ensure that young people trying to find jobs are not offered positions that provide nothing more than trivial experience with no pay.

Youth have always had higher rates of unemployment than the general population, and we recognize that. What is most concerning about the current situation is that the transition to the workforce is becoming more challenging. It will be problematic for all society if the reality of precarious employment follows current youth throughout their lives. If nothing changes, it could cost the whole country dearly.

Thank you for your time.

•(1535)

**The Chair:** Thank you for your presentation.

We'll now hear from the Canadian Intern Association, please.

**Ms. Claire Seaborn (President, Canadian Intern Association):** Hello, everyone.

My name is Claire Seaborn.

[*Translation*]

I am a common law student at the University of Ottawa. I am also the President of the Canadian Intern Association.

[*English*]

We're a not-for-profit federal organization that aims to improve internship experiences and end the exploitation of unpaid interns.

Over the next five minutes I will speak about the problems with unpaid internships, outline the internship issues within federal jurisdictions, and provide legal and policy recommendations.

The word "internship" isn't defined in Canadian workplaces or in law. Internships can be paid or unpaid and they can be part of a formal educational program or they can be independently organized. An estimated 300,000 unpaid internships outside of school programs take place across Canada annually.

I speak to interns about their experiences every day and I've been an unpaid intern twice myself.

Although paid internships can be extremely valuable, unpaid internships facilitate socio-economic, gender, and intergenerational inequality. There are two University of Victoria master's students who recently undertook a study of unpaid internships to examine these issues. They're here today. While this study has limitations, the results provide insight on the characteristics and outcomes of internships in Canada.

For many industries, unpaid internships have effectively become a prerequisite to a job. The result is that those without the right financial means or connections are simply unable to break into certain fields.

The University of Victoria study found that unpaid internships have a disproportionate effect on women. Industries with unpaid internships are typically female dominated. Now, older generations who did not perform internships are benefiting from the labour of younger workers.

•(1540)

[*Translation*]

Unpaid internships also present other problems: they drive down wages, replace paid positions and contribute to youth unemployment.

In 2013, roughly 14% of Canadians aged 15 to 24 who were looking for work could not find a job.

A study from the University of Victoria revealed that 86% of unpaid interns were not hired at the end of their internship.

[*English*]

Now I'd like to shift to internship issues within federal jurisdictions.

First, there is a complete lack of data on internships in Canada. No provincial or federal government has collected any statistics regarding the prevalence or characteristics of unpaid internships.

Second, federal workplace laws are unclear regarding the status of interns. The Canada labour code does not have provisions for training or for internships, and the Canada labour program has not released any interpretation guidelines. Under Canadian workplace law, interns are considered employees unless they are subject to some kind of statutory exclusion. So provinces like Ontario and Quebec and British Columbia have all released statutory exclusions or interpretation guidelines for interns and trainees. But the federal government hasn't done that.

This legal ambiguity at the federal level means that interns can't claim EI or CPP, and they can't make contributions either. They're not protected under federal workplace health and safety laws.

[*Translation*]

The third problem is that measures designed to prevent employers from offering unpaid internships are insufficient. For this reason, unpaid interns do not pay income tax. We believe that millions of dollars in tax revenue are lost in this way.

[*English*]

Now I have two examples to illustrate these internship issues.

The first example is Jainna Patel, who is one of over 100 unpaid interns at Bell Media in Toronto. She did telephone surveys, performed research, and wrote reports. She is actually a math and statistics major. She filed a complaint with the Canada labour program and the inspector rejected that complaint.

After we put Bell Media on our wall of shame, we received emails from a bunch of other interns who had similar experiences. One was an unpaid intern in Bell's hardware department. He provided technician support for Bell's computers. Unpaid, he implemented software and hardware for the network infrastructure as well.

Jainna has appealed her decision and a hearing is going to take place this summer to determine whether Jainna was entitled to wages and whether Bell must pay their interns.

**The Chair:** We're coming up against time so can I just get you to wrap up, please?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Sure.

I'm going to quickly mention the second example which is about the tragic death of Andy Ferguson.

He worked at a radio station in Alberta as an intern, and as a contract employee. After finishing a double shift— which lasted 16 hours and ended at 5 a.m—he fell asleep at the wheel and his car collided with a truck. When the Canada Labour Program did an investigation, they concluded that the paid hours were within allowable limits. They had no authority to investigate the unpaid hours because Andy was a post-secondary student.

In conclusion, the first recommendation is Statistics Canada should begin tracking unpaid internships as part of the labour force survey.

The second is parliament needs to amend the Canada Labour Code to extend employment standards to protect interns.

The third is the Canada Labour Program and the Canada Revenue Agency should adopt proactive enforcement strategies.

Finally, we would just like to thank the three members of Parliament—Scott Brison, Andrew Cash, and Brent Rathgeber—who have already spoken out about this issue.

We're very pleased to have the opportunity to address the committee.

Thanks.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'll remind witnesses that the reason we do limit is so we can allow as much time for questions as possible.

[*Translation*]

I will now give the floor to Mr. Sylvain Groulx, from the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française.

**Mr. Sylvain Groulx (Director General, Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française):** Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee.

First of all, allow me to say that as an organization representing French-speaking young people in the country since 1974, our federation believes in working with and for young people. The Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française believes it has a duty to ensure that young people have a voice at events like this one today. So it is actually unusual for me, the director general, to be speaking today on their behalf. Because of the storm that has hit the Maritimes in the last few days, our president, Alexis Couture, was not able to be here today because his flight was cancelled. I would like you to know that the testimony I will be presenting today comes from Alexis. That said, I would like to thank you for having invited the FJCF to appear before you this afternoon.

As an organization that offers programs through the Youth Employment Strategy, and having created many employment projects for French-speaking youth in Canada living in minority

communities, we are convinced that we will be able to contribute to your study on youth employment in the country.

The FJCF's priority is to defend the interests of French-speaking youth living in minority communities. According to the most recent Statistics Canada data, there are more than 450,000 young people aged 14 to 25 whose first or second language is French, and who live in Canada but outside of Quebec.

Our federation also creates a range of activities that allow young people to have French-language experiences across the country and also locally, with the help of 11 youth organizations in 9 provinces and 2 territories.

For the past 18 years, the FJCF has led projects funded by the Youth Employment Strategy. Our organization has designed and led nine editions of the Francophone Youth Employment Program, which was funded by the Career Focus Section of the Youth Employment Strategy.

Since 1996, the FJCF has helped find placements for around 200 young people per year through the Languages at Work Section of the Young Canada Works Program. This program is administered by the Department of Canadian Heritage, through the Summer Work Experience Program.

Furthermore, for three years we have led the Traduca Internship Program, funded by Public Works and Government Services Canada.

In the 2014 budget, the government committed to making sure that employment programs better reflected the realities of the job market. Given the new conditions for certain employment programs, it is obvious to us that the government will not be able to ensure that its employment programs line up with the realities of the job market for official language minority communities.

Unfortunately, because of the new conditions, certain employment programs will limit eligibility to private sector employers or those who do not receive any public funds.

As a result, French-speaking youth who want to work in French outside of Quebec will be left behind by these programs. We find it alarming that this new trend could spread to other programs which have not yet been affected by the new conditions.

For this reason, it is critical that the government review its program policies in order to include francophone minority community organizations as potential employers in these employment programs. This would allow us to fight against two significant problems, the first and most important of which is the small number of French-language jobs in Canada in official language minority communities. I am not referring to bilingual positions, but rather to positions where the young workers would be working mainly in French. The second problem is that francophone minority community organizations have difficulty recruiting educated and qualified labour.

Apart from a few communities, francophone community organizations are the largest source of French-language jobs in Canada outside of Quebec. They represent an incredible springboard for young students or graduates who speak French and who live in minority communities, because these organizations provide early and enriching work experiences in a wide range of fields related to young people's studies. Furthermore, if we want Canada's francophone and Acadian communities to flourish, we will require good youth employment programs for young students and graduates who speak French, through francophone community organizations.

It is important to understand that the reality for not-for-profit francophone organizations outside of Quebec is not the same as for anglophone organizations. For this reason, francophone organizations should receive this type of funding.

In his presentation before this committee on March 6, Mr. David McGovern, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister in the Department of Employment and Social Development, argued that the government was trying to match job offers and job seekers, to benefit skilled young workers.

We believe that the interest French-speaking youth have for their language is underestimated. So, the government is not currently meeting the ambitions of these French-speaking youth.

To conclude, I would say that there is currently a significant lack of job opportunities for French-speaking youth in minority communities. However, effective methods have already been successfully established to fill part of that gap, such as the programs that were offered by the FJCF. All these programs require is a change in the conditions that would allow not-for-profit organizations to be considered as employers. These are programs that have a huge impact on young people and that meet real needs, both for young people and their communities.

• (1545)

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

Next we'll go to Mitacs, please.

**Mr. Robert Annan (Vice-President, Research and Policy, Mitacs):** Thanks.

Good afternoon, honourable members. Thank you for the opportunity to present to the committee today.

Mitacs is a national, independent, not-for-profit research organization that supports Canadian innovation through collaborative research projects that link Canadian businesses with leading experts at Canadian universities. A key component in all of our programs is skills training and professional development of our participants—graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at Canadian universities.

