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Chair

Ms. Marilyn Gladu

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•(0845)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Before we start our meeting this morning I want to bring you some news and encouragement about our work here on committee.

Yesterday, Facebook announced that they have upgraded their functionality to address revenge porn issues. Now, if there's objectionable material that was put up without your consent, you have a button to notify them, and they will take the material down from their platform, from everyone's pages. They will also use face recognition software to take it off Instagram and any of the platforms they are in charge of.

Kevin Chan cited the work of our committee. How exciting, you are having an impact. What an encouragement this is as we continue with our study on economic security.

[Translation]

Today, we have with us Carole Gingras, Director of the Status of Women Service of the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec.

[English]

We also have Meg Gingrich from United Steelworkers, and Debora De Angelis from the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Canada.

Welcome, ladies. You each have seven minutes for your remarks.

[Translation]

Are you there, Ms. Gingras?

Ms. Carole Gingras (Director, Status of Women Service, Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec): Yes, I am here.

The Chair: Excellent. You can begin.

Ms. Carole Gingras: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the committee for giving us the opportunity to present our views this morning.

I would like to begin by saying a little bit about the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec.

The FTQ is the largest union federation in Quebec. We represent more than 600,000 members. We represent the largest number of

unionized women in Quebec: over 200,000. We also represent more than 125,000 members who work in federally regulated sectors.

To advance women's economic security, the FTQ advocates acting simultaneously on several fronts; I will address six of them.

The first point is recognition of the value of women's work. The federal government needs a proactive pay equity law now. We believe this would be one way of respecting women workers' right to a fair wage for the work they do. In Quebec, a law enacted in 1997 has significantly reduced the wage gap, which has gone from 16% in 1997 to 10% in 2015. I will not dwell on this point, but it is clearly one way to advance women's economic security.

The second point is an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. The FTQ fully supports that recommendation, which has also been made by the Canadian Labour Congress. We reiterate that, in an economic context where non-standard jobs and precarious employment are of growing importance, the federal government must set the tone by establishing a minimum wage of \$15 per hour. We would point out that a very large number of women in Canada work for minimum wage. There are also men working for minimum wage, but women are affected more: nearly 60% of people who work for minimum wage are women. These women's work needs to be better recognized.

Another effective way of advancing women's economic security is to balance work, family and school. This is an important lever for reducing inequality between men and women while producing positive effects on the economy. In Quebec, we have a family policy that includes child care, the Quebec parental insurance plan, which covers maternity and parental leave and work-family balance measures. I would like to address those elements one by one.

First, a complete public network of high-quality reduced-contribution educational child care services is important, to support women and keep them in employment. In Quebec, this measure has markedly improved women's labour market participation rate for two decades. In the initial years of the plan, between 1997 and 2004, we saw a significant 10% increase in the presence of women in the labour market.

This measure has also resulted in the creation of thousands of jobs in the child care industry. In its 2002-03 budget speech, Quebec's government indicated that subsidized child care had already led to the creation of 12,000 jobs, and, in 2014, 30,000 full-time jobs had been created in the industry.

According to Statistics Canada, 45,000 people work in child care in Quebec. Over 90% of workers in this occupation are women. This is therefore an important issue. The industry is far from perfect in Quebec, but this measure has had a positive impact on women's employment.

The other measure relates to maternity and parental leave, which has resulted in a significant increase in women's labour market participation rate in Quebec. This measure has been in place since 2006. The Quebec parental insurance plan allows 90% of new mothers in Quebec to receive parental benefits, versus 65% of Canadian women governed by employment insurance rules.

●(0850)

Recently, the Quebec government did an evaluation, and the economic and social impacts were extremely positive.

In addition, there is a widening gap between Quebec and the other Canadian provinces. For example, in a household with total income of \$30,000 or less, mothers are more likely to take paid leave in Quebec than in the other provinces. In 2013, 85% of low-income women in Quebec had access to paid maternity leave, as compared with 44% of Canadian women.

There is also the entire question of fathers. We can see the effects of this measure on fathers' participation when it comes to taking leave, whether paternity leave or parental leave. We see that the rate rose from 28% under the employment insurance plan in 2005 to 83% under the Quebec parental insurance plan in 2004. This is beneficial in terms of the role of parents and the division of labour in the home.

There is also the entire question of adapting workplaces. This is an important measure. In Quebec, we work with the Coalition pour la conciliation famille-travail-études. For several years, we have been calling for framework legislation on family-work-school balance. Its aim would be to require employers to initiate a labour-management process with employees and the unions that represent them to determine the needs relating to family-work-school balance in each workplace and to put measures in place, with a focus on equality.

Another element of this is the protective reassignment of pregnant or breastfeeding workers. In the last federal budget, we saw a measure referred to as protective withdrawal from work that covers up to 12 weeks before the due date rather than the eight weeks allowed at present. That does not trigger additional benefits for the claimant. In our opinion, this is not genuine protective withdrawal; it is disguised maternity leave. In Quebec, protective reassignment is not maternity leave and is not a social measure.

The Chair: Thank you.

Your time is up.

Ms. Carole Gingras: I have more to say, but you will be asking me questions.

The Chair: Yes, that is right.

[English]

We will continue with Meg Gingrich for seven minutes as well.

Ms. Meg Gingrich (Research Representative, National Office, United Steelworkers): Thank you.

I'd like to thank everybody for the opportunity to speak today. I'm here from the United Steelworkers union. We represent about 220,000 active members in Canada. USW members are men and women of every social, cultural, and ethnic background, and virtually every industry and job.

Over the years the steelworkers have developed courses for women to train other women in the union. We continue to work in politics and the community to advance the interests of all working women.

We've submitted 10 recommendations covering a wide range of issues. They cover some of the same issues that were just spoken about, but they cover federal pay equity legislation, universal child care, secure pensions, and address gender violence. These areas all have an impact on the economic security of women.

An unacceptable pay gap remains between men and women in every jurisdiction in Canada. At the federal level we believe it's absolutely essential to pass proactive pay equity legislation. We also know that legislation on its own doesn't necessarily eliminate the gap all of the way. We know that unions and collective bargaining have been important to reducing the wage gap. In terms of hourly wages, unionization diminishes the gap to close to 5%, from upwards of 15% to 20%, and then on an annual earnings basis, where the gap is much larger, unionization reduces it from over 30% to closer to 15%, which we recognize is still too high.

Beyond wages, collective bargaining and unionization provide women with a protected collective voice to negotiate improved pensions and benefits, as well as flexibility to prevent the negative economic consequences that arise out of the unpaid labour that women are often expected to do and do perform in the domestic sphere. There are OECD studies that say that women in Canada report upwards of four hours of unpaid work on a daily basis, and that's close to two hours more than men report.

We believe this is a contributing factor to women's economic inequality. It forces women to take on more part-time and insecure work that's often lower paid and with fewer workplace protections. For that reason, USW calls for an immediate increase to the federal minimum wage, to \$15 an hour, and we further call for the protection and expansion of union rights.

Close to 40% of women outside Quebec cannot access the current EI maternity and parental leave system, either because of a lack of eligible hours or because they simply cannot afford to take the leave based on their replacement rates.

USW recommends a federal leave system that's more equivalent to the Quebec program, so an eligibility based on \$2,000 of income during the eligibility period, a reduction of hours required to become eligible to 300, a longer eligibility period of up to five years. We also recommend raising income replacement for maternity and second parent leave to 70%. We're trying to get an equalization of care between parents, and we recommend a "use it or lose it" second parent leave, which would typically be the father, though not necessarily.

Then, there are wage replacements and improved flexibility for compassionate care leave, as women take on the majority of all types of family care.

Canada must go much further than it has to create a universal child care system as well, one that's accessible and affordable to all families. It must also be inclusive, regardless of ability; economic, cultural, or linguistic circumstances; location; or workforce status. It must also include a living wage for child care workers.

Canada must also ensure equality of access to decent pensions that do not simply perpetuate the wage gap until death. USW applauds the recent CPP expansion and recommends that all provisions of CPP, including child-rearing and disability dropout provisions are included to ensure that women receive the full economic benefit of the expanded CPP.

Old age security and the guaranteed income supplement eligibility must remain at 65, and there must be further work with the provinces to reduce social assistance and other clawbacks that arise from OAS and GIS payments.

The steelworkers also ask for increased federal-provincial collaboration on apprenticeship programs and placements aimed at equity-seeking groups. We also call on the federal government to assess infrastructure investments through a gender and equity lens.

● (0855)

We call on the government to invest in social infrastructure, such as affordable housing and public transportation, and we call for procurement provisions and policies that meet gender and equity standards with clear enforcement mechanisms and that do not simply continue occupational segregation.

Women cannot achieve true economic equality and security if we do not also address the particular inequalities faced by indigenous women, black and other women of colour, women with disabilities, and LGBTQ women. Women facing multiple inequalities experience even larger wage gaps and are more likely to be in precarious work.

Last but not least, Canada must protect and expand our public health care system by implementing a national pharmacare plan that is accessible, publicly funded, and publicly delivered.

Finally, access to and protection of reproductive health services is essential to women's economic freedom and security.

That concludes my remarks. I'll be happy to answer any questions you have. Thank you.

● (0900)

The Chair: Very good. Thanks so much.

We are now going to go to Debora De Angelis.

You have seven minutes.

Ms. Debora De Angelis (Regional Director, Ontario, United Food and Commercial Workers Union Canada): Thank you.

On behalf of the members of UFCW Canada, we welcome the opportunity to make recommendations to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women on how to improve women's economic security and ensure the equal participation of women in the Canadian economy.

