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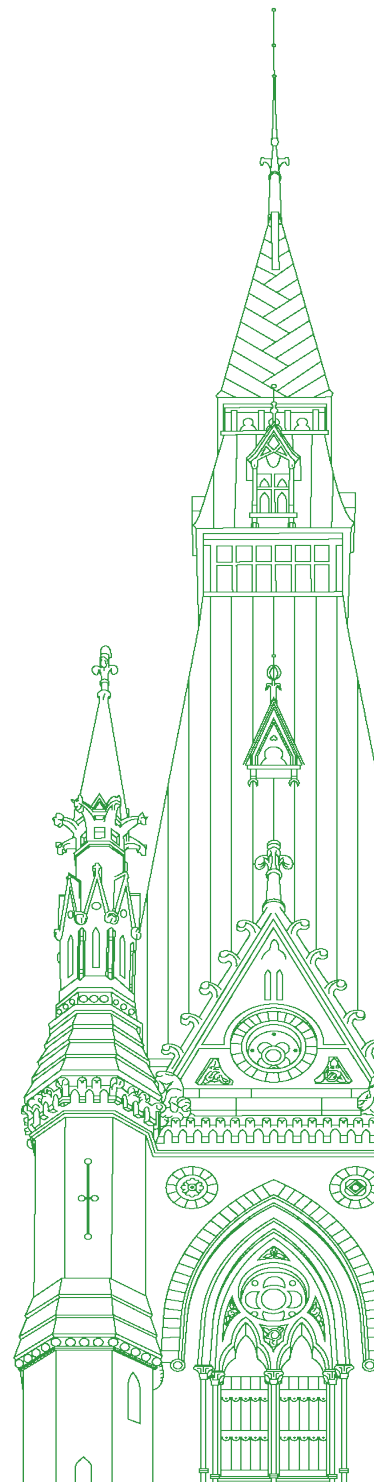
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Chair: Robert Morrissey

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• (1100)

[Translation]

The Chair (Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.)): I now call this meeting to order.

[English]

Welcome to meeting number 48 of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Pursuant to the order of reference received on Wednesday, September 23, 2026, the committee is meeting on Bill C-266, an act to establish a national framework respecting skilled trades and labour mobility.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders adopted by the House. Members are attending in person in the room and virtually. In the first hour, all our witnesses are appearing in person in the room.

Let me review a few items before we begin the meeting.

I want to clarify with all members and witnesses that this meeting is taking place where participants have the option of participating in the official language of their choice: French or English. I would remind all members to wear the earpiece if you're fluent in only one and to ensure you're on the channel that gives you the interpretation and allows you to fully understand all the comments being made, in order to fully participate in the meeting regardless of the language used by the speaker. For those appearing virtually, you can click on the globe icon and choose the official language that you wish to participate in.

If there is a breakdown in interpretation, please get my attention. We'll suspend while it is being corrected.

As well, I would remind members to please silence your devices while the meeting is going on, and please refrain from tapping the microphone boom in front of you, for the protection of our translators.

Please direct all questions through the chair. Wait until I recognize you by name before you proceed.

This morning, in the first hour, we have witnesses appearing on Bill C-266 in the room. I would like to now welcome, from the Association de la construction du Québec, Francine Sabourin, executive director, and Jean-Philippe De Choinière, director, labour relations; from Build a Dream, Stacey Noronha, senior manager, public affairs and strategic partnerships; and from the Mechanical Con-

tractors Association of Canada, Ken Lancaster, chief operating officer.

Each group has five minutes for an opening statement.

Please remember to speak slowly, so that it can be properly translated.

[Translation]

We will begin with Ms. Sabourin from the Association de la construction du Québec.

You have five minutes for your opening remarks.

Francine Sabourin (Executive Director, Association de la construction du Québec): Mr. Chair, members of the committee, good morning.

My name is Francine Sabourin, and I'm the executive director of the Association de la construction du Québec, or ACQ. I am joined by my colleague Jean-Philippe De Choinière, director of labour relations at the ACQ.

First, I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to discuss Quebec's construction industry with you and, more importantly, to highlight its unique characteristics.

The Association de la construction du Québec is the largest employer association in the industry. It operates within the framework of Quebec's Act respecting labour relations, vocational training and workforce management in the construction industry. The ACQ serves as the employers' representative and bargaining agent in the institutional, commercial and industrial sectors. In practical terms, we represent 20,000 contractors responsible for approximately 64% of all hours worked in the industry. To illustrate the significance of the construction sector in Quebec, it accounts for roughly 7% of the province's GDP. While approximately 200,000 workers are employed directly on construction sites, the industry supports about 350,000 workers overall.

At the outset, I would note that the ACQ supports measures that facilitate access to a skilled workforce and provide greater flexibility regarding the work activities performed by employees in the industry, particularly in finishing trades such as tile setting, plastering, painting and carpentry.