At the foundation, we understand that education is key to preparing our young people for jobs and that a strong foundational education is key to tackling chronic unemployment. At Mitacs we work with some of Canada's best educated young people, but even for these highly schooled youth we recognize that transitioning into high-quality jobs is a bigger challenge for this generation than it has

ever been before. It is not just that these young people suffer these challenges, but in underutilizing their talent and training, we as Canadians lose the opportunity to be more productive and more innovative as a society. Over the last 15 years, we've developed programs that support skills development and training to ensure that we support the transition of these young researchers into productive, well-paying jobs.

Our flagship program, Mitacs Accelerate, is a program that integrates industrial research experience and professional skills development into the academic research training for graduate students and post-doctoral researchers through paid research internships aligned with their academic studies. Accelerate has grown from 18 internships in 2007 to well over 2,000 internships this year delivered from coast to coast in every sector and academic discipline.

Since 2007, Mitacs has supported internships for more than 5,000 Canadian students and post-docs. Our studies demonstrate that these students have an easier time transitioning to non-academic jobs, earn higher starting salaries than their peers, and even start their own companies at a higher rate. We've also observed an indirect benefit for young researchers through these internships. Host organizations clearly value the research performed by these interns. They have served as exceptional mechanisms to transfer knowledge and expertise from the universities into more than 2,000 Canadian companies, most of which are small and medium-sized enterprises. This value is best exemplified by the fact that companies often create new positions in their companies as a result of their participation in the program. Nearly 20% of our participating companies hire their interns into newly created positions within their firms. Not only are the interns benefiting personally from their improved employability but these internships have the potential to grow the pool of available jobs.

Mitacs has several other innovation programs, all built on the same general model of providing relevant experience and skills training as part of a comprehensive education. For instance, we have a post-doctoral training program called Elevate, which is now a national program thanks to funding in the most recent federal budget. Post-doctoral fellows are a wonderful, untapped resource of highly trained and educated young researchers, but many languish in university labs due to fewer opportunities to find jobs as university professors. Elevate provides these researchers the opportunity to work with industry and to gain skills and experience through a combination of mentorship, experience, and workshops all geared towards providing them with the ability to act as research managers for Canadian companies that lack capacity to build and manage research portfolios. This year, several hundred post-docs across the country will work as young research managers with Canadian companies, providing valuable research expertise to their company hosts while easing their transition out of the universities and into industry.

Finally, I'll mention our professional skills training program called Step. Mitacs runs a series of Step workshops at universities across the country on topics such as project management, communication skills, and business etiquette. These immensely popular workshops are offered free of charge to graduate students. In five years more than 10,000 students have attended Step workshops at universities in every province in Canada. These workshops supplement the students' advanced education with so-called soft skills that our industrial partners have identified as key hiring factors.

In all of these cases, we have engaged with industry partners—those who know best what skills and expertise they need in today's job market—to train our students. We believe a significant strength of our approach is that we do not seek to replace or to supplant the fine education provided by Canadian universities. Rather, we seek to supplement the quality education provided by our world-class institutions with the opportunity to apply knowledge first-hand to gain relevant experience and to connect with the professional world before facing the job market upon graduation.

•(1550)

**The Chair:** You have one minute.

**Mr. Robert Annan:** We are passionate about internships and experiential learning because we've seen them work time and again. They leverage the strengths of our existing educational institutions with the opportunity to engage directly with those firms that understand in-demand skills best.

We sincerely support the work of this committee to address issues of youth unemployment and are pleased to provide whatever support we can.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll now go to Polytechnics Canada, please.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson (Chief Executive Officer, Polytechnics Canada):** Thank you for the invitation to speak with you today, honourable members, on the persistent challenge of youth unemployment.

We have two recommendations to propose, which will conclude my remarks.

My name is Nobina Robinson, and I'm the CEO of Polytechnics Canada, the association that represents Canada's leading urban, degree-granting, publicly funded colleges and polytechnics. You know us best as the champions for increased supports for apprentices and the inclusion of college applied research in federal support for innovation and R and D.

Polytechnic applied education has three distinct features that are relevant for our discussion.

We offer undergraduate degrees and graduate certificates as well as the full range of traditional community college vocational and professional credentials. We offer more than 220 skilled trades training programs, and student involvement in applied research projects is available for hands-on R and D experience, along the lines of what our colleagues in Mitacs do for the graduate students.

Applied education is outcomes-based. Our members work closely with industry partners to set curricula according to industry standards, ensuring that our graduates will meet employer expectations and hit the ground running on day one on the job. Work-integrated learning is the hallmark of our model of education. Irrespective of the various debates over the skills mismatch, I want to make the case that advanced applied education is the best insurance against youth unemployment and underemployment.

There is a diverse set of needs and experience levels among the youth who are unemployed and underemployed. At least two different descriptors are needed to capture this diversity: those who are “not in education, employment, or training”, now known as NEETs; and those who are the “poorly integrated new entrants” to the labour force, now referred to as PINEs, as our colleagues in CASA mentioned.

It is the PINEs I want to focus on today, those who are underemployed, sometimes overqualified, or generally mismatched to the needs of employers.

I understand that you will be hearing from the traditional community college sector next week. All of Canada's colleges offer solutions for those known as NEETs. Polytechnic institutions have innovated their training programs to develop a solution for PINEs.

We saw a strong trend of students enrolling in our institutions who had already completed a university bachelor's degree and who sought targeted skills that would give them a competitive advantage in the marketplace. We developed graduate certificates to respond to this demand, providing students with small classes, industry-experienced faculty, and relevant workplace experience. These certificates put them not just into a new job but on the on-ramp to a prosperous career.

In the absence of timely labour market information—a vital federal role—we've decided to collect our own. Our members offer more than 200 such graduate certificate programs open only to those who have completed a prior post-secondary credential, usually a university degree. An average of 12% of our full-time students have already completed a four-year university bachelor's degree and are now enrolled in these targeted graduate certificate programs. In some cases, the percentage of university graduates is as high as 15%.

These graduate certificates are in high demand. The ratio of qualified applicants for each available seat is often 10:1 or higher. I can provide specific examples in our discussions to follow.

Our two recommendations for your study are the following.

First, provide timely, relevant, objective, credible, and consistent labour market information by focusing on two Statistics Canada surveys: modernize and improve the Workplace and Employee Survey; and reactivate the Youth in Transition Survey. These were noted by the 2009 Drummond panel. These surveys will provide the depth and the breadth of data needed to connect education to employment. That will allow employers to look for new hires with the right credentials and will allow educational institutions to design more outcomes-oriented programs and students to make more informed choices about what to study.

Second, to increase the capacity of our institutions' high-demand programs, such as these graduate certificates, a portion of the funding for the Canada social transfer for post-secondary education should be set aside for demand-driven, industry-responsive programs.

●(1555)

For every one student who gets to register for these in-demand programs, our current capacity restraints force us to turn away nine other fully qualified applicants.

In conclusion, the plight of younger workers is a persistent social and economic challenge that has much impact on Canada's productivity. As a closing remark, it is worth saying that all of this will be easier to do once we establish a parity of esteem among the various post-secondary options young people choose from today.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll now welcome from the University of Toronto Students Union the president-elect, Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara.

You have five minutes for your opening presentation.

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara (President Elect, University of Toronto Students' Union):** Good afternoon. My name is Yolen. I'm the vice-president equity and president-elect of the University of

Toronto Students' Union. I, like most students at the University of Toronto and our peers across the country, opted to pursue higher education in the belief that our initiative, hard work, and financial investment would lead to well-paying, secure jobs that would allow us to repay our loans. That is no longer the case.

During the recession, youth unemployment peaked at more than 15% and hasn't changed much since. Recent figures place it at about 14%, double the national rate. If this number accounted for those who are underemployed or in precarious work with part-time, temporary, and contract jobs with lower wages and few to no benefits, it would double to about 28%. Of jobs created between 2008 and 2013, 72% fall into the precarious category, which leaves Canada ranked 17th among OECD countries for the proportion of people who are precariously employed.

As our tuition increases, the financial value of our investment seemingly decreases. An undergraduate degree on average provides a 30% earnings premium over a high school degree, but in the last decade, degree holder wages have increased by 8% while high school and college diploma wages have increased by 13%. With increasing debt and fewer good job options, young Canadians are in crisis, and many who are desperate for employment are forced to consider working for free.

It is now believed that as many as 300,000 young Canadians each year are forced to take on unpaid internships, an extreme form of precarious work. Regulations vary based on jurisdictions, and there is poor enforcement of what little regulation is in place, making these positions especially precarious and prone to abuse.

Although many students are aware that they are being exploited, they find it difficult to come forward to report incidents because of the fear of being blacklisted. In Ontario and at the University of Toronto Students' Union we have been working towards pressuring the provincial government to enforce a six-step process, as outlined in the Employment Standards Act, to ensure that students are not being taken advantage of. We've been able to work with Yasir Naqvi, the Minister of Labour, to ensure that interns are better covered under provincial legislation.

However, this is not just a provincial issue. It is a national issue, and a growing issue at that. The case of Andrew Ferguson in Alberta was mentioned; he was a student who died after driving home from his unpaid internship.



Another example is an unpaid bus person internship at Vancouver's Fairmont Waterfront Hotel. Unpaid internships favour those without student debt and those who come from higher income backgrounds. Those who cannot afford to work for free lose out on networking opportunities, can suffer from skills degradation, and often can have their skills fall behind innovation, making it more difficult to enter their field, if given the opportunity.