UFCW Canada is this country's leading private sector union, representing more than 250,000 workers throughout Canada. We are the leading force for workers in the retail, food processing, and hospitality sectors. Over 50% of UFCW Canada's members are women, and 40% of our members are under the age of 30. Close to 10,000 UFCW Canada members work in federally regulated sectors. They work in the security sector—for example, for G4S; in transportation; at Canadian Forces bases; in credit unions; in the fisheries sector; in the milling sector, including flour, grain, and malt; in the mining sector; and in other federally regulated workplaces.

We applaud the federal government's commitment to take action to close the gender pay gap, including actions to reduce occupational segregation, reduce women's poverty, and eliminate sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

UFCW Canada recommends the following actions that the government can implement now to close the gender wage gap.

Make closing the gender wage gap a human rights priority.

We call for a proactive federal pay equity law modelled on the recommendations of the 2004 pay equity task force. UFCW joins other trade unions and pay equity advocates in calling for legislation this year.

We call on the federal government to legislate a living wage. Women dominate low-wage, precarious work. One in three women earn less than \$15 per hour compared to one in five men.

We call on the government to address the barriers in accessing leave such as maternity and parental leave. Research shows that Quebec's maternity and parental leave does a much better job at reaching low-income families than does the program available in the rest of Canada. There are several elements behind this, including a lower entrance requirement, additional "use it or lose it" weeks of leave for the non-birthing parent, and higher replacement rates for portions of the benefit period.

UFCW Canada members have many diverse social and economic concerns. The following additional recommendations are based on issues that are particularly relevant to them.

UFCW Canada recommends that legislation be amended to compel employers to provide reliable scheduling practices and better notice periods. The majority of retail workers are women working part-time hours. Employers do not always give guarantees as to how many hours a part-time employee will receive. This results in insufficient notice of shifts, last-minute changes to schedules, cancelled shifts right before they begin, and abbreviated shifts once the employee has arrived. This gives employers a large pool of individuals willing to work at a moment's notice, as this is the only way they can get their hours. Unreliable scheduling practices operate to the detriment of many workers, particularly part-time employees. These practices disproportionately affect women and worsen the wage gap.

UFCW Canada local 1006A and locals 175 and 633 recently negotiated scheduling languages with a large food retailer aimed at addressing the notice issue. The two-week rolling schedule provides each employee at least 10 days' notice of what their schedule will be for the week. With the exception of emergencies, without the consent of the affected employees the employer cannot be allowed to change the schedule once posted. Providing adequate notice is important for allowing employees to plan their lives in such a way as to maximize their work hours to their desired level.

We also call on the federal government to champion, support, and help fund a high-quality, universal child care system. UFCW Canada recently surveyed its young members, of which more than 60% are women, on what they would like to see from the federal government when it comes to addressing young worker issues. Access to high-quality, universal child care ranked as one of their top three responses in the survey.

Women are unable to access better-paying jobs or full-time jobs because of the lack of affordable and accessible child care in this country. Working mothers in Quebec have been able to benefit tremendously from the implementation of high-quality, universal child care, and this is widely accepted as a key component of reducing the gender wage gap.

● (0905)

We understand that negotiations towards a new framework for early learning and child care are under way. We recommend that the federal government, in co-operation with the provinces and territories, make adequate funding available to ensure that all Canadian families can access quality, affordable child care, and that this universal system be considered a priority to be achieved without undue delay.

On behalf of the membership of UFCW Canada, we urge the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women to consider all of the above to ensure that the economic security of women is improved in Canada. We look forward to working with all of you.

Thank you.

The Chair: Very good. Thanks so much.

Now we're going to begin our first round of questions. We are going to start with my colleague, Ms. Ludwig, for seven minutes.

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, all, for your presentations today.

We've done a very good job in Canada redirecting young people from the arts into business and some other fields. How would you recommend that we encourage our young people to relook at the arts fields but also women to be more involved in STEM—in science, technology, engineering, and math?

I'd like to ask both Meg and Debora.

Ms. Debora De Angelis: Recent research in the STEM industries continues to show that there is an incredible amount of discrimination towards women. Even though women graduate more than young men from universities in the STEM fields, they are still disproportionately not in those fields. There is a systemic discrimination that is going on right now, and I think that this needs to be addressed before young women are willing to enter those fields.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Thank you.

Meg, go ahead.

Ms. Meg Gingrich: I echo that. Women face a lot of discrimination. It goes deeper than that to the unexplained wage gap, which goes into stereotypes and assumptions about women's and men's abilities, and things like that. That starts from a very young age. Just getting girls in school interested in those fields.... I don't want to say that we want to just push everybody into STEM and business at the expense of other programs. We want to focus on job creation, rather than just on individual responsibility to get a particular type of education.

Those are my comments.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Great. Thank you.

We've heard other witnesses speak about the same wraparound support, for example in terms of affordable, quality, accessible child care. For women who want to be involved in, say, working in the steel industry, sometimes the hours aren't conducive to day care hours. Within your program, the women of steel program, is there anything you are doing to expand and look at accessible, affordable, quality child care that's outside of the nine-to-five realm?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: When we're looking at creating a universal child care program—and the provinces would create programs—ideally it would also provide child care for hours that are not just nine to five. That is one of the things that we recommend. I didn't say it explicitly in the report, but generally, when we are talking about a child care system that is accessible for everybody, that includes women who work all shifts. It goes beyond just steel. It's any industry—service industry, or whatever it may be. People don't work nine to five anymore.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: My next question is about the \$15-an-hour minimum wage. As a small business owner, we employ about 20 people in the province of New Brunswick. We pay higher than the minimum wage. However—and we've had this conversation within my family—with 20 people, it is a bit of a stretch sometimes to meet the payroll. It's not always easy.

If the minimum wage is increased to \$15 an hour, the consequence is that a number of people within our company and others would be looking at.... If they are making \$20 an hour, they'd like to see their wages increased by \$3. How would you explain to employers the economic return of an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour?

•(0910)

Ms. Meg Gingrich: There have been numerous studies on this that show the overall impact. There is often an argument from employer groups that they would have to lay people off and so on, but the increased demand that comes from people having more disposable income actually tends to offset any sort of increased demand on employers to pay their workers more. In an immediate sense, it might be difficult to adjust, but in the long term, having more disposable income, especially for people with lower incomes—they are the ones who spend that money, and they spend it on consumer goods—the ultimate economic benefit for everybody is positive in a net sense.

Ms. Debora De Angelis: In my role as director in Ontario, we receive calls daily, especially from women trying to improve their working conditions by wanting to join a union. A lot of those women are in precarious work but are working two or three jobs because minimum wage just isn't cutting it. An increase to minimum wage would help with the fact that they wouldn't have to work two or three jobs. They would be more available, not only to society but to their families as well.

I also agree with the comments that Meg has made.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: In terms of the \$15 per hour minimum wage, in eastern Canada that would be high. In western Canada it may not be enough.

How did you come to \$15 per hour?

Ms. Debora De Angelis: We use the \$15 statistic because it's available, but we are actually requesting a living wage. It would be

different in different places, but it's whatever the markers are that would make it comfortable for workers to be able to survive above poverty in their provinces.

Ms. Meg Gingrich: We also support a living wage. We also support the expansion of union organizing, union rights, and collective bargaining, workers determining and having the ability to bargain with their employers so that if \$15 is not enough they can actually have the ability to collectively bargain for higher wages.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: What about those who are not unionized in the private sector?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: We're always pushing for everybody to be unionized, but for those who aren't we call for a \$15 minimum wage. It's a baseline. It's not necessarily as high as we would like it to be, but it would immediately bring a lot of people out of poverty who are making \$4 less per hour now. That's a significant increase.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: I just want to say that I really do appreciate your comment about the adequate notification of shift changes. I think that's really important and I think it would make a big difference, not only for women but also for men, with that advance notice. Certainly, if we're looking at the issue of child care, it's very difficult to get child care at the last minute, so thank you for that.

The Chair: Very good.

We'll go now to my colleague, Ms. Vecchio, for seven minutes.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Thank you very much.

Meg, I want to speak to you. I also salute the 12 weeks prior, due to the fact that we are extending the date at which people can take maternity leave to 12 weeks prior to the child's birth.

As well, you talked about the reduction of the number of hours—up to 300 hours—and things of that sort. Have you actually looked at the way the program works? The fewer hours you have, the fewer weeks you have. What is the expectation you have, when someone has 300 hours, of how long they'll actually be receiving EI benefits?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: You would still be able to receive the EI benefits for a full year or whatever. It has now been extended to 18 months. Whatever the period is now, it would cause a reform in the EI-based system, so you would need fewer hours but still have access to the full leave.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: You're referring more specifically to special benefits. You're not looking at EI regular benefits. I know that has become an issue as well.

Ms. Meg Gingrich: Right.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: For EI regular benefits, are you still supportive of 910?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: We didn't address that in our submission. We do recommend general reforms to EI, so there would be a lower eligibility period for that as well, but this actually just addresses the special benefits.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Okay.

I have just another question, and anyone can answer this question.

When you're looking at the transparency of organizations, how they hire their workers, and a variety of different things, can you advise me what the current average wage is that one of the employees under your union would receive?

Do you not have that data available?

• (0915)

Ms. Meg Gingrich: We don't. We represent workers in so many different industries that I can't say off the top of my head.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Okay, let's look at the steelworkers specifically.

Debora, I know you have a much broader sense, but let's look at the labour side, the actual steelworkers. Do you not have data there?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: Just for the steel industry...?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Yes. Are they above the \$15?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: Yes, they would be, but actual steelworkers—people working in the steel industry—are not the majority of our membership by any means.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Okay.

Ms. Meg Gingrich: We have 15,000 workers in post-secondary education. We have 5,000 in health care.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Okay, but is the average wage usually greater than \$15 an hour?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: Yes, it is, usually.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Okay.

Ms. Meg Gingrich: But I will say that we have a number who are paid less than the \$15, particularly in the security sector.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Okay.

Actually, I just want to pass this over to Jamie. I know he has some awesome questions, and then we can come back to me if we have time.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Thank you. I appreciate that.

I would like to pick up on what Ms. Ludwig was talking about regarding the \$15 minimum wage. Again, why \$15? Based on what's happening in a number of industries such as the fast food industry... Look at McDonald's, IKEA, Home Depot, which are facing a number of challenges. Some of them here in Ontario are caused by government with high hydro prices. What's the logic in saying if we up the minimum wage to \$15, we will somehow allow those jobs to continue coming, because already automation is taking over those jobs, filled mostly by women? Once you get rid of those jobs, they're not coming back. How does that help?

Ms. Debora De Angelis: The assumption here is that if we increase the minimum wage then automatically we're going to lose

all these jobs. We've seen workplaces cut jobs back to bare bones. I really don't see how, if we're already at bare bones, we're going to lose all of these jobs because of an increase to minimum wage.

With an increase from minimum wage to a living wage, as we said before, the social and economic factors would be benefiting society as a whole. The money that those women, specifically, as you pointed out, would be making would go back into society. It would be going to buy their kids running shoes. That goes back into the local economy.

Yes, automation is coming. We see it as well, but I don't see a direct correlation between the minimum wage and the automation.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Do you not believe there's a huge difference between income and the value of labour?

Ms. Debora De Angelis: I'm glad you bring that up. The special committee on pay equity had a whole conversation around value. If you look at jobs that women are particularly in, you see it's because, for whatever reason, there's systemic discrimination and they've been considered undervalued. Those are primarily the people in our society for whom we're trying to lift up the minimum wage so that their work is given value.

I was a retail worker for six years. I was paid minimum wage. When I asked for a wage increase, they told me, "No. You got your wage increase when the government increased the minimum wage." I did managers' jobs, shift work, key holder work, and everything else, but I was paid minimum wage. To say that my value was minimum wage is unfair, because I brought way more to the company than my minimum wage job.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Sure.

The laws of supply and demand don't change just because you dictate the value of something. The true value of the wage is how the market will take it, with supply and demand. To raise the value of labour it's based, usually, on scarcity. When the economy is chugging along and people are hard to find, the value of the labour goes up.

What you're doing is putting a cap on what employers should do and pay. I believe everyone deserves a fair wage—don't get me wrong. I'm just saying you see what's happening now in the industry. Raising the minimum wage will put more of those people who we are all trying to help out of work, because it's happening right now.

Ms. Debora De Angelis: We've also seen situations in other places in the world, in Europe particularly, where they pay much higher than a minimum wage and their economies are still moving.

Did you want to comment?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: It's what I was saying before to Ms. Ludwig's question. There are numerous studies that show that's simply not true. This idea that the market just dictates everything as if there's no interference as it stands, or that the values that exist right now in people's wages are absent or separate from all sorts of other historical discrimination and assumptions about what types of work are more valuable than others, is simply untrue. That's why we call for things like pay equity legislation as well, and job evaluation where you can actually see that women, in particular, are not paid an equal wage for work of equal value.

I don't really agree with that fully. I think from an economic standpoint in places that have higher base wages or collectively bargained wages that are higher, in northern Europe and places like that, or even in the States where they've started implementing some of these \$15 minimum wages, you don't see these mass layoffs or this replacement with automation.

• (0920)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Yes, you do. Absolutely, you do.

Ms. Meg Gingrich: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

The Chair: I'm sorry. That's the end of your time.

I want to remind the committee members that we still have a witness on the phone, Carole Gingras. If you want to ask her a question, you'll have to direct it to her because she's having trouble jumping into the conversation.

We'll go now to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

Thanks to all three witnesses. We are going to get lots of material from your testimony already. I will try to ask three questions in my seven minutes.

The first, I think, is for the steelworkers more than anything. I want to say thank you for your union's work on leave provisions for victims of domestic violence. You've been able to negotiate that into a couple of contracts, and it's starting to affect provincial legislation—up to four weeks of paid leave for domestic violence, and up to five months of unpaid leave, although I understand that, on average, women are only taking something like three days to get their lives back in order. In any case, they don't need to lose their jobs because they have been victims of domestic violence at home.

We've been hearing at this panel that the cost to the Canadian economy is tremendous, \$12 billion. Given that, I was disappointed that the federal budget two weeks ago included spending only within the federal government—\$20 million a year, as opposed to the \$500 million to fund a domestic violence national action plan that NGOs were asking for.

Can you talk a little about how the government could take the leadership to make it a standard that women experiencing violence can take the time they need to get to safety and rebuild their lives?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: Manitoba, I believe, has passed legislation that provides for protected leave. The federal government could do something similar to create some sort of domestic violence leave that's protected for a certain number of days or even weeks, with some income replacement. I think it's as simple as passing legislation

—not that this is always easy—that provides leave for domestic violence similar to other types of leave that we have for compassionate care or whatever it may be.

We already have a system of leaves, which we argue needs to be improved, but it can fall within that and they can really take a leadership role on that. We've been pushing for it through collective bargaining, as you said, but we want it to be universal for all women and all victims of domestic violence, regardless of whether they are in a union.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Great. Thank you.

This is for any of the three witnesses. I want to talk a little about Bill C-27. This is a bill that is now in Parliament for debate, and it modifies pension benefits. We are concerned that it threatens the defined benefit plans that women in particular rely on. We've already heard witnesses at this committee say that they are concerned about Bill C-27. Jennifer Howard, from the Public Service Alliance of Canada, said, "If we have seen a decrease in poverty among senior women, good pensions is one of the biggest causes of it".

I see that the steelworkers at least, and maybe UFCW as well, has written to Minister Morneau asking for Bill C-27 to be withdrawn and for defined benefits to be protected.

I am interested to know whether you have received an answer to that letter. Also, can you talk a bit more about why eliminating defined benefits is so harmful for women, especially elderly women without other sources of income?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: Defined benefits are always, as we say, the gold standard of pension plans. They are extremely important for maintaining economic security. Historically, especially when they were excluded from paid labour at the same level as men, women were often not covered by pension plans of any type, including CPP or any type of workplace plan. OAS and GIS have been extremely instrumental in reducing seniors' poverty, particularly for single women.

The Canadian pension system is designed in a way that it has to be supplemented by private plans, whether that third pillar is through your private savings or a workplace plan. We see that through private savings people simply cannot put enough money away to save as much as they will need in retirement through RRSPs, TFSAs, or whatever mechanism it may be. People's wages are stagnating, debt is increasing, and people simply cannot save as much money as they're told they are supposed to.

Defined benefit plans are the best way to supplement the public pension system. They should not be at the expense of the public pension system or anything like that, but having that defined, reliable income in retirement that the employer is required to fund properly—they have solvency funding requirements and things like that, which ensure they're actually funding their pension plans—is something that we need to maintain to make sure that people have a reliable income in retirement and that it can't simply be changed at any time. The strict funding rules that go along with having defined benefit plans ensure, to some extent at least, that those will actually be funded, and they are funded collectively in a way that private plans are not.

• (0925)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thanks.

Is there anything that other witnesses want to add on that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Carole Gingras: May I speak, please?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Carole Gingras: Thank you.

There is a problem. Every time I want to speak, I am not able to do so, because I do not have access to the mic. So I am quite unhappy.

Regarding defined benefits, I support what was just said. On the question of pension plans, I want to point out that women, overall, are much poorer than men, because they have lower wages and they have less capacity to save money than men. There are still too few private pension plans. More women than men retire before age 65 because of family obligations, the jobs they hold, and their difficult working conditions. In addition, their life expectancy is much longer. As a result, they need a public pension plan, to be able to count on an acceptable income.

Public pension plans are the only ones that, at least partially, take into account women's unpaid work in their families, whether with children or family members who have lost autonomy or are sick, and so they help to advance equality between men and women. In our opinion, it is important that the public plans stay in place and that they be enhanced. When it comes to the entire question of defined benefits, it is important to preserve them, because, otherwise, women will be increasingly impoverished. They have so much trouble saving money, given the wages they earn. They will be doubly penalized. That is what I wanted to say.

Since I have the floor, I want to tell you that I would have had a lot of things to say on the subject of work schedules and work-family balance. In Quebec, we have done studies with the universities and workplaces on this subject, and I would have liked to talk to you more about that. I would also have liked to talk to you about linkages with child care services, but I was unable to speak. The system is not working. That is what I wanted to say.

[*English*]

The Chair: Very good. We'll make sure that we address this and try to include you in each response.

We're going now to my colleague Ms. Damoff, for seven minutes

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): No.

The Chair: Oh, I'm sorry.

It's Ms. Nassif.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank our witnesses for their presentations.

As the only female member from Quebec who sits on this committee, I would like to address Ms. Gingras, who has expressed her interest in making a few remarks on this subject.

Your union was part of the union delegation that participated in the session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held in March 2017. In fact, I had the pleasure of being part of that delegation, as were many of my colleagues here today. We also had the privilege of having the minister, Ms. Thériault, with us. The delegation asked the government to take measures on several issues, including access to suitable jobs for all women, to workplaces organized around families, to child care services, and to care for the elderly.

Ms. Gingras, can you describe for us what you mean by suitable jobs for all women? In your opinion, what is a workplace organized around families, child care and care for the elderly?

Ms. Carole Gingras: I do not know whether I understand your second question properly. I am going to begin by answering the first one about suitable jobs.

Having a suitable job means having a job that offers acceptable working conditions and an acceptable wage. Just now, we were talking about the connections with the minimum wage. On that point, there are a great many working women and men who are still earning minimum wage.