There have been numerous cases in which unpaid internships offer little benefit to students while providing a service to an employer who would otherwise pay for the position. Unpaid internships are unfair for students, and changes need to be made. We are calling on the federal government to take a leadership role in addressing the national youth employment crisis.

For these reasons, we ask that the government take the following measures. First, develop a national strategy to address youth unemployment, underemployment, and unpaid internships, and that includes as a first step collecting relevant employment data on recent graduates. Second, restore funding to the Canada summer jobs grants program. Third, eliminate the practice of unpaid internships within government and federally regulated companies; I think it's important for the federal government to take the leadership in this instance. Fourth, work with the provinces to create employment standards for precarious work in internships, as well as to increase the ability to enforce the standards.

Youth are not the future of the economy; we are part of it now. We need the government to take action today to ensure that we are able to fully participate in the labour market.

Thank you for inviting me to speak today. I and my colleague Najiba will be happy to take any questions.

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll begin members' questions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dubé, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here today.

[*Translation*]

I have a few questions for you, Mr. Groulx.

During this study, we have often talked about mobility and the fact that some young people are leaving their region. You spoke about official languages, which I find interesting. When I had the opportunity to meet with representatives of your organization in the past, there was a lot of discussion regarding the consequences that these demographic changes could have on francophone communities outside Quebec. That was the first part of my question.

The second part concerns the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018. Some youth employment programs were abolished by the government. Does this have negative consequences for these communities? The guarantee of services is based on the

strength of each francophone community. If people leave the communities, services are reduced accordingly.

**Mr. Sylvain Groulx:** Thank you for the question.

There are consequences on student mobility. Because young people have few opportunities to continue their post-secondary education in French in most of these communities, they move towards large urban centres. We are looking for ways to have these young people come back.

People return to their regions for all sorts of reasons. Feeling like they belong is important, but jobs are really the main reason why people return to their communities. It is therefore very important to ensure that there are jobs in the regions. All young Canadians are very mobile, but this is particularly true of young francophones. Because the communities are already small, they are impacted by this mobility.

There was a program under the previous roadmap. Public Works and Government Services Canada provided funding for a youth employment program for students studying translation and interpretation. Unfortunately, cuts in the 2013 budget have meant that PWGSC's assistance program for the language sector was abolished.

Some programs aimed at the language sector, including Skills Link, were strengthened. However, translation and interpretation services were not. At the same time, we are hearing that there will not be enough workers in this sector over the next decade. In terms of official languages, it is important for communities to continue to have access to translation and interpretation services. It is unfortunate that they are no longer included in the roadmap.

• (1605)

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Regarding youth unemployment, much has been said and much will continue to be said about the long-term impact on youth, who must find somewhere to settle down and have children and so on. I reiterate, and I will continue to do so, that this places francophone communities in a particular situation.

Given what was just said, are you starting to see impacts on youth employment in general?

**Mr. Sylvain Groulx:** Young people in minority communities are in a fairly unique situation in terms of employment. I mentioned it during my presentation. We talked a lot about linguistic duality. Young people want to settle down and find work, but in most cases, the language of work is almost exclusively English, which leaves no room for the francophone aspect.

This has an impact on communities. Fewer people return. Communities become weaker and more assimilated. In short, these communities are the losers. There are a few exceptions, such as the Acadian Peninsula, in New Brunswick, and some regions in eastern Ontario.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Does your federation have any solutions to propose? Are you asking for the federal government to provide leadership?

**Mr. Sylvain Groulx:** In some cases, we have to ensure that not-for-profit organizations in minority communities have access to programs that are funded by the government so that they can participate actively in job searches. This would enable them to develop fully.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** I will use the 30 seconds I have left to state that the situation of francophones in minority communities is extremely important.

Thank you very much for providing us with information on this issue.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[English]

Next we'll go to Mr. Saxton, please.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to our witnesses for being here today.

My first questions are for Ms. Robinson from Polytechnics Canada.

Ms. Robinson, you're probably aware that our government recently reached an agreement for the Canada job grant program with the provinces, and this new program will bring together the federal government, the provincial governments, and businesses into a partnership to deliver skills training. My question to you is, first of all, what is your opinion of the Canada job grant? Also, what role will Polytechnics play in helping to deliver those skills?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** What I have always liked about the concept of the Canada job grant is the focus on involving employers. That said, large urban colleges and polytechnics will have to wait to see what demand is created because it really is up to the employer to find the worker who they wish to have trained. We are waiting to see the traffic that will come from the grant.

Our large publicly funded colleges are very dependent on these provincial operating grants. These sorts of training programs are fairly small potatoes for the bread and butter of the programs we're talking about. The Canada job grant will go to things like up-scaling in the short term. That's not the same as the full range of full-time credentials that we are really focused on.

That said, the objective of the Canada job grant, where we want to actually deal with the lack of employer investment in training, we hope will work; we want to see it work. Now, there were all sorts of negotiations around this pot of money, and that has been a concern. As we say, there are billions of dollars being transferred to the provinces, and I'd say the solution here is to talk about what the outcome of the program is. Let's focus on the outcome.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Yes, but surely there is an opportunity, a big opportunity, for polytechnics to get involved in helping to deliver these skills.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** Again, we'll have to wait to see the demand coming. When we look at the kinds of small companies that will have to sponsor the worker to go and get the training, we're hoping that there will be flexibility in the implementation of the grant so that companies can pool their demand and we can train 15

people in the same kind of up-scaling. All Canada's colleges are extremely good at providing that kind of customized workplace training. We'll have to see what traffic comes from it.

• (1610)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Okay, thank you.

Now in budget 2014 we included the Canada apprentice loan program—a hundred million dollars in no-interest loans to help apprentices fund their living expenses while learning skills and getting the experiences they need to get jobs.

What is your opinion of the apprentice loan program?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** We were absolutely delighted with that initiative. We see ourselves as a key proponent of that idea. We presented it to your committee in the fall.

In brief, what I think is important is the philosophical change that the initiative makes. It treats apprenticeship as learning. Making the Canada apprentice loan part of the Canada student loans program gets at that parity of esteem issue that I was talking about. Whether you're a learner in a post-secondary credential or you're an apprentice learner, you are the same. You are part of our learning population.

Again, it's a pilot. We want to see it work. We have been working very closely with ESDC officials in providing ways to make it roll out as fast as possible.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you very much.

My next question is for Mitacs.

You mentioned the Elevate initiative in your opening remarks. The economic action plan 2014 invested another \$8 million into Mitacs over two years to help with programs like this. I'm interested to know from you how this investment and this program are going to help young Canadians get jobs.

**Mr. Robert Annan:** We were very pleased about the investment in Elevate. Really that's in response to something that was coming back to us from our industrial partners that we work with in our other programs, in Accelerate, for instance.

Essentially there are two parts to the question. The first part is that we were hearing from a lot of our industrial partners that were sponsoring interns through our Accelerate program that, while they appreciated the program—and in many ways it actually spurred investment R and D within the companies we were working with—given that most of our partners are small and medium-sized enterprises, they didn't tend to have the capacity in-house to actually manage research groups. So a small company that has a dozen employees may want to bring on two Ph.D. graduates to do research in-house, but they don't have anyone in their organization who could then actually launch the research group and tie it to the business needs of the organization.

We decided that we needed to find a way to train research managers. In some countries, like in the United States for instance, they have a lot of large-scale companies performing R and D. They have four times as many per capita as we have, so they spin out these managers. We don't have a mechanism, so what we decided was that this was a way to start training these managers—

**The Chair:** Thank you. Just wrap it up very quickly, please.

**Mr. Robert Annan:** Yes.

The last piece is really the fact that we have an excess of post-doctoral researchers who aren't going to find faculty positions, so really it was a match of excess labour with demand.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Saxton.

We'll go to Mr. Brison, please.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all I'd like to start on the issue of unpaid internships. If the federal government were to tighten and clarify its laws around unpaid internships with federally regulated industries, which jurisdictions should we seek to emulate?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** So far I've only seen unpaid internships in telecommunications, so really Bell Mobility, WIND Mobile, and radio companies. I haven't seen any evidence of unpaid internships in banks or transport, so that's really the industry you should be focusing on.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** So that's the only federally regulated industry where—

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Where I've seen them, but again we don't have any official data.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** But which provinces or what countries have taken steps that you believe we ought to emulate in terms of public policy?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** I think British Columbia's Employment Standards Act is the strongest example. They have interpretation guidelines that clearly explain that interns who are not working for academic credit are always entitled to minimum wage.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Those were the regulations under which Bell Canada was found offside?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** There's a company in B.C. called HootSuite, and it was found to be offside. It's a social media-based company. After it was called out it not only started paying all of its unpaid interns, it paid them retroactively for the six months prior.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Okay.

So which telecommunication firms are you referring to, then, in terms of federally regulated industries?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Bell Mobility and WIND Mobile.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Ontario has recently introduced amendments. I think Yolen referred to Ontario's amendment to their laws to bring interns under the protection of provincial workplace health and safety laws. They've made more resources available for investigations.

Can you comment on how that's working out so far?

•(1615)

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara:** This is a very recent change. I think it's a really good start to ensure that interns have the same rights in terms of workplace safety. But what we'd like to further see from the Ontario government is that they're actually proactively looking into instances of unpaid internships just because they are pretty prevalent in Ontario. Currently, the government relies on a complaints-based system, which means that interns who aren't aware of the laws around unpaid internships aren't able to ensure that their rights are safeguarded.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Sure.

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** I just have one thing. Just to clarify, Minister Naqvi's bill about placing workplace health and safety laws for interns hasn't actually passed yet. It's just a proposed bill at this stage. At this point in time students in Ontario are not covered under workplace health and safety laws, nor are they at the federal level.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Part of the emergence or the growth of unpaid internships has occurred as part of a broader labour market issue. We have 265,000 fewer jobs for young Canadians than before the downturn. There is a supply and demand issue here, and one that didn't exist I think when we were students. You didn't have unpaid internships to the extent there is today.

Can you comment on the issue of equality of opportunity and the emergence of the situation whereby if a student or young person is from a privileged family they can afford to get, effectively, an unpaid internship that can give them a level of experience that may not be available to somebody who just has to take whatever job they can get to pay the bills. Is that an emerging deepening of inequality of opportunity?

Would you like to comment, Jonathan?

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** When students graduate today, some of them graduate with no student debt, many of them graduate with significant amounts of student debt. Students have six months until they're expected to start repaying the amounts that they've taken out to go and study. In many cases students within those six months need to find something that will start to pay the bills. Those students often are somewhat restricted in their ability to search for employment or their ability to be picky and choosy maybe in specific fields that they wanted to study in. This, as you were mentioning, creates situations where those who are able to afford to work for free are able to take jobs, especially in specific industries or sectors of the economy where that's the expectation. Those who graduate and need to start earning an income might have to take jobs unrelated or they'd be considered underemployed at that point.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Thank you.

Mr. Annan, your members use interns. Are they paid interns?

**Mr. Robert Annan:** Yes, all of our interns are paid. They receive a stipend, which is the equivalent of what they would be receiving as a graduate student at one of the universities.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Are you aware of unpaid internships? If not in your industry, are you aware of other industries that are using unpaid internships?

**Mr. Robert Annan:** We're made aware by the sorts of discussions that are being generated around the table. We certainly make the argument to the employers that we engage with that, of course, there's value obviously in the work that they're getting here. So that's a key part. All of our programs have a cost-sharing arrangement so that industry pays half the cost. In terms of the total cost of the internship experience, a portion of it goes to fund the research, but the majority of it goes to pay a stipend to the student.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** The stipend would be, roughly, minimum wage? Or would it—

**Mr. Robert Annan:** It would work out to, roughly, somewhere between \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year, on an annual pro-rated basis, which is about what graduate student receive as an annual stipend.

**The Chair:** A last brief question, please.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** That would reflect a paid internship that would be onside in terms of...and they're getting transferable skills.

**Mr. Robert Annan:** Absolutely.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Thank you for clarifying that, because I think this is helpful for us to understand, that there are paid internship opportunities—

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

**Hon. Scott Brison:** —that are fulfilling their responsibility.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Keddy now, please.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome to our witnesses.

I'll just maybe take a little more time with Mitacs on the paid internship issue. This seems to be a larger problem than it was in the past. I'm just trying to rationalize where it came from. It's not unusual for a number of university classes or community college classes to ask their students to volunteer in an office. We often get volunteers here in Ottawa. There's a difference between a volunteer for a couple of weeks to learn how an office functions and an unpaid intern. Where's the cut-off point? Is it two weeks? Or is it a month? Do we know?

• (1620)

**Mr. Robert Annan:** We don't work with unpaid internship arrangements.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** No, I appreciate that.

**Mr. Robert Annan:** One significant difference is that in many cases, these unpaid internships—and this is really just my own personal understanding—are often used essentially almost as an employment substitute.

Our programs are really geared towards integrated training experience and research for the company. So in our case, it's a very

different value argument from the very beginning. So it's just not an issue for us.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** And I think it's safe to say that the employment substitute is an abuse of the internship process.

Thank you.

I have a couple of other questions.

Jonathan, you had mentioned that the way the student loan system works now, there's a limit on the amount of money that a student can earn while they're in school before it's clawed back against their student loan. I think you said it's \$100. In recognition of the challenges for students with high student loans, we took the value of the vehicle out in the former budget to allow students... Because students need more mobility, they often require that car to work. So I would hope you see that as a good move.

And on the wages earned, the cut-off point is \$100 a week so that's roughly one or two days maximum a week. Do you agree with taking the vehicle out? That was my question.

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** That was something our members and our organization were calling for. The elimination of the vehicle as an asset for the candidate's student loans was something very positive that we were pleased to see. And it was increased access for rural students who needed a vehicle. It also could potentially increase access to post-secondary education for mature students.

So we look forward to further investments in increasing accessibility.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Thank you.

Ms. Seaborn, you mentioned that typically the majority of unpaid interns are women. Where's that information coming from and what types of jobs are usually the ones that are female?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** I was referring specifically to a study done by two University of Victoria students. It was in no way a representative sample. That was the result of their study.

As I said, we don't have data, but based on my experience and the job advertisements that we've looked at and the interns I've spoken to, it's my belief that the vast majority of unpaid interns are women. It's also because the industries that are most likely to do unpaid internships—journalism, nutrition, social work, marketing, public relations—are all female-dominated areas.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Okay.

I was just going to say out loud and I caught myself, but I'm going to say it anyway.

Surely journalism wouldn't involve themselves in unpaid interns.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Order.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Ms. Nobina—

**The Chair:** Just a brief question.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** —you made a comment that I think is a significant comment, that education is outcome-based. I really think that rule has to be applied straight across the board, whether you're in community college or post-secondary university.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** Thank you. Obviously we are in agreement.

Yet we need to understand that in our British model of education that we've inherited we've said that we send our students to university to gain knowledge. All of the students around the table here are expecting to gain jobs. There is a fundamental societal bias here.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Very good. I like that.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Keddy.

We're going to Mr. Cash now, please.

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you all for being here.

I think this is an incredibly important discussion we're having here and I do want to thank the committee for having me as a visitor.

I want to double back to something that Mr. Keddy said, which is essentially the nub of the issue with unpaid internships. When it's an employment substitute, it's really an abuse of the internship process and the whole concept of what interns are or should be or could be.

And I'd like to get a sense first from Ms. Seaborn about what kind of implications are there for...? You can't say that they're running against the rules if there are no rules. I think what we're seeing here in the federal space is a lack of clear rules that impact young people and impact employers, too. So I want to get a sense first from you Ms. Seaborn, what the implications are of not having specific rules for when an employer can host an internship. And what implications do you see of not treating unpaid internship hours as work?

• (1625)

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Thank you. I think you're absolutely right. I'm going to focus only on federal jurisdiction because there are rules that exist in the provinces.

Federally under the Canada Labour Code there is just no clarity on whether interns should be considered employees. By default in workplace law they are, but the implication is stories like Jainna Patel and Andy Ferguson, which I just spoke about, where interns are not receiving the right protections, whether that's minimum wage or workplace health and safety.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** I'm wondering, Ms. Bollo-Kamara, if you have anything to add to that on the issue of not having clear rules around internships in the federally regulated space.

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara:** Yes. We went into some of the federally regulated industries that are covered under the Canada Labour Code—banks, telecoms, TV and radio broadcasters, federal crown corporations, and air transport companies. I believe the example Ms. Seaborn had pointed out to earlier—Andrew Ferguson—fell under that category.

What that means is that interns who aren't covered under any sort of regulation don't have any sort of protection. In that case, he was

working numerous hours. He fell asleep driving back from his unpaid internship. There is no regulation around that.

So I think it's important for there to be clarity both at the federal level and at the provincial level as well.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Ms. Seaborn, you referenced the B.C. rules. It's important to note that it's one thing to have rules—and they have them in British Columbia—but the enforcement in British Columbia is not what it could be...just as we're seeing now with enforcement being ramped up in Ontario, what enforcement actually looks like when it actually happens.

Before we get to that, I first of all want to ask Mr. Annan, why don't you use unpaid interns?

**Mr. Robert Annan:** Well, the short answer is just as a matter of principle.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Okay. I only have a short amount of time so I want to get back to the issue of enforcement.

Ms. Seaborn, what can the federal government do right now to protect students like Andy Ferguson so his tragic story is not repeated? What can the federal government do right now?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** The Canada labour program can release interpretation guidelines that say when the word “employee” is used under that act, intern is included in that word.

All that means is all of those existing employment laws that apply federally also should apply to interns. So it's releasing those interpretation guidelines, and then adopting a proactive enforcement strategy to ensure those guidelines are enforced.

**The Chair:** One minute.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** I've been talking a lot to young people and to students, but I have also been talking to businesses. You know that you could be a business in Ontario and you could be complying with the rules around internships; then you could be going to another jurisdiction and potentially not be.

First of all, do you hear that issue? I'm going to send this out to Ms. Robinson or Mr. Annan. Do you hear that issue of a lack of clarity around the issue of unpaid internships?

**Mr. Robert Annan:** We don't, but that's largely because it just isn't a topic we engage with.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** And the same with you?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** The same. I'm listening to this discussion, and one thing I do want to clarify is this. Internships that are part of work-integrated learning in school programs are not what you're asking about here.

• (1630)

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** No, we're not. And I think it's an important....