This gives me the chance to say that in Quebec, we have experience with workplaces that, in 2016 and 2017, tried to negotiate, with unions, working conditions and wages above \$15 an hour, in retirement homes, in particular. We were able to do that. Employers have shown themselves to be sensitive to that. There are beneficial effects because the employees are much more satisfied. It also allows for better relationships to be established when it comes to labour relations and employee retention.

Coming back to the subject of suitable jobs, we are talking about good working conditions. We are talking about working conditions that enable women to be comfortable in the work they do, whether in terms of schedules or work-family balance. We also have to enable these women to have access to leave not only when a child is born, but also when parents or family members are sick. We have to make a connection with labour standards, with the Quebec parental insurance plan, and with child care services. I talked about that a little. As I was saying earlier, that is important, because having good child care services that are educational and accessible enables women to keep working and to have access to employment. There is also the entire question of pension plans. That is connected with acceptable work too. Having an acceptable job includes being able to count on an acceptable pension when you get on in years. That is important, and it is also important to provide women with adequate incomes. I could mention several other elements.

Could you remind me of the second question, please?

• (0930)

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Yes.

In your experience, would access to workplaces that are organized around the family increase women's economic security. If so, why?

Ms. Carole Gingras: That is clear. It ties in with what I was just saying.

Good services enable women to go to work with peace of mind, because the children are being cared for. They are not just being placed in day care. The service is of high quality, and there are trained specialized educators working there. Once those services are offered, it enables women to go to work with their minds at rest, to count on safe services, and have the means to obtain them. We are talking about universal access: it means that women, and also men, can count on these services and have the means to do that.

I said this in my presentation. The evidence can be seen in Quebec. From the time when educational child care services were created, women's labour market participation rate rose significantly, particularly for women with young children. When we compare the situation with the situation elsewhere in Canada, there is a gap between the two, and the situation is much better in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. There are studies that prove this.

It is also very beneficial for the children. The positive effects of these services have been documented; for example, they give children from disadvantaged backgrounds equal access. That enables them to socialize and to prepare for kindergarten, and so on. There is no doubt about this: these are important services. I know that the Quebec example is cited in Canadian discussions, and there is good reason for that. The system in Quebec has proven itself, and that matters.

Everything is not perfect in Quebec. Budget cuts have done harm in recent years. Early childhood centres have suffered cuts. Child care services have closed their doors. There is also the entire question of the subsidies that have to be allocated so the network can be expanded, because different services are offered. There are subsidized services and other services that are not subsidized. Nonetheless, we have a system that is worthwhile and beneficial. There is no doubt about that.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: I think you spoke earlier about the fact that unionization influences women's economic prosperity. Could you explain how it does that?

Ms. Carole Gingras: Once women workers unionize, they have access to support from a union to obtain services, to represent them, to talk to their employer, and to make sure that provisions are negotiated that go beyond what the laws say, whether in terms of hours of work, breaks, vacation, overtime, wages, or pension plans. It enables them to do that, there is no doubt about it.

The statistics tell the story. Once working women unionize, it makes a significant difference, particularly regarding the wage gap between men and women. Their wages and benefits are improved.

• (0935)

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Okay. Now we'll go to my colleague Ms. Vecchio for five minutes.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I'm going to share some of my questions with Jamie, but I want to start off with Carole.

You're talking about women and day care. I want to look at it in the big scope and the big picture of families and day care. We have to recognize one of the things we need, and even this budget showed extended parental leave, though we know the uptake for parental leave is only about 2% of men. What can we do so that we have more of a family balance, rather than it all being on the mother's shoulders?

I think we heard a lot about what women need, but men also need support. I recognize, working full time here, that I do have a spouse who takes on all the family responsibilities. What are we doing to make sure that we empower men as part of the family unit, not just as breadwinners?

[Translation]

Ms. Carole Gingras: Yes. I would say that, in Quebec, the creation of paternity leave has made a difference when it comes to the parental insurance plan.

The paternity leave provisions mean that a father is entitled to take five or three weeks at home, depending on the individual's base plan. If he does not do that, those weeks are not transferable. As a result, we have seen fathers using that leave. That's related to the figure I was telling you about. Significant growth has been noted among fathers. When the parental insurance plan came under the federal employment insurance plan, 26% of Quebec fathers used parental leave; under the present Quebec plan, it is 83%.

We have seen a difference. It is not just that they are taking leave. We are also seeing models emerging, fathers caring for children. Because parental leave, after paternity leave, can be split between the men and the women, we are seeing a difference there, too. More and more fathers are taking a portion of the parental leave and making a difference by being there with their children.

[English]

The Chair: That's fine. Thank you.

We're going to go to a question from Mr. Schmale.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Thank you very much, Chair.

I want to continue with the comment concerning the \$15 minimum wage—I believe it was made during the second round of questioning—about a decent salary. It goes back to my earlier point about the value of labour.

For those retailers on the main street who are struggling to get by—the small businesses with maybe two or three employees, maybe more but sometimes fewer—what are we saying to those businesses, which are struggling to get by, by saying that we should up the minimum wage? For the products they sell, there's only a certain margin in which they can price their products, or else they don't sell and then they go out of business—or they lay off and then go out of business.

What do we say to them?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: I've more or less already answered this question. Ms. Ludwig asked it: essentially, what do you say to small business owners?

We go back to saying that, as it stands right now, wages stagnate, people are taking on more debt, people don't have disposable income in the way they need to have it to actually sustain an economy properly. There are all sorts of economic problems that arise out of low wages, beyond the idea that the value of labour is purely determined by the market. I guess indigenous women just deserve to make significantly less than white men, and it's just the market dictating that. No, I'm sorry, that's not true. There are all sorts of other factors that go into it.

I would say to small business owners who are worried that we have to look at a larger economic picture, which might not always allay all their fears, and I would say that you get more economic demand when people make more money, when they have higher wages. Then they can buy more stuff, basically.

• (0940)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: But the price goes up.

Ms. Meg Gingrich: Prices don't actually increase at the same—

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Yes. They do.

Ms. Meg Gingrich: They might increase a little bit, but again, there have been numerous economic studies on this that show—

Mr. Jamie Schmale: You then have less purchasing power, because the price goes up.

Ms. Meg Gingrich: Yes, but if you look at places that have actually raised minimum wage or have higher wages, prices might be a little bit higher, but the actual net benefits are still greater to increasing the minimum wage than they are....

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Sure.

The Chair: All right. Now we'll go to—

Ms. Debora De Angelis: May I answer? I'm sorry, Chair.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: I had a follow-up.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Schmale, your time was up.

Yes, Ms. De Angelis.

Ms. Debora De Angelis: Concerning the myth that if you increase the minimum wage, prices go up, let me ask you a question.

We have two employers. We have a high-end grocery employer and a lower-end grocery employer. They're both unionized. If you go into the lower-end grocery employer, does the ketchup cost more or less than at the higher-end grocery employer?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Can I answer that, Chair?

The Chair: Actually, no, you are out of time.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: The witness asked me a question. I would love to answer it, Chair.

The Chair: We're going to Anita Vandenbeld for five minutes.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Can a Liberal give me a question?

Anita, come on. Can I have some of your time, please?

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Pam Damoff: I'm actually taking her time.

Women living with disabilities have an unemployment rate of about 75%. It's just horrible that women living with disabilities aren't able to find employment—women and men. I'm wondering—and I'm thinking in particular of you, Ms. De Angelis, because I know you represent restaurant and hospitality, where a number of people living with developmental disabilities are working and are being paid to work in that field—what your union is doing to encourage more employers to hire.

Is there anything the federal government can do to help you with this? We know that wage grants don't work, because when those are gone the jobs tend to disappear, but is there anything the federal government could do to help?

It's certainly of economic benefit to the employer, because these employees stay longer, they're more productive, their retention rate is high. Is there anything that you're doing, and could we help you with it?

Ms. Debora De Angelis: We have lots of members with different abilities. With the collective bargaining agreement comes the protection against discrimination, and it is an added benefit that workers can go to the union in the event that they are having issues with their hours.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Those are the ones who are already employed, and I applaud you for that, but I'm thinking more of employing more people in those positions. Is there anything we can do to help with that?

Ms. Debora De Angelis: I can't think of anything off the top of my head.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Do any of the other witnesses have anything to add on that?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: For employing people with disabilities, we had a whole separate submission on increasing accessibility for people with disabilities. But I think there are those programs you can set up working with employers in hiring and things like that and identifying people working with community groups to see if there's.... It's the same thing we recommend with all sorts of other inequities in redressing them: the employer working with whoever to take a proactive approach to go out and actually seek people who they normally might just overlook and assume they couldn't do a particular job when that's not actually the case.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Okay. We've talked a lot about day care and paternity leave, not just with you but with other witnesses. I wonder if we could talk a little bit more about compassionate care, because quite often it falls on the woman to take time off work to care for parents or a spouse or a child with autism. In a range of issues at home, compassionate care tends to be taken by women. What can the federal government do in terms of compassionate care specifically to make it easier, not just for the woman to take the leave, but also to reintegrate back into work afterwards?

Ms. Meg Gingrich: I think there are a couple of things on that. There's having protected leave with some wage supplements so women don't economically suffer when they are the ones taking on the brunt of this.

But I think we also need to look beyond just the individual responsibility and make sure we have publicly funded, accessible programs of care and that we're not just shifting all this care into the community or into the home sphere because, again, that often means women end up taking on more. Even if you hire home care or workers or something like that to assist, it's often the lowest wage employees in those sectors. It's this two-prong thing where you want to have the protected leave with some sort of wage replacements but also to make sure that it's not at the expense of a high-quality, publicly accessible health care system and other types of care that are publicly funded and accessible.