**The Chair:** Okay. Just wrap up, please.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** One last quick question is, how do we crack down on these internships that are an abuse and a misuse of the internship without compromising some of the good programs?

**The Chair:** We are over time here but we can have one person respond quickly on that. Maybe Ms. Seaborn? Thank you.

We'll move on to Mr. Allen, please.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here.

Ms. Robinson, I'd like to start with you. I want to recount some testimony we had in our natural resources committee last year. We were talking a little bit about the trades. One of the folks from the building and construction trades group was here.

I had just been talking to two young people who had come out of the basic first education part, and they were actually going into the block release. I talked to the president of the New Brunswick Community College about this, and I told her I didn't think we were preparing the students for what they were going to see after, because all of these trades jobs involve moving and going to construction sites. Sometimes they can get plumbing jobs locally, sometimes they can't, whatever it happens to be.

But what I'd like to understand is, what are the schools doing to ensure, for example, that people can go to these places and don't have to come back to their home provinces to do block release training, and then travel back and forth all the time?

He was indicating they were trying to work on that with the schools, but that seems to me to be something we could really do to help the young students.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** I fully agree, and I can tell you trades training.... We always think it's about metal bashing, and we always think about these old dirty jobs. But the technology is changing rapidly in many of these professions. So, the larger schools—in my membership, NAIT/SAIT in Alberta—are innovating in trades training such that in Calgary, you can actually do your course work on your smartphone while then going out to your work location.

There are all kinds of innovation I could enumerate for you. The concept of block release is really an old concept, and it was designed at a time when there were employers willing to take them on. For whatever economic shift that has gone on, the block release is a bit of problem now.

I'd say that with Minister Kenney's trip to Germany and the U.K., one of the things you can see there in the German model of apprenticeship is it's extremely integrated into the studying. It's not that you would go away for 10 weeks and get your training. It's part of your work week. It's part of your study week.

There are many different things. There are specific.... The larger community colleges, not just my members, are able to innovate within all of this, and if you wish I can outline those—

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Just now you've led me to another thing....

For example, and if you're knowledgeable, are the unions in Germany actually integrating very well so that they make sure that

when the young people go into these programs....? Because that's what ends up.... Some of these young people do the first year or so, and then they can't get the job close to home so they drop out, and then they're underemployed. They're left in an underemployed situation, which is really too bad because they've paid a year or two of tuition.

Is that the model we're looking to go to? Is that what has made Germany successful?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** There are many reasons why Germany is successful, but one of the bigger models is their notion of their chambers of commerce, which involve unions, employers, post-secondary, and mandatory participation for all employers.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Okay.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** That's one very important feature.

The other thing is that all of the prosperous G-7 countries are facing this rural-urban divide. It's very difficult to get people to go back to their communities.

I think what we heard after the minister's trip—and we were very delighted to be part of that trip; my colleague, Ken Doyle, was invited to join the minister—is that there are common challenges that places like Germany and the U.K. have with us, particularly on how you get the workers back to where the work is when the training had happened in an urban location.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** You have one minute.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** I have a couple quick ones.

Monsieur Groulx, are you still receiving funding under the youth employment strategy piece?

**Mr. Sylvain Groulx:** Yes, for one program.

[*Translation*]

The Young Canada Works Program.

We do not receive funding for programs that provide jobs to young people once they have finished their studies. Community organizations can no longer receive funding for this because they can no longer be employers under the program.

• (1635)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Thank you.

Claire, my last quick question is for you. I'd especially like to ask you about the OSHA regulation. I think it is Bill 146 in Ontario that was just tabled in December 2013.

Are you aware of any other provinces moving on protecting potential interns under OSHA guidelines in their provinces?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** It really differs province by province, but British Columbia has already taken more steps than Ontario has in terms of protecting interns and students under their workplace, health, and safety. But no, I haven't seen anything similar to OSHA in any other province, and in that respect, Ontario is a leader.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thanks very much.

Now Mr. Cullen, please.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

This is interesting just in terms of this growth, particularly in the unpaid internships.

Ms. Robinson, we're recognizing there's a difference between an integrated internship program that helps a young person get the training that moves them into a position, and Mr. Annan, in companies that feel an ethical or moral obligation—I'm not sure what obligation—towards paying interns.

What is our measurement of internships? Who measures internships in Canada, particularly unpaid internships?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Nobody.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Nobody? The federal government doesn't?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** No.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Individual provincial governments don't?

As they say, if you don't measure, you can't manage.

Is there a general agreement across our panel today that the leadership required to actually understand what's happening in the internship field would be an important one to cutting out abuse, certainly, of any employers that are using internships inappropriately? Would anyone disagree with that statement and put it in the negative?

Okay, there is agreement from the panel on this.

I want to talk about that potential for exploitation. So, we don't know how many unpaid internships are out there. We have, in some provinces, laws that would protect those unpaid interns from unreasonable work conditions, and a lack of health and safety benefits. But, the application of what few laws exist on the books is also somewhat scattered.

Can anyone comment on how we got to this situation? Why is it? Is it a supply and demand question, where young people are coming out of school so hungry for a job—or not a job, an internship, anything—that they're willing to put themselves in sometimes, as we call it, precarious work.

Mrs. Bollo-Kamara, could you comment on this?

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara:** I think it's as you mentioned. Students are going into more and more debt, and just the way the economy is, it seems as though for many of the jobs you need to take on an unpaid internship in order to gain any sort of footing.

At U of T we have some good examples of paid internship opportunities. For example, our engineering and computer science students tend to go into what's called PEY, a professional employment year. They're able to gain paid employment—it's an internship, but it's paid—and afterwards, they tend to find jobs in those fields. But in a number of other fields that are typically female-dominated, as Claire mentioned, such as journalism and the fashion industry, there aren't the same opportunities.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** To be clear on that last point, applying a gender lens to this question that we're facing, is it your suggestion that there is a potential further bias against young women graduates coming into the workplace within the fields they may be pursuing?

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara:** Yes, young women, but I think the issue of unpaid internships tends... I think it further marginalizes anyone who is of a lower income, because, as was mentioned, if you can't afford to take on unpaid employment, than you don't have the same opportunities to network.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Right. I want to pick up on this point with Mr. Champagne.

I'm not sure how you phrased it exactly, but you mentioned that there is the potential, and it may even be a reality right now, that between "those who have", leaving school with no debt because either they or their parents are of means...that there could be an exacerbation between the haves and have-nots of young Canadians coming out of school.

Am I summarizing some of what you had to say correctly? I don't want to get it wrong.

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** Some of that is the case, yes.

There are other reasons explaining why students may have graduated with no debt; they were able, for example, to get work opportunities or co-op opportunities as well.

But the impact and burden that debt has on graduates will help determine or impact their choice in employment after they graduate.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Does this not further exacerbate the waste of talent, particularly of middle-income or lower-income Canadians; that not only are they leaving school with higher debt rates than those from a higher class of income—

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** Yes, I would—

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Let me characterize it fully; allow me to finish.

—but that people are not only not able to access the unpaid internships that may lead to the career that they choose but are also forced into jobs that don't match the qualifications and talents that they have?

I'm just wondering about the lag and burden on our economy as a result.

•(1640)

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** I would say that the public—the taxpayer, the government—invests a lot in students and trains students, in many respects, for specific fields, but provides a comprehensive education as well. To put that investment into those students and have them not be able to use the skills they have gained is an inefficient use of dollars, and they are not living up to their potential and their ability to contribute to the economy.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** We had a comment yesterday about the Canada Builds fund from the government benches, about potentially directing some of that fund towards youth employment, from the building fund.

Would this be at all interesting for the jobs grant program that has been announced? This question is to Ms. Robinson. That program is not directed now towards young people. Would it be helpful to have a certain portion of the jobs grant fund directed towards young people?

**The Chair:** Give a brief response.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** I'd have to think about it more, but the Build Canada program can do a lot more than it is currently doing.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Van Kesteren, please.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Thank you all for appearing before us today.

Ms. Seaborn, I want to clarify. You mentioned that women were more likely to be exploited. You have no data; that's just your own take.

The reason I say that is that when we have our witnesses, we compile the information, and it obviously comes from data.

So you have no data. This is something that you just...

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** The data that I have is from the University of Victoria study that was conducted recently, which indicated that 72% of the unpaid interns were women. Several American studies have come to the same conclusion, as well as anecdotal evidence.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Could you provide the committee with that study?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** That's good. Excellent.

I'm a little confused. I see a trend developing here. On the one hand, we are trying to train young people for jobs. On the other hand, I'm hearing that there is horrible exploitation taking place.

Are there any statistics in that regard? Have any student groups done a study, or do you know of any studies that can determine just how many students are involved in a program that isn't agreed on?

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** I'm not sure what you mean by "isn't agreed on".

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Ms. Robinson has pretty well laid out, I think, that there are programs under which you know, going into the thing, that you're going to be putting some time in and are not going to be paid; that it's part of the training.

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** I would echo what Ms. Robinson said, that there are many portions of academic programs in which

working is a part of it. Those are arrangements created by the institution in partnership with the different employers. Some of it might be paid, some of it might not be paid, but you're still receiving consideration. You might be getting academic credit, for example. There's a finite amount of time, and you continue your education after it.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** So you have no issue with those types of arrangements.

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** Those aren't the areas in which the concerns or issues lie, for us.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Okay, but are you aware of any studies that could determine just how many students are involved in something other than that?

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** I'm not aware of such studies as they relate to students. In most cases they're recent graduates and are no longer students, so they wouldn't necessarily—

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Are you aware of any studies that would determine that?

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** No.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Ms. Seaborn? No?

Ms. Robinson, can you help me out?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** Let me tell you the parts that I think are the positive side of the story. Those companies that partner, let's say, with Mitacs—and Rob, you should probably address this—or that partner with colleges.... Yesterday, I think, the Council of Ontario Universities issued a report about work-integrated learning now becoming 60% of Ontario university programming.

Those are not the companies we're after. If you've actually become a company that wants to help design a curriculum, that wants to have field placements, that wants to hire the R and D graduate to bring in expertise on the research lab, you're not going to be one of the companies that are interested in the unpaid internship, because you actually see the value.

For our world, the really wonderful thing about work-integrated learning is that it has given, from the employer's perspective, a "try while you buy" kind of approach.

•(1645)

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** And I want to protect that, because I know how valuable it is. By the same token, I'm hearing that there's a huge problem. I think we all as parliamentarians want to ratify that too.

I remember that when I was in business, for instance, we had a period of time during which people needed to work extra hours. They passed the 44-hour mark, and we didn't pay them time and a half; they just agreed to stay an extra hour. Later on, the labour board....

So aren't there laws that protect somebody who goes into a workplace, or do we have to reinvent the wheel?

Does anybody...?



Mr. Annan.

**The Chair:** Give a brief response, please.

**Mr. Robert Annan:** I couldn't comment. All of our participants are students, and they're not governed by any sort of employment laws. We just don't have the expertise to comment.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Van Kesteren.

We'll go to Mr. Adler, please.

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Chair, and thank you all for being here today.

I want to clarify one thing, Ms. Seaborn. What is the difference between a volunteer, an intern, an employee, and a co-op student?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** First of all, under employment law what matters is what the person is doing, not what they're called.

**Mr. Mark Adler:** Okay.

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Secondly, "volunteer" is not defined anywhere; we don't define the term "volunteer" provincially, federally, or anywhere at all. There are some internal documents within the ministries through which they have an idea of what a volunteer means: that they're doing the work for altruistic purposes; that it's not to advance their own career.

But you're absolutely right that the line is murky between the idea of an intern and an employee, in some cases, whereas the terms student or co-op are defined, in large part. But an internship can be a co-op; a student can do an internship. Many of these definitions overlap. You can have a paid internship, in which case the intern is an employee.

**Mr. Mark Adler:** Right. Thanks.

We've been talking so much about the traditional kinds of jobs. Ms. Robinson, you acknowledged this earlier when you said that it's more the muscle jobs that we're focusing on here, on getting the training for those kinds of historical and traditional jobs that we've all become accustomed to, particularly in Ontario.

But what about the real quality of a country being defined through...? Yes, we need the people who are going to work in manufacturing, but we also need poets and musicians and people who are artists and all of that. Where do all those sorts of people, who want to train in those professions or who have talents and want to expand those talents, fit into this entire picture?

Anybody, just jump in. I don't necessarily mean Ms. Robinson, but anybody.

**Mr. Robert Annan:** I'll just quickly say that certainly at Mitacs we do a lot of work with, as you might expect, things like engineering and so on, but in fact about a quarter of our internships now are done with students from the social sciences and humanities, and oftentimes those skills are very transferable. You may have a psychologist doing work with a video game company, a historian doing work with a first nations group. You have different ways of applying those skills and it often is the case of learning the transferable or so-called professional skills to layer on top of the academic training.

**Mr. Mark Adler:** Okay.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** I guess I would just say that being a poet...this is the privilege of this kind of society, you can actually pursue that in Canada, and you can go to very fine universities to do that. If you want to be doing applied arts in, for example, Sheridan, in the ceramic arts, you can also do that. The issue is the application to the end profession and occupation.

**Mr. Mark Adler:** But you hear stories of people who typically want to be an actor starting off as a waiter or waitress and they do that until they get their break, so you can consider that person to be desperately underemployed too.

In first year at U of T in sociology we had to read *The Vertical Mosaic* by Porter, which talked about social stratification in Canada. Ms. Bollo-Kamara, do you believe that exists in Canada—that we're defined by our social class and it's hard to bust out of that?

• (1650)

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara:** Yes, absolutely; our education is becoming more and more unaffordable for students, which means that a lot of people either can't afford to go to university, or if they are able to, aren't able to have the same opportunities as other students, for example, being able to take on unpaid internships. So that does work to further stratify.

**Mr. Mark Adler:** What would be your solution then? We're here looking for solutions to youth unemployment, youth underemployment, chronic youth unemployment. What would you offer as a solution?

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara:** With respect to unpaid internships specifically?

**Mr. Mark Adler:** Not necessarily, just a solution to the youth unemployment dilemma that we face along with every other country in the OECD.

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara:** It's a big question.

One of the things that I talked about as one of my recommendations was actually gathering the data so we can figure out where we should be most concerned and how to address that.

Unpaid internships, I think, are a really big issue. The problem in Ontario, but also nationally, is that these aren't proactively being investigated. Ontario's legislation around unpaid internships isn't terrible, but the fact is a lot of students don't know what their rights are. We'd like to see the federal government work with the provincial governments to make sure that they are actually going out and looking at the prevalence of unpaid internships and actually doing something to address that.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Adler.

We'll go to Mr. Cash, please, again.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, it's a revelation and it's an encouraging sign to hear my friends on the other side are interested in fact-based and empirical research and data, and the development of poets.

I want to just ask the question again about how we got to this point where we're hearing about so many unpaid internships. We're not talking about just in the media space, we're talking about busboys and bus women. How did we get here? What are some of the reasons? What are some of the factors that got us to this point?

Ms. Seaborn, do you want to take that one?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** We've had internships in Canada for at least 100 years, in the medical field for example, but I think the time when we started to see the prevalence of unpaid internships was around the 2008 financial crisis. This is something that built in the United States and now has been growing in Canada and it was exacerbated by the lack of awareness about the laws that do exist.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Speaking of the laws that do exist, when you look at the labour program, the federal document states:

[c.] Training initiated on the volition of the employee or developmental voluntary training which prepares the employee for another job **does not** constitute hours of work.

Other than those issues, other than that very narrow definition, the rest is work.

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** If my memory serves me well, that guideline was adopted in 1992, so well before the internship issue came up, and now we're applying it to this internship issue, which is great because it does give a presumption that interns should be paid but it in no way covers all of the breadth of internship issues that have arisen since that time.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Then it sounds therefore like we could amend these rules very quickly and very simply. Do you agree with that?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** And then once that happens, we need to engage in some kind of an educational endeavour, I assume, to ensure that companies understand what the rules are. And I just want to ask again about the enforcement of rules. We've got something right here that also could be enforced at the federal level, no?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Yes, absolutely, but I think there's a lack of investigative officers dealing with this issue and also those officers don't have knowledge of things like that guideline or ways that the word "employee" can be interpreted. The perfect example of that is Jaina Patel's case, and I think we will see more clarity this summer after her hearing is heard against Bell Mobility. We're going to have a referee hearing where that adjudicator will determine whether Bell was required to pay its interns.

•(1655)

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Do you think Canadians would be surprised to hear that in many different ways students do not have workers' rights when they are actually working?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Yes, I think so, absolutely.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** And can you speak to that?

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara:** I would hope so. I think that if people are performing employment that is typically paid, then they should be paid for it, and also they should be covered under workers' rights legislation. And so I'd hope that Canadians would be supportive. I think that they would.

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Thank you. I'd just like to throw the rest of my time over to my colleague, Mr. Dubé.

**The Chair:** You have a full minute.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** All right. In that minute I just want to quickly get maybe a comment from our friend at CASA, because at the last meeting we heard from one of our colleagues on the other side that according to Stats Canada student loans are dropping. The reality is that they're up 44.1% since 1999 so that's pretty significant.

What is that doing to folks? We heard a couple of weeks ago about the anxiety. It's also up 24.4%, in case the government is wondering, since 2005. What's that doing for young people in the workplace?

**The Chair:** All questions and comments and answers go through the chair, please. Thank you.

Mr. Champagne, please respond.

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** Student loans are a big barrier for students when they do graduate. Perhaps the prevalence of student loans might not be as problematic if students were graduating into good well-paying jobs after. They would be able to manage that, but because of the prevalence of PINEs and the struggles they have to integrate into employment, student loans are further burdening them with regard to paying them back, and in terms of being able to make life decisions such as buying a house, whatever it is they choose to do.

So that is now lasting longer as they progress through their lives, the impact those debts are having.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm going to take the next round.

I want to start with you, Ms. Robinson. I very much agreed with much of your presentation. As you know, we have a very fine institution in Edmonton, NAIT, which trains more apprentices than any other in Canada I think. So it's one of the strongest national institutions.

In your presentation, you said that you saw a strong trend of students enrolling in your institutions who had already completed a university bachelor's degree and who sought targeted skills that would give them a competitive advantage in the marketplace. President Feltham has made the same point to me as well.

So why is that? Why do they do the university degree first and then come to your institutions later?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** There are at least two quick answers I will give you. One is because we don't have enough data on the different kinds of occupations and professions and the earning power of each profession, we are generally driving our high school graduates into university. Every parent in Canada will say, I want my kid to go to university. I need more parents to say, I want my kid to go to a polytechnic.