• (0945)

Ms. Debora De Angelis: For all these leaves there has to be a guarantee that the workers' jobs are protected when they go back, because just to have a leave.... We've received calls from workers who left and then they came back and were told, "This is your job now" and they were saying, "That's not the job I had before". We're talking about non-unionized workers, so it's too bad, right?

There has to be a protection especially for non-unionized workers that, when they leave, they come back and their job has been protected with any wage increases that they would have missed. Women largely leave to do these jobs. Sometimes they have to take leaves of absence. I know my mother had to take care of my grandmother, and when she went back to her job she just picked up where she left off and there was nothing for her in the wage increase that everybody else got. She was told, "Okay, go do what you have to do; maybe a job will be here when you get back". There has to be a guarantee for these leaves.

The Chair: Very good.

That's the end of our time today.

Ms. Pam Damoff: That was only five minutes; I thought I had seven.

The Chair: No, it's only five.

Thanks to all of our witnesses for your excellent testimony. If you've thought of something that you would like to send to the committee, I invite you to send it to our clerk and she will distribute it.

Now, we're going to suspend and quickly clear the room so we can start our second panel.

• (0945)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (0945)

The Chair: We're back for our second panel on our study of the economic status of women in Canada. Could I have the committee members resume their seats?

We are pleased today to have, from the Company of Women, Anne Day who is the founder and president, and by video conference we also have Linda Davis, who is the first vice-president for the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional women.

Welcome, ladies. We're going to begin with comments from Anne for seven minutes. Then we'll go on to Linda.

• (0950)

Ms. Anne Day (Founder and President, Company of Women): Thank you very much for inviting me. It's a big honour to be here.

You've probably heard lots of stats and heard about lots of research, so I'm not going to deal with those. It's not my background. I've been working in the trenches for about the last 38 years, mainly with women who have different issues. I've been working with parents and child care providers. I've worked with marginalized women who have been in a shelter or who have gone to a women's centre, and I've worked with teen moms. Most recently I've been working with women entrepreneurs. I have to say, that's the most positive piece of what I've been doing.

What I'd like to do is walk through some of the things I've observed over the years. Unfortunately, things haven't changed much.

I have to start with affordable child care. I'm sure you've been hearing this all the time, but really, if women cannot afford to have child care, they can't work, and there goes their social and economic security.

I was talking to someone from Toronto. I think it is harder in bigger cities. It's really a bit like the housing market, in that she put her name down as soon as she was pregnant to get a child care spot. When she got one, it wasn't anywhere near where she was working or where she was living. She had to put down her first and last month's deposit, which is just like the case with accommodation. When she got there she found that her little guy couldn't tolerate being with a lot of people and was getting sick all the time, so she had to pull him out.

Then she thought she'd go the nanny route. Nannies charge \$50 an hour. Here she was with a middle management position, and she said, "I couldn't afford it; I did the math and I could not afford to work." We are losing out on so many women being part of the labour market because they can't afford "affordable child care".

This is someone with one child. If you have more than one child, it's even worse. When you start doing the math, paying for each child is just impossible. If you work shift work or you work different times or work part time, it is extremely difficult.

I really think this is one of the major issues that the federal government has to look at: having affordable child care. I'm not saying free—actually, free doesn't work; it's just taken advantage of. I certainly think that if there are more subsidized spots available, and some creativity.... There's a lot happening in Scandinavia.

For example, there is someone who runs Kids and Company, which is a privately owned business. It might be good to start looking at a private partnership with somebody like that, because she offers emergency child care so if your child is sick you can take your child there. She's in the workplace. I really encourage you to talk to Victoria Sopik, who owns that business, to see whether there's some way you could learn from it and also build something that would make it easier for women to work.

The other challenge is that, as we all know, most of the time there needs to be two people working in a family to make ends meet. Unfortunately, what parents sometimes do is go the informal child care route; they go with the unlicensed child care providers.

There's been a lot in the news this week about the horrific case in Vaughan in which a child died. There were 35 children in that home and 12 dogs. That really cannot be tolerated. I think that as a country we have to look at what standards we're setting for informal child care. If they're licensed, they're part of a federal or a provincial government ruling, but perhaps we need to up the standards and also set in place some regulations to make sure that something like that never happens again.

I'm going to move on to marginalized women. I used to be the president of Halton Women's Place. When I was there we found that half the women never made it to the shelter. We were concerned, because we knew there was abuse happening. We thus started up a women's centre located in a mall on the second floor. It was really easy, because the women could say they were going shopping and then come upstairs to visit with us.

Much of what we did was support them in what they were going through and help build their self-esteem, but it became very clear to me that while that's fine, they needed to find a job. They needed to be able to find work so that they could put their best foot forward and move forward with their lives and for their children.

● (0955)

We actually started doing job search skills and we started to work on how they could find a job. For some of them they didn't even know what they wanted to do. It was, you know, what do you want to be when you grow up? They hadn't really thought about what their skill sets were. I would really like to see more programs like that, more programs where we're helping women at the grassroots level move forward with their lives.

The other group of people who I have worked with were teen moms. I had 65 students who we were helping to get through high school—and they did. But one thing we did was make the curriculum practical. For example, they did their income tax as part of their math program. I know there are moves to make more practical life skills part of the high school curriculum, and I really think that is a great idea.

The Chair: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Ms. Anne Day: Oh, I haven't even got to women entrepreneurs. That was quick. In that case I'm moving right along.

I'm glad that the government has chosen to fund Futurpreneur. I have a suggestion: broaden it to women over 40, or people over 40. We are seeing more and more women and men, I guess, starting businesses, and there are no programs for them. They are only for those who are under 39.

My other suggestion, cutting to the quick, is that every province has a women's enterprise centre funded by the federal government, except Ontario. We are one of the biggest business hubs and it seems somewhat odd that there isn't a women's enterprise centre that is funded here in Ontario.

There are different groups of us working independently and it would be really good if you brought us all together.

Thank you.

The Chair: Wonderful.

We'll now go to Linda for seven minutes.

Ms. Linda Davis (First Vice-President, Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women): Thank you. Good morning.

In the interests of time and with all protocol observed, I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to address the topic of women's economic empowerment.

I have been a member of the business and professional women's organization for more than 20 years. I served as the provincial president for Ontario from 2012 to 2014, and as mentioned, I am currently the first vice-president for BPW Canada. From April 2015 to May 2016, I was appointed by an order in council to the Ontario minister of labour's steering committee tasked with studying the causes of and recommending ways to close Ontario's gender wage gap. I recently attended the CSW 61 meeting at the UN and was a delegate for BPW International. It's these experiences that I draw on today for my comments.

I will start by saying that the imbalance of power between men and women is not a women's issue. This is a societal issue based in human rights. Although those of us who have been working in this for some time understand that, the general public does not, and that was borne out in the consultation process.

Most young women don't know that there's inequality in the workplace and usually don't come to that realization until mid-career. We desperately need a national awareness campaign before any real change can happen. We must ensure that, during the awareness process, we do not create a women versus men attitude, and that again was borne out in the consultation process.

This issue is a societal issue, as already noted, and it will take men and women working together to eliminate the bias and the inequality.

Men have had privilege in our society since the beginning of recorded time. We cannot risk dividing our society and creating a Donald Trump phenomenon here in Canada. The intent must be clear that men are asked to share the responsibilities of family, to create welcoming work environments, and to open themselves to change.

Women also must bear the burden of sharing their domain, and work with men to create this change. Employers must change their attitudes to accept men as parents and allow the flexibility for them to meet their family responsibilities. In the past, that meant bringing home a good paycheque. Today, that means sharing the care, sharing the work, sharing the decision-making, and sharing the rewards.

Once the public is aware of the issue, the causes, and the solutions, legislative changes will be more easily adopted and implemented.

Key areas for change are, of course, child care, which has been already mentioned, employment insurance leaves, education, and pay equity legislation, and that's just to name a few.

We need a high-quality affordable, accessible, publicly funded, and geared-to-income child care system with sufficient spaces to meet the needs of Canadians. We also need a better system for elder care. However, assistance to the family care alone will not solve the problem. This must be accompanied with changes to the employment insurance system.

We need a "use it or lose it" father care leave to encourage men to share the care. Both parents must have access to some kind of top-up. Studies show that men are more likely to take those leaves when they have sufficient benefits. The top-up could be an optional opt-in program to deduct higher premiums, or a separate government-supported savings plan like the educational savings plan.

Flexible EI leave plans must also allow both parents to move in and out of the workplace for predetermined periods of time to accommodate their career activities and their advancements while offering continuous care to the child. This flexible leave should continue beyond the parental leave to accommodate short time-off leaves for sick children so parents can be compensated if they're even only off for a day, and that's if they don't have paid sick days from work.

Our educational system—and I know this is not necessarily specifically to the federal government—must strive for a bias-free curriculum and delivery, and we heard information at the consultations that delivery is not bias-free.

• (1000)

I believe that gender balance in the classroom plays a big role and must be involved in all aspects of organized classroom activities,

whether it's during playtime or whether it's shared experience. As boys and girls learn from each other and share their knowledge and their experience, we will see less segregation into stereotypical roles as they progress through school.

Pay equity legislation should include gender-based analysis of workplaces and reporting of that analysis. Workplace education, transparency of wages, reporting of workplace data, policies, and strategies to government related to gender equality are a must. Some of the reporting could be incorporated into employment tax data already gathered by Revenue Canada.

Data is another topic that requires that we ensure we are collecting data so we can show progress. We have found that many employment programs and different programs that were happening were actually gathering data, but the data was not being gathered by gender. When we asked why they didn't have that data by gender, they said they'd never been asked for it. Simply rearranging the programs that are happening, asking for data to be gathered by gender, by race, and by religion, could very much help the lack of data we have in this situation.