So there is that. Then, universities have no incentive to turn students away when other pressures on their funding mean that it's per bum in seat that they're getting the funding. But there are a number of students who are not suited to sitting in large classes, especially in the general arts and sciences. So one of the kinds of graduate certificate responses has been to the general arts graduate. I have a B.A. in sociology but now I need to be productive and I need to learn some technical skills and some soft skills. Colleges and polytechnics have the flexibility to respond, design programs that are quality assured by each province, with nine months to delivery to the workforce.

So I think there are two things and that's why I would bring it right back to the data. We need to know about youth pathways.

**The Chair:** I would say on the first point you made, though, in terms of the data, it would even be expanded in the sense of... At least when I was in high school, the option of going to a polytechnic was not even presented. In our last panel on Tuesday, that's what a lot of the people were saying, not to tell someone in high school where they should go, but actually make them aware of all of the options that are available.

You may start off, as my uncle did, as an X-ray technician because he got an AIT degree, but he ended up getting his doctorate and becoming a diabetes researcher. You just never know where your paths lead. You might as well be aware of all the options that are available. I think that's a problem as well.

Is that better, though, now in junior highs and high schools than it was?

• (1700)

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** A little bit, but let's remember the bias. The high school guidance counsellor actually is a teacher. You can only be a teacher if you've gone to university. Why would you want to promote something that you didn't do? That's one point.

The other thing where things get better is exactly in Alberta. NAIT and SAIT are able to say, we produced this many students, their first six months they were earning this, median earnings are this. We don't have to invent that data. That is why I think, bringing it back to the federal role...to challenge every public post-secondary institution to make its outcomes data known and available.

**The Chair:** I want to raise a second problem with you, and it may be more particular to my own province. But if you look at a company like Ledcor—one of their executives is on the board of NAIT in terms of working with the institution—they say there are certain programs in NAIT in which 100% of those graduates are taken up immediately by companies. In fact, the companies would take up 50% more graduates if they could. So you go back to NAIT and say, what is the issue here?

In terms of demand, you have a higher demand than you have supply. What's the issue? They will typically point to an issue of ongoing annual funding which is obviously mostly provincial. Is that the issue, or is there another?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** That's what I'm getting to with my second recommendation. We don't have adequate data. When the federal government transfers funding to the provinces to deliver those kinds of training programs, it's inside this glob of money called the Canada

social transfer. How much is really going to post-secondary, and within that, how much is going to university versus a polytechnic, versus a community college, and how much is going to the high-demand programs?

Some of the programs we're talking about, sir, are high-tech, so it's the investment in technology. You're not going to be able to produce 60 power engineers because the technology is so expensive and dangerous. So NAIT's problem has been that it doesn't have the capacity to train even when industry is demanding more.

**The Chair:** Now, in terms of the second one, then, you would have actually directed funds, but you would also ask for, I guess, better feedback and information back from the provinces to the federal government in terms of where the funds are currently being allocated.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** Absolutely. This is the accountability for the post-secondary spend.

**The Chair:** Thank you for clarifying that. I appreciate that.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** I will go to Mr. Brison now, please.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Van Kesteren was asking about better data around issues, or details around unpaid interns and the potential gender bias around unpaid internships. Would you agree that if Stats Canada were to track unpaid internships, the gender question could be addressed as part of that research?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Absolutely. I think Statistics Canada should be tracking whether the internship is paid or unpaid; what industry it's in; obviously, the gender of the intern; and also whether a job was offered at the end of the internship.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** That would help answer Mr. Van Kesteren's question.

I'm just trying to help.

On the question of labour market research, Ms. Robinson, we understand and the students understand the importance of what labour market trends are, and what they're likely to be, recognizing there are always changes. Is that the kind of work that more resources and a deeper mandate for Stats Canada may be able to address?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** Yes, indeed. I think I presented to the committee in the fall there are these two specific surveys.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Yes, those surveys—

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** I think the total cost is about \$18 million. You heard from ESDC, web portal, Working in Canada portal.... I don't think it's government's job to design portals. It's to make available longitudinal, credible data on whatever the issue is we're trying to track.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** You've referenced a couple of studies from Stats Canada.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** Yes.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** You mentioned guidance counsellors. My understanding is that within the public school system guidance counselling is not as resourced, or as available as it used to be, in any case, yet, at the same time, young people today are more connected to information and technology than ever before.

Is there the potential for a more robust effort by the federal government to get the information, but then to provide it broadly to young people where they live digitally, and as such, the guidance counsellor role does not become less important? They're getting information. They're getting it in real time. Does that make sense? If we did more of that research, that would help inform people, potentially, even more than the traditional guidance counselling role did, or is certainly doing today.

• (1705)

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** I had two takeaways from the U.K. trip again. My colleague Ken Doyle did the travelling, but he's briefed me enough.

In the U.K. they just recently redid their thinking on apprenticeship, and apprenticeship is slightly more widely understood in the U. K. They've come up with something called statutory duty for high school teachers who have to be able—and correct me if I'm wrong, Ken—to advise high school students on the various alternatives.

That's one thing. The other one is Doug Richard, who did this review of their skills training system, said, "Government, get out of the business of portals and design. Young people don't want to know about this. Gamify the data, open-source the data, put it out there, and let whoever's got a good way of managing this data make it accessible to young people."

**Hon. Scott Brison:** The second approach is more easily done by a federal government, given our constitutional realities, and that makes sense.

There are a lot of people with university degrees who then decide to pursue a polytechnic or college...yet they're already burdened with student debt. Should we create a much more flexible student loan and aid funding program, such that there can be funding throughout a person's career and life and educational stage? Because it may be at 35, it may be at 45 that people need to go back to school and upgrade their skills. Should we do an overhaul reflecting the realities of modern work?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** It depends on how big the pie can be. Of course, "woulda, shoulda, coulda", but, at the end of the day, we have tremendous constraints on any kind of public funding for education. It's what we can do within those constraints. I think one of the things that's really important is to say there should be academic mobility. I don't want to leave the committee with the impression that

one should only choose university or only choose a polytechnic. We also want these pathways.

We don't have a national credit transfer system in this country. That's the better one to work on.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Thank you.

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

Thank you, Mr. Brison.

I'll go to Mr. Saxton, please.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thanks, Chair.

I'll be sharing my time with Mr. Keddy as well.

Very quickly, there's been a lot of discussion about unpaid internships here today and the problems that may arise from them. I'm trying to go back to what Mr. Adler said, and that is, where's a solution? I've heard a few things talked about: better regulation, better enforcement. Is anybody talking about getting rid of unpaid internships?

I don't know, but, Claire, maybe you could just tell me quickly what a possible solution is, and then I'll ask Jonathan.

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Internship is a really broad term, and I in no way would recommend getting rid of it altogether. But I would recommend having no more illegal, unpaid internships and improving the law, which means internships can only be unpaid as part of an academic program. It's amending the Canada Labour Code to say, if the internship is part of an academic program it can be unpaid. If it's not part of an academic program that intern's entitled to minimum wage.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Where does that leave volunteerism?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Volunteers are not regulated under employment standards in any jurisdiction.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** What's the difference, then, between an unpaid intern and a volunteer?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** It's really up to the labour boards to determine. If there's a question as to whether the person was an employee or a volunteer, that will go to a labour board. They can make the conclusion as to whether that person was a true volunteer, they were doing it for altruistic purposes, or whether it was in fact a job.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Okay, thank you.

Jonathan, anything to add?

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** I would say it comes down to access to post-secondary education. Folks, whether they have a university degree, a college degree, a polytechnic...have higher employment outcomes afterwards, have higher lifetime earnings. Even touching on what Mr. Adler said with the stratification of societies, if we're able to ensure that everyone has access, everyone's able to go to school, that's how you're able to break those cycles of poverty and eliminate those barriers to folks being stuck in precarious or low-wage jobs for the rest of their lives.

●(1710)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Finally, here is a question for Ms. Bollo-Kamara. You can add to that last answer as well, but you mentioned earlier Canada's summer jobs program. My understanding is that we have increased it.

What did you mean by re-funding it? We increased it by 10% last year, I believe.

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara:** It's in the funding here somewhere.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** If you don't have it handy, since my time is almost up, perhaps you can look for it and I'll let Mr. Keddy ask the next question.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Do we have time?

**The Chair:** We're out of time. You also have another round. The Conservatives have another round.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** I'll grab the two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Take your time. I'll get back to you.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Mr. Groulx, you talked about a unique challenge amongst linguistic minorities, in particular the French linguistic minority, but you came at it from a different angle. I'd like some clarification.

Certainly there's been a huge impetus in non-French communities to have children learn French because it's advantageous to their career advancement and gives them other options. What I was hearing from you is a call to have French-only positions opened up. But the linguistic communities that have been successful, such as the Acadian community in New Brunswick and in Nova Scotia.... They took the federal government to court and won that court battle without any help from the French community in Quebec; they did it by themselves. That community has very much integrated into the labour and the job market, quite successfully, and has managed to maintain and enhance French at the same time.

Is there a lesson to be learned there?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sylvain Groulx:** There is quite a unique situation in New Brunswick because it is a bilingual province. In addition, the population base is large enough that people have access to jobs and can work in different fields in French. The same is true of some small communities in Nova Scotia, PEI and some regions in Ontario.