Thank you for the opportunity. I have many more ideas, but of course, in seven minutes it's hard to get it all in.

The Chair: Very good. Thank you very much.

Now we'll go into our round of questioning, beginning with my friend Ms. Damoff for seven minutes.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you very much.

Before I start with questions, Anne, I want to congratulate you on everything you've done. I represent Oakville North—Burlington and I've been in Oakville since 1992. I was recently at the Women's Centre. I think it's still in the same location as it has been since day one.

Ms. Anne Day: Yes. It's still in the mall.

Ms. Pam Damoff: My first question has to do with the Women's Centre, because it still operates without any funding from any level of government. Certainly you mentioned some of the programs that are being offered, in particular those that have to do with job skills training and that type of thing. We don't provide operational funding, but do you see a role for the federal government in being able to help organizations such as the Women's Centre to be able to provide those types of programs?

Ms. Anne Day: I wonder if there's a grant that can be attached to someone who is on EI who is going through processes to improve her skills, such as a subsidy that would go to the Women's Centre to help them with the work they do. They used to be funded by the Ontario women's directorate. I know that because I used to work there. I think they have curtailed a lot of the funding they're giving to women's centres across the province, too.

• (1005)

Ms. Pam Damoff: There does seem to be a gap—

Ms. Anne Day: It is a gap.

Ms. Pam Damoff: —in programs that are offered.

Ms. Anne Day: The regional government also provides some of those programs, but there is some strength in bringing together women who are in the same situation. It builds a community and they realize they're not alone in their situation.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Absolutely.

You also do a lot of work around women who lack the confidence in their business to move it forward. We've heard that, and I've heard it myself, that a lot of times it's women who are afraid to take those risks to grow their businesses. They reach a certain point and they don't go further.

You've done work around that. Is there anything we can do to encourage women to gain more confidence in what they're doing in their business so they can grow it, so they can go in for a bank loan and present in a way that gets the bank manager to actually offer that loan?

Ms. Anne Day: That is the sort of work that women's enterprise centres do in the other provinces. They support women as they go through. They run programs that are funded by the federal government. They will also help them access loans and they'll start a peer lending circle.

PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise, in Thunder Bay, does that right now. I think supporting those sorts of ventures is the way to go.

I sat on the task force for small business looking at why women's businesses didn't grow. We did it across Canada and we came up with three reasons. One reason was lack of financial literacy. The second reason was not using IT the best they could to move their businesses forward. The third reason was lack of confidence. That was huge. Lack of confidence is really big. I've spent the last three years working on a book called *Good Enough*, which looks at why women don't feel good enough, and the confidence level is really there. They question everything. They're full of self-doubt. Building programs and services that work on the inner person before they can move forward with their business is helpful, as well as financial skills.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you.

I'm going to share my time with Ms. Ludwig.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Thank you.

Thank you both for your presentations this morning.

My questions are regarding women or diversity on boards. Does either one of you have experience getting more women involved at the board level, and also in the election process?

Ms. Anne Day: I haven't. I've sat on several non-profit boards, but I haven't been involved in that process. What I know is that you need to have at least three women on a board to make a difference. If it's tokenism, it's not really going to work as well.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Okay.

Ms. Linda Davis: From my standpoint, it would just be from the studies and things that we know. We don't have enough women in the pipeline. To get women involved takes programs and mentoring. There has to be an effort. It can't just happen. We can't just dream it and make it happen.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Thank you.

We heard from Jennifer Reynolds before this committee, from Women in Capital Markets. She spoke specifically about women on boards, and about its not being about tokenism, for sure—I agree 100% with that, Anne—but about the best talent to help our companies out.

The return on investment is significant when we have women on boards, and have diversity on boards. I wonder whether you could offer us, as a committee and also as a federal government, some suggestions about how to get the message out more to corporate industry and the not-for-profit industries about the election process and about the value of the outcomes of having women and diversity on boards.

Ms. Anne Day: There's a group called BoardMatch, certainly in Ontario, that will match you up with a board position. It's back to the lack of confidence again. Women really need to understand and believe they have something to contribute.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: That message, then, should go to men as well, who are also in charge of the election process, because we need men and women involved in this discussion.

• (1010)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Hear, hear!

Ms. Linda Davis: I would say that I think the government needs to set the tone and show the way. I think that having a balanced cabinet is a great example, but governments appoint many boards and to many positions. I think they need to balance those appointments as well at all levels of government—municipalities, provincial governments, as well as the federal government. That in and of itself can be a great leadership initiative.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: For sure, leading by example is, I think, an important message. There's a mantra that I often use: you can't be what you cannot see. If people don't see diversity on boards or don't see women on boards in leadership positions, they don't identify. We often don't identify ourselves there, so the fact that we have a gender-balanced cabinet based on the best qualifications is, I think, a very important message.

Ms. Anne Day: Another thing is, let's look at the bottom line. As you were saying, when women are on their boards, businesses do better. That may be the way to approach corporations, to say, "This is going to improve your profits at the end of the day, if you are seen to be a company that believes in women and diversity and you actually have representatives there." This is especially so among millennials; they judge you.

The Chair: We're out of time. I'm sorry.

We'll go to Ms. Vecchio for seven minutes.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I'd almost be willing to give her a couple of my seconds, but I have lots of questions.

Linda, I want to start with you.

We talk about curriculum a lot. In my own constituency, the STEAM Centre—which is STEM plus the arts—of the Thames Valley District School Board in our area is focusing on a program and doing a pilot for the program starting in September 2017.

You talked about grassroots. I believe much of our problem is that we're not getting it as the children grow. Even when I was in public school in the early eighties, you would go in, you would go to the workshop and you would cook, and all the girls and boys did this together. Those kinds of programs were taken away. Personally, I would probably never have gone into a workshop if it hadn't been for the school, and now we don't see those sorts of things.

I find that the curriculum sometimes.... Trust me, I love our counsellors and guidance counsellors in the high schools, but often they are not affiliated with the actual workforce. They're affiliated with school boards and therefore may not know the opportunities.

How can we work better with our secondary schools and our elementary schools so that we're starting this early? We talk about the competence. I think if you were to put me in a workshop.... I was in a workshop in grade 7. I was terrible, but I still at least tried. There are other people, though, who are going to be successful. We see lots of changes in the automotive sector.

What can we do, starting with those children in grades 7 and 8, so that as they're growing they're not feeling excluded from certain fields? How can we work on that?

Ms. Linda Davis: I'm glad you asked that, Karen. Thank you.

I think a really key piece here is to make sure that the learning is experimental. There's a great way, I think, that school boards can do this through partnering with business. I think partnering is wonderful. It shares a bit of the cost and it shares the responsibility, but it makes an awareness piece for the employers too.

On the steering committee we talked about having field trips going out to different types of employers, making sure that students see women in what we're going to call non-traditional—

I've had my fingers slapped about calling it non-traditional.... I think we should change the language there. Let me say, making sure that young men and boys see themselves or see their counterparts in something that might be more female-dominated.

Another economical way we can do this is to partner with those employers, but instead of making field trips, which are costly and

time-consuming, create videos and make sure that the videos are a bit contrived, in the sense that we're giving the message we want to give, so that we show the best light for the industry and the best welcoming environment for either gender to be engaged in it. We also need to make sure we're engaging students at a young age, so that they see the possibility of what that industry is about first-hand, in a real-life experience kind of situation.

• (1015)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: That's awesome. Thank you so much, Linda.

Anne, I want to move on to you. Thank you very much for your presentations today.

When you talk about entrepreneurs, if we're looking at the entrepreneurs you deal with, how many actually have employees? Are they single-person businesses, or...?

Ms. Anne Day: Quite a few are single-person, but we go from people who have just started right up to people who are in the top 100. Some of the women are in the top 100, and yes, they have lots of employees.

Taking on an employee is tough.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Absolutely. I don't want to become political here, but I also want to look at small business, because I ran a small business so I know the cost. Whether it's for the Canada pension plan, employment insurance, or WSIB, we have all sorts of factors that employers have to take into consideration. My mom and dad ran a business as well.

I always say that for every dollar, it's \$1.30 minimum that somebody is actually putting out when they're paying to have an employee. With any of the changes we've seen, such as the small business tax credits or the small business tax not being reduced, is there anything of that type that we should be focusing on to help women entrepreneurs and all entrepreneurs?

Ms. Anne Day: I was listening to the previous discussion and was thinking, when they were talking about putting the minimum wage up to \$15, that as a small business owner it would be rather prohibitive. I think that's one of the concerns that small business owners would bring forward.

If you're going to do it, then I think you need to look at what you are going to give the small business owner to help offset it, because the bottom line is the bottom line, and they cannot afford to do it. I think assistance in that way would be good.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I really appreciate that, because this week I was meeting with the convenience store owners, and one of the discussions was what their margins actually were. We were talking about contraband cigarettes, and why people go elsewhere. People go elsewhere because it costs less elsewhere. If they're having to increase, we may see much more of an "under market" happening. We may also see an increase on Amazon, which is positive for some entrepreneurs, but not when the small businesses in our communities are closing because I can get something from China in four days. We have to be very aware of that. I really appreciate this.

You talk about confidence. I spoke to Linda about curriculum. What are some of the antidotes you would have, and what are some of the things we can do there? I was just speaking to Sheila before and talked about my daughter working in manufacturing. She has just started a new job. I felt it was really important that she know what hard work really is. She is doing things on cycles, going quickly.

What are some of the things we can give to our younger generation?

Ms. Anne Day: I used to work with women who were going into the skilled trades. One of the most effective things we did was bring in a young welder, who brought her first paycheque.

As soon as the women saw how much she earned, they were thinking “oh”. Women have the same sorts of skills. They have fine motor skills. They can follow a sewing pattern. They can follow a blueprint. Many of the women thus went into the skilled trades. I think it's a question of the exposure and also of working with the parents, because there's still a stigma about working in the skilled trades. I think it's important to reach the parents so that they encourage their children.

I recently was in Linamar, which is a company in the automotive industry in Guelph. They're starting a women's network. They were asking me how to start one. They have 19 apprentices, and every year they try to take five more women apprentices. It's thus also a question of working with business to encourage them to support women.

The Chair: Very good.

Now we'll go to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to both witnesses.

This is to the Company of Women witness, Ms. Day.

I want to talk a little about parental leave as it intersects with women doing well in the economy. The parental leave changes announced in the budget two weeks ago seemed like a good thing, but it looks as though they lead to a penalty for women. With the new changes, a woman can take 12 weeks before her due date as well as up to 18 months of parental leave with her child.

The problem, however, is that women would need to take time out from the workplace, because the government didn't include the dropout clause with the Canada pension plan calculation for new mothers, the expansion of CPP. That means that there's a CPP penalty for women who use the full time allocated to them for maternal leave. It ends up, in effect, being rather clawed back. At the elderly time of their life, they are again going to have that compounded problem of not having the benefit of all that time in the workplace.

We heard from Professor Kathleen Lahey back in February at this committee. She said that the government should have included a provision for women who take time out to care for children and that it wouldn't have been an expensive or difficult change to the expanded CPP.

Do you agree that women should not be penalized for taking that leave?

• (1020)

Ms. Anne Day: I don't think they should be. Actually, because I am here more to represent women entrepreneurs—and of course I have run out of time—let me say that women entrepreneurs can't afford to take time off. We had a woman the other week who is expecting her first baby. She was in tears, because she's worried about her business and what is going to happen. She wants to spend some quality time with her baby, but she can't also afford the time off with her business. She's worried about her business and what's going to happen to it.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: In her case, then, these leave provisions might—

Ms. Anne Day: Yes.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: She can't afford to take them up.

Ms. Anne Day: She can't afford to take them up.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: That's worrying.

I want to turn to the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women. Thank you, Linda Davis, for your work.

Your organization has noted that women are under-represented in fields such as skilled trades and science, technology, engineering, and math. Given this, I'm concerned that the federal government's spending on infrastructure—as in the focus just in last month's budget—looks as though it may leave women out of the equation so far as infrastructure spending is concerned.

We heard earlier in this study from Professor Marjorie Cohen about the Vancouver Island highway construction in the nineties, which used equity hiring to promote the participation of both indigenous people and women in the highway construction. As a result of inserting that provision into the tenders, they went from 2% of women at the beginning of the project to having women and indigenous people constitute 20% of the labour force on this major highway construction on Vancouver Island.

Do you support initiatives like that to increase women's participation in—I wanted to say “non-traditional sectors”, but I know you're saying I shouldn't say “non-traditional”—STEM and infrastructure projects?

Ms. Linda Davis: Absolutely. I think that we as a society have to start thinking about the spending. Government spends a lot of money. They are a driving force in our economy. Without their considering the gender impact to that spending, we can find a lot of expansion of the gender wage gap by virtue of that kind of not thinking ahead. I applaud, then, that kind of initiative.

We have to have infrastructure spending. How do we balance it? Do we also balance it by spending in the health care and human services at the same time? Do we split the spending dollar so that we're making sure we're balancing it, or do we try to balance the spending by means of initiatives such as you've mentioned?

I certainly would support that kind of thinking.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thank you.

I'd like to also talk about your brief to the Canadian government. In 2006 the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women called for a national seniors strategy to support older women in Canada. We've been hearing from witnesses already that elderly women are often the most economically vulnerable women in Canada. I'm hoping you can reiterate some of the parts of your brief, or just let the committee know your advice, on what the government can do to make sure that older women in Canada do not live in poverty. How might a national strategy help that?

Ms. Linda Davis: Of late there seems to be a movement to youth. I'm seeing a lot of grant money available to young Canadians. I'm seeing youth being a part of every aspect that's happening. As my co-presenter here today has mentioned, let's not leave out women over 40 from the mix. It's almost like a discriminatory practice starting to happen now, when we see the attention paid to youth. I think older women will suffer if we continue with that and do not have opportunities for women at an older age.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: In the national seniors strategy, I'm not thinking so much of women entrepreneurs who are over 40, although we're getting good testimony on that, but of seniors and retired women particularly. Do you have advice for the committee on that?

Ms. Linda Davis: I haven't dealt with that specifically. I've been focusing on the gender wage gap, which is really more about women during their employment years.

• (1025)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Okay.

If your organization looks at the submission you made in 2006 on the national seniors strategy and finds that you think it might be of benefit to this committee, we'd be glad to receive it and we could include it in our final report.

Ms. Linda Davis: Thank you. We'll do that.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thanks, Chair.

The Chair: Very good.

Now we'll go to Mr. Serré for seven minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Thank you so much to the two witnesses for all your experience and the work that you've done.

My first question is for Ms. Day. You have 38 years of experience. Thank you so much for all you've done. What I want to follow up on a bit is what Ms. Malcolmson mentioned concerning a national seniors strategy.

I've submitted a bill, we're going to be voting on the bill, and I hope everyone will be supporting the creation of a national seniors strategy in May. I've been talking to the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, and long-term care associations. Part of the strategy they've outlined as a priority is concerned with compassionate care and caregiving and a lot of the unpaid work involved. From your experience, I want to know whether you have any recommendations specific to that area.

Ms. Anne Day: When we were writing our book we talked to a lot of women who were what I'd call the sandwich generation. They have teenagers, they may be going through a messy divorce, and they also have senior parents. It's a question of having time to deal with those situations. It's almost as though it could push them over the edge, because it's very difficult.

Having some supports, either paid time off work, or in the case of entrepreneurs, maybe there's a benefit they could get....

Trying to work the maze of all the different services that are available and all the different criteria involves extremely difficult navigation, so I think that even having a plan—whereby you could see that if your partner has X or your mother has this, then here is where you would go for help—would help. It's very difficult to navigate and it's time-consuming at a stressful time.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you.

Ms. Davis, you indicated in your presentation the lack of data. We've heard this pretty much for all the studies. I want to know whether you have specific recommendations for us linked to Stats Canada or Revenue Canada. You started to talk a bit about data by gender, but do you have other specific recommendations for us?

Ms. Linda Davis: In our consultation process we saw there was a huge lack of data and lack of continuity of data because of the census' being discontinued. When we were gathering our data we had to jump among different forms of data, which aren't always comparable. I applaud the census' being established again. We need that information and data.

We have to have employer data. I know that we're looking at a pay equity act nationally. That act really should involve the gathering of data. There should be a requirement within that process that employment and wage data be gathered and shared. Even though I know that the information is already being gathered.... We talked about this as well, that Revenue Canada gathers much of that employment and wage data, but it's not necessarily shared, or there's no access to it. To be able to use it in a meaningful way, we have to have that.

I would say that an easy fix whenever programs and projects are funded would be that there be a data-gathering component to them.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you.

I forgot to mention, too, the work that the BPW does nationally and internationally, and also to recognize Carol Stahl from Sudbury, the BPW president, they've done a fabulous job in Sudbury.

Even prior to being an MP, I sponsored many of the business awards, luncheons, and suppers. Continue the good work that you're doing.

What I wanted to ask is this. You mentioned also in your presentation the need for a national awareness campaign. We heard about this from other witnesses. Do you have any examples or suggested partners, or can you expand a bit on the idea? How can we look at implementing it? It would be large as a campaign, but do you have a specific area that you would recommend it focus on?

•(1030)

Ms. Linda Davis: The Ontario government ran a campaign for “It’s never okay”, for gender violence. It was really hard-hitting, I think, and very effective. They showed a scene happening that people, I’m sure, will have seen every day. We’ve normalized these kinds of things, and no one says anything, a young man taking a drunk young woman out of a party, as an example, and looking to the camera to say, “Thanks for not saying anything.” Then they show the repercussion of that, or the situation when somebody does say something, and the young woman leaving the party saying, “Thanks for saying something.”

I think there’s a great example there of showing the situation, in a campaign that I think was very effective. Echoing something along those lines would be very helpful.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you.

I want to ask, Ms. Day, about the lack of a woman’s centre in Ontario for entrepreneurs. You talked about future entrepreneurship and looking at funding and you applauded the recent government budget and also indicated some of the success stories with a gender-balanced cabinet.

Do you, however, have any specific recommendations for the future entrepreneurial.... You mentioned the “over 40”, which is a good example. Do you have any other recommendations?

Ms. Anne Day: I actually used to volunteer for them, so I’m familiar with their program. I think the key is that not only do the young people get a grant, but they get a mentor for two years. That’s actually what the government needs, I think, because—let’s face it—this is taxpayers’ money. If you are giving money to futurpreneurs, you want to make sure it’s being well spent, especially given the failure rate of new businesses.

Extending it to those over 40 makes sense to me. We are seeing many women being downsized or ending up in divorce. What do they do? They may stay at home the whole time and not have any skill sets, so they start looking at what they could do.

Broadening it with futurpreneurs.... You already have a base there, a program that runs and runs well, so what would be the difference in extending the age? Plus, if you’re over 40, one hopes you have some experience and some skills that would make your business more successful.

The Chair: That brings us to the end of our time to hear witnesses today. We have a little bit of committee business to take care of.

I want to thank our witnesses. You are both a wealth of information. Thank you for the work you do. I would invite you, if you have any other comments that you think would be helpful to the committee, to feel free to send those to the clerk. We appreciate them.