The situation is very different outside of these areas. We therefore have to look beyond them. It would be like comparing them to Quebec, which you cannot do because the realities are so different. In the same way, things can be very different for an anglophone working in Montreal and an anglophone living in Chicoutimi.

We should instead be focusing on supply and demand. In some provinces, people have been able to do that by themselves. However, we cannot expect the provinces to intervene in communities where francophones are a small minority. In these cases, the government's support is sought under the Official Languages Act.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

Thank you, Mr. Keddy.

There will be one more Conservative round, so we'll come back to Ms. Bollo-Kamara after we go to the NDP.

We'll go to Mr. Cullen, please, for five minutes.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Ms. Robinson, I wanted to pick up on something that's connected to the larger study we are doing. You referred to the glob of the Canada social transfer that goes across. It was some \$63 billion last year.

I want to ask a question about leadership and actual authority. Can the federal government show leadership to seek out the accountability and transparency you were talking about, concerning where the money goes once it hits the provinces?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** I believe it can. I have to say that I'm not in government, but having seen the historical attempts.... There were attempts to seek accountability for the health transfer, for example.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** So there are choices there—

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** Yes.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** —and essentially some politics between the feds and the provinces.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** I can only speak about our institutions. We would happily give the data.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Right.

So there are the two ends of it: you're talking about the institutions showing the data in terms of placements, success, salaries—

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** We have to provide this data to our provincial masters. You cannot get funding at NAIT or at Sheridan without showing how many students there are, their outcomes, and key performances.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** The same is not true for other post-secondary—

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** Why is that not available to the federal government?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** But connected back to that, the response is to ask how we fund different institutions and at what levels.

As a second question about federal leadership or the lack of it, you talked about a national credit transfer system. Do you believe that the power rests within the hands of the feds to coordinate some leadership with the provinces?

●(1715)

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** It's a shared issue. The Council of Ministers of Education is there. It has not actually gotten to this question. Part of the problem is that universities are still their own entities, and so currently it is per institution that you have to negotiate the credit transfer.

B.C. has a good system; so has Alberta. We're trying to build it in Ontario. It really has to be a shared table.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Being from B.C., you know that the west is best; we're quite confident in our positions.

Concerning the youth focus, Ms. Seaborn, we talked briefly earlier about where it comes from. Mr. Brison talked about why we are in this situation—the enforcement, the lack of rules and accountability, the unpaid internships, and the potential exploitation or actual exploitation going on for young people right now.

The government recently mused about giving the new build infrastructure program a potential focus towards youth unemployment, which is twice the national average, as we know.

As a question about the jobs grant as it has just now, after some turmoil, been negotiated between the feds and the provinces, would your group see it as having a youth focus, with a portion of the money that's going out on the jobs grant, on the training side, being specifically focused towards youth—because it is not focused that way right now—on our young people coming out of college, university, polytechnic institutes? Would that be a positive step, in the right direction?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** Yes, it would be very positive to have money focused towards youth and jobs. Essentially that would encourage more paid positions as opposed to unpaid, so we would support it.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** There's a recent study out talking about the impact of temporary foreign workers, a program that has expanded quite massively. Up to 300,000 people went to work today in Canada under that program.

To you first, and then to Ms. Robinson, let me ask whether there is any connection that we can make between the availability of those entry-level apprenticeship jobs, those jobs that are not unpaid internships but are the skills training within the work environment that is being supplanted.... It's quite permissive and easy—this is admitted by the government as well, it's not the opposition's point of view—to seek out temporary foreign workers, and it is quicker and cheaper and easier, particularly for a resource-sector company.

Does that put any pressure on the ability of young people to go that first step, to gain that access rather than go the route of unpaid internships?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** I think it certainly makes it more challenging for young people to find a paid entry-level position.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Ms. Robinson, do you have an opinion on this?

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** I don't see companies wanting temporary foreign workers at that pre-apprentice, first level of apprenticeship, and you mentioned apprenticeship. I think that the hunt, rather, has been for certified workers who can perhaps be paid less at times. I wouldn't want to mix up apprenticeship and temporary foreign workers. That's my first thing.

I want to use this moment to ask whether, when you're worried about how you define internships, you have looked at the United States Department of Labor's definition of internship.

Okay. And does it help?

**The Chair:** Mr. Cash, do you have a brief question?

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** I do have a brief question. I want to get back to one that I tried to ask earlier.

Ms. Seaborn, could you give our committee a sense of how we can both crack down on illegal internships while not throwing the baby out with the bathwater? We know that there are some that are positive and important for young workers.

Can you give us some advice on how we do that?

**Ms. Claire Seaborn:** I think those interpretation guidelines will help. I think this meeting is also a very good start. It's been really positive to have a lot of members of Parliament take an interest in the issue. I think our public debate on when internships are and aren't permissible, when they can be paid or unpaid, will really help.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I am going to Mr. Allen.

I just want to allow Ms. Bollo-Kamara to respond to Mr. Saxton's question first.

**Ms. Yolen Bollo-Kamara:** In 2006, \$55 million was cut from the Canada summer jobs program. At that point the program created somewhere between 45,000 and 55,000 summer job opportunities for students, whereas in more recent estimates it appears that it's about 35,000 to 40,000. With an increasing youth population, this means that there are fewer job opportunities for more students.

**The Chair:** Mr. Saxton.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** I appreciate that. I wanted to point out that the Canada summer jobs program funding was actually increased not in this budget but the year before, 2013, by about 10%, I think it was.

It was increased, so I wanted to know what time period you were talking about so that we're on the same page. It has gone up; I think you've answered my question. That's great.

● (1720)

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you. I'm going to Mr. Allen.

Unless it's a point of order, Mr. Brison?

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Is there another time for just a brief intervention?

**The Chair:** No, there's not.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** To find some information...?

**The Chair:** There are no "points of information", as you know.

Mr. Allen.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Jonathan, I can start with you.

My first question is with regard to incoming students who come in, and your association. Now, your association has talked about unhooking the transfer and having some accountability back on the education transfer to the provinces. What kinds of things are your student associations doing with your universities to make accountability in reporting the metrics of success at university? And what are you also doing to work with universities to prepare incoming students for maybe the things they should be looking at taking to prepare them?

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** Our association represents universities, graduate students, undergraduate students, as well as colleges and polytechnics. I guess from the incoming standpoint—and it will refer slightly back to the guidance counsellors and what we've heard from the Canada student loans program as well—there is information out there that helps educate or inform high school students in terms of what their options are in being able to obtain funding, different scholarships, whatever it is, to be able to access their post-secondary institution of choice. Being able to effectively communicate that through is important to help make sure they make the right decision, and what educational institution best fits their career outcomes.

I guess the other point is that when you have a post-secondary education system as a whole, there are jobs today that we can train and educate people for. There might be jobs in five or ten years from now and we don't know what they are right now, we don't know that they exist. Just like 10 years ago we didn't know many jobs that currently exist, would exist. So it's making sure that the education we have really provides a comprehensive, well-rounded skill set. Perhaps people want to become poets or actors, or maybe later on in their career they decide they want to become welders or carpenters or politicians, or whatever their career outcomes. Preparing them to be able to adapt to our changing economy and changing labour market is incredibly important.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** What I didn't hear in that answer is that you haven't really taken on with the university administration to help you make your case for an independent transfer to say that the reporting of the metrics....

**Mr. Jonathan Champagne:** We have in the past advocated for separating out the Canada social transfer, the part that goes toward post-secondary institutions, so that remains an important priority for our members.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Okay, but are you going to go and flog your universities since you represent 300,000 students? I would suggest you go and flog your universities to report back on those metrics of success. Because I understand, Ms. Robinson, that your institutions are reporting to your masters in terms of your success and the metrics of success.

**Ms. Nobina Robinson:** We are tethered to the provincial governments; universities are independent organizations.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** I'm just suggesting there's possibly a way to actually do that.

I guess my final question, then, is to Mr. Annan. You gave some pretty good targets. You're up to 10,000 students in graduate workshops now. What are the types of things that you and your paid internships...20% are hired into newly created positions...? How are you tracking this kind of stuff? What are your metrics for success? Where do you think that will grow to?

**Mr. Robert Annan:** In terms of growth, we still see ongoing demand both from company sponsors and students. This year we'll do about 3,000 internships. We have a goal of 10,000 over the next five to seven years. We have a couple of people in the organization whose primary responsibility is tracking these outcomes, which we do through surveys, longitudinal studies, as well as specific evaluation projects with the companies we work with. I'm with Nobina on this. I think the tracking outcome is absolutely essential especially when we're making decisions about tax dollars and where they're going to go. So we encourage more, and also the information-sharing that comes out of it.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Thank you.

I'm sorry I didn't leave Mr. Brison any time.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I want to thank our panel. It was a fascinating discussion here this afternoon.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Thank you for your presentations and for having answered our questions.

[*English*]

Colleagues, I just have a couple of housekeeping items.

First of all, it's to remind finance members of the committee that on April 1, on Tuesday, we have an informal meeting with a delegation from Nigeria.

Second, you have a proposed budget in front of you for the study we are doing currently, so I sincerely hope it passes. It's the proposed budget on the amount of \$38,000 for the study on youth employment.

Can I get somebody to move that?

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** So moved.

**The Chair:** All in favour? Opposed?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you again, colleagues.

The meeting is adjourned.







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