In terms of the business we have as a committee, you will have received the eighth report of the subcommittee. It basically considered the work we’re going to do on Bill C-337 and said that there’s a budget of \$9,000 for it. There is a press release that we were going to send out to ask for briefs on it.

There was a decision by the subcommittee that we want to include all of the testimony we heard on violence against women and girls.

Because there was a lot of overlap and a lot of testimony that pertained to the judicial training, we want to make sure it’s included in the study so that we don’t have to recall all those witnesses, in an attempt to narrow a bit.

The subcommittee also decided that we should set aside two days, April 11 and April 13, for all of the witnesses we’ve agreed upon—and there is a work plan for you to review—and that we would then undertake clause-by-clause on May 4.

That was the first part.

The second part had to do with the economic security study that we’re now doing. We wanted to reissue the press release to make sure that we can extend and get more briefs. Then we talked about how, as we go along here in this study, we have noticed that questions may come up or there may be witnesses we have not heard from, so we wanted to have an opportunity to put forward some more witnesses to fill in any of the gaps.

Originally, we were thinking we would do so today, but I would propose, if the committee is happy to do it, that we allow some time for people to submit those names, because it’s not as though we’re in a hurry. We’re continuing this study into the fall. It would be great if we could get the list of any additional witnesses people want to hear by the end of April.

I would be looking for a motion to adopt the subcommittee report.

That is so moved by Ms. Damoff.

Is there any discussion?

•(1035)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Yes.

By adopting the subcommittee report, I think we’re adopting the work plan. Is that right?

The Chair: No.

An hon. member: The witness list.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: The witness list...?

The Chair: We’re considering the work plan. We would amend it at the bottom to say that we would extend the addition of witnesses to the end of April.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Is this a good time to talk about the work plan?

The Chair: For Bill C-337 or the economic security?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: For Bill C-337.

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: There are two what I think might be small details. One is on page 1 of the work plan, which is dated April 4. For panel two, under B, in meeting two, for the Native Women’s Association of Canada, included there is the wrong name for the president. Francyne Joe is the interim president, and I think she has been for at least six months now.

The Chair: Okay. That’s a good correction.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: On the news release, which is I think attached to the analysts’ report, I have two questions.

This is not my bill, so I'll look to my Conservative colleagues on this. One, does this news release tell members of the public enough about the intention of the bill? It doesn't look very friendly to me, and I thought we might have one line that says what it is intended to do. I'll leave that to my Conservative colleagues to say whether that looks inviting enough.

Next, I just wanted to double-check this. April 14 is Good Friday. Is there any problem with having that as the deadline for submissions?

The Chair: They're online submissions, so I think it's not an issue. All right?

With the amendment to the correction of the name on the work plan, and the amendment to allow the discussion on the economic security of women study to receive witnesses before the end of April, there is this motion to adopt the report of the subcommittee.

Is there any other discussion?

Mr. Fraser.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): On the issue of written briefs, and not only because it's Good Friday, if we're extending the possibility of witnesses until the end of April, I feel that we may as well bump it back. Our study is not going to finish until early May, I don't think, before we get to clause-by-clause. Is that right?

Is there a reason why we couldn't bump it an additional week to give those who've just learned about it a chance to put something together, so that they essentially have two weeks instead of one?

The Chair: The discussion was about how we were going to hear all of the witnesses on Bill C-337 by April 13, and we wanted the committee members to have the two weeks that we're in the constituencies to consider all of that. We thought that if we had all the briefs by then, they'd have the whole package. If the committee has the will to extend it to the 21st, I don't have an issue with it.

Ms. Vecchio.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I really like Sean's idea of extending it by a week. I don't think this is giving the appropriate amount of time, and I think it's an important issue. Since we are doing everything in a state-of-the-art way now, with technology such as iPads and fax machines and things like that, I think it's a great idea. I think it would be absolutely fine to extend it by a week, because even during that two-week break we can get it sent right to us in our constituencies, regardless of whether we get it in week one or two.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Sean Fraser: I have one related comment—or ask, I guess—for the analysts. Will we get any kind of summary of the evidence, based on what we heard, before we get to clause-by-clause, or are we on our own in terms of what we've heard and what briefs we read?

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard (Committee Researcher): We can definitely provide a summary of evidence. The challenge now is that if you push the deadline back—

Mr. Sean Fraser: That's what I'm asking, yes.

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard: —to April 21, it would be more challenging to get you that summary of evidence by the clause-by-clause. If I look at a calendar...

If we get the last briefs by the 21st, we could try to pull something together for maybe May 1, but then you're doing clause-by-clause on May 4.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Okay.

The Chair: Also, the amendments need to be in by the 2nd.

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard: Yes.

Mr. Sean Fraser: I hate to delay things that the subcommittee has already talked about. Is it not possible to get a draft of where we're at when we break for the two weeks, pending further briefs?

• (1040)

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard: Absolutely. We can provide a summary of the evidence of the meetings—

Mr. Sean Fraser: Okay.

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard: —but if you want to have a summary of evidence for the briefs and the deadline for the briefs is the 21st, that gets to be challenging.

Mr. Sean Fraser: I hate to put too much on our analysts, but is it workable for you guys to do a summary of what we've heard by the time we break to go back to the constituencies and to then, three days before clause-by-clause, get a summary of the written evidence through briefs?

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard: Our last meeting is on April 13.

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard: We could try to get you something probably by Monday, April 24, translated.

Mr. Sean Fraser: That would be great.

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard: You could have a week to consider that information.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Okay.

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard: The challenge, then, is that the submitted written briefs will not be considered to the same extent. They would not be included in that summary. It would be up to all of you to read those and consider them.

Mr. Sean Fraser: I think that's a workable compromise from my perspective. Is that okay with everyone else?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: I'm thinking that it's absolutely fine, even if, instead of going to April 21, which is great, we give people that weekend so that we go to maybe even April 19. That gives you an extra two working days, and then, instead of saying that Friday is the deadline, maybe the Wednesday is the deadline. If there's that concern about time, is there a way we can do that?

Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard: Yes. If you give us until April 19—unless we get 50 briefs on April 19—we should be able to incorporate that information and still get you something as soon as possible.

The Chair: All right. Just so you keep track of where we are, we have the correction of the name on the work plan, plus the receipt of briefs by the 19th, with a summary of evidence interim report by the 24th. Also, on the economic security study, we would have up to April 30 to put forward additional witnesses.

With those amendments, all in favour?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: You said April...?

The Chair: For which one? It's April 30 for the economic security study.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Okay.

The Chair: All in favour?

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

The Chair: That's wonderful. Thank you so much.

Ms. Malcolmson.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I have a notice of motion that I want to give for our next meeting. I'll give out copies here.

I have two items. On the first one, I'll read out what the motion will be, but I know that we won't actually debate this until next week.

I will move:

That the Committee invite the Minister of the Status of Women, the Honourable Maryam Monsef, to appear before the Committee at the earliest opportunity to brief the Committee Members and respond to questions on her progress, to-date, in implementing Gender-Based Analysis Plus; that, in addition, Treasury Board Secretariat officials be invited to appear at this meeting to update Committee members on the Secretariat's response to Gender-Based Analysis Plus; and that this meeting be televised.

I'll just say as background that we received a March 31 report on the interim progress report, which is directly linked to the committee's recommendation that we gave last spring, but we hadn't received that report by the time the minister appeared. I think it would be helpful for us to be able to talk with her directly about that. I'll give a copy of this to the clerk.

For my second motion, again, next week I will move:

That the Committee invite the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Bill Morneau, at the earliest opportunity to explain the effect of Budget 2017 on women and girls; and that this meeting be televised.

When I move the motion, I can talk a bit more about the rationale, but I think probably the big picture is clear. We've had a lot of new programs and new announcements unrolled, and I think it would be helpful for the committee to be able to hear directly from him on the government's direction.

The Chair: Very good.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thank you.

The Chair: That's in order. Is there any other business?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Can I say one more thing?

The Chair: Sure.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: This is a heads-up for the other committee members for our discussion at the end of April about changes in witnesses, just to give you a bit of the flavour for what I'm seeing from my seat and for some of the witnesses who we might propose.

My sense is that the first part of our motion on the economic insecurity of women hasn't been fully fleshed out by the witnesses that I, as well as other committee members, had proposed around the higher incidence of poverty among women and the factors that contribute to it. I'm also seeing that we have seven panels that are dedicated to trade, STEM, and entrepreneurship, but only one meeting devoted to indigenous women, one meeting for women with economic challenges, which includes women with different abilities, and no meetings about young women, elderly women, or immigrant women. I would urge committee members to think about that to get us ready for our deadline at the end of April.

I will be proposing paring down some of the seven panels that we have now, and I'll be proposing some other suggestions. For example, there's CARP, the Canadian Association of Retired Persons. They've done a lot of analysis. They might be helpful for us to call on. Also, there's B.C.'s Federation of Students. I have only a local organization on immigrant women, but maybe other people have an idea of a national group that might talk about how we might be able to remove barriers.

•(1045)

The Chair: Sheila, would you be willing to send that email with the list of gaps to the clerk, who could distribute it to the committee members? Then, we could take a look at who we know who might be good.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I will. Thank you.

The Chair: That would be awesome.

Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I think some of the blame for that has to fall on us as well. A lot of our questioning and a lot of the witness testimony has focused on child care, paternal leave, and pay equity, and our questioning ends up being around that as well. I think we could try to refocus some of our questions around poverty.

I don't know if there's any way, with the witnesses who are coming forward, to highlight that there are gaps. A lot of these witnesses know about those issues. They've just testified on other things because we haven't made it a priority.

The Chair: I think having Sheila's list of gaps might help us redirect our questions a little bit, and that will be good.

Very good. What a great committee you are. Thanks so much, and have a wonderful day.

The meeting is adjourned.

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