However, any measure intended to modernize our industry must take into account our unique circumstances. Although our system can and should continue to evolve, it's built on mechanisms that have, for decades, structured access to the industry, workforce training and the qualification requirements for the various trades.

To help you better understand our reality, I will briefly outline the history of our model. Let's go back to 1934, when Quebec adopted the Act respecting collective agreement decrees. At the time, the legal extension of collective agreements made it possible to standardize working conditions for a given trade or geographic area under the joint supervision of employer and union representatives. This model gradually evolved until 1968, when the Government of Quebec established a decree that applied to the entire construction industry.

Then, in 1987, the establishment of the Commission de la construction du Québec, or CCQ, reinforced the principle of parity that continues to characterize our industry today. In practical terms, this means that the key decisions affecting the industry are made jointly by employer and union representatives, with the participation of the Government of Quebec. This governance model is unique and explains many of our system's distinctive features, as I mentioned earlier.

As a result, we operate under a specialized collective bargaining regime governed by legislation specific to our industry. More than 20 regulations flow from that legislation. There are 25 regulated trades for which a qualification certificate must be issued by the CCQ, and each trade has its own vocational training program.

The ACQ therefore welcomes proposals aimed at establishing equivalencies for workers across provinces and territories, provided that existing industry access requirements are respected. It should also be noted that a Quebec worker may obtain Red Seal certification, which is then recorded on the qualification certificate issued by the CCQ.

The ACQ also supports the objective set out in subparagraph 3(3)(c)(v) of Bill C-266, namely, ensuring that the public understands and respects the skilled trades and recognizes their importance to the economy. For the past two years, we've been promoting careers in construction through our construction trades camp initiative, the Camp des métiers Construction. The program enables young people and those considering a career change from all regions of Quebec to explore the various construction trades with the ultimate goal of joining the industry. A third camp is currently under way. To date, we've attracted more than 1,000 participants, and we have another 1,000 individuals on our waiting lists.

The CCQ estimates that Quebec's construction industry will require 17,000 new workers annually through 2030 to meet demand. We must therefore take action on recruitment, training and retention alike. In that regard, I would note that Quebec has not yet received the funding promised by the Government of Canada under the team Canada strong initiative, which is intended to strengthen construction training programs.

• (1105)

In conclusion, since the bill recognizes the importance of respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction over training, certification and regulation, we encourage the Government of Canada to provide Quebec with its share of the funding allocated for these purposes.

We would once again like to thank the members of the committee for giving us this opportunity, and we would welcome the op-

portunity to participate in the consultations contemplated in subsection 3(2).

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Sabourin.

[English]

We'll now go to Madam Noronha, for five minutes or less.

Stacey Noronha (Senior Manager, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, Build a Dream): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the members of the committee for inviting Build a Dream to contribute to your study.

My name is Stacey Noronha and I'm the senior manager of public affairs and strategic partnerships at Build a Dream. We're a national charity and for more than a decade, we've worked to bring more women and under-represented groups into the skilled trades, STEM, emergency response and other high-demand sectors.

We work directly with young people, educators, employers, unions and industry, so we see where the talent pipeline is breaking down. Canada's skilled trades challenge spans recruitment, mobility, apprenticeship and retention. I want to start there, because it shapes everything I'll say today.

We support what the bill is trying to do. The barriers it targets are real. Right now, a certified tradesperson in one province can hit a wall of recertification, paperwork and delay just for taking her skills across a provincial border. For women, who already face higher barriers getting into the trades and staying there, each extra hurdle is one more reason to walk away.

However, mobility is one part of a bigger workforce challenge. Canada needs to grow its workforce, not just move the existing one around more efficiently. Every day, employers tell us they are trying to find skilled workers. At the same time, we meet young women and other under-represented individuals across this country who have never seriously considered the trades. They're held back by lack of exposure, by never seeing themselves represented in these careers, and by perceptions that haven't caught up with reality. Canada can pour resources into recruiting new people into the trades, but if they leave because the workplace wasn't ready to keep them, we haven't solved the shortage. We've built a revolving door.

With that in mind, Build a Dream has three recommendations to strengthen the bill.

First, broaden who's at the consultation table. Subclause 3(2) calls for consultation with provinces, regulators, industry, unions, indigenous bodies and colleges, all essential. Two voices are missing, though: the organizations that recruit, train and keep women in the trades, who live these barriers every single day, and the workers and apprentices themselves, who can tell you exactly where the system breaks down.

Second, measure outcomes, not activity. The bill requires annual reports to Parliament. Those reports should break down apprenticeship enrolment, completion, certification and interprovincial mobility by gender. Canada can't close a gap it doesn't measure. Then, let's hold the framework to what matters: credentials recognized faster, vacancies filled sooner, apprentices finishing, and women entering the trades and staying.

Third, put an inclusion lens on mobility itself. There's a gap between being credentialed to move and actually being able to move. Child care, housing, transportation and relocation costs—these practical barriers can stop a move cold, and they land hardest on women. The framework should account for that. Under the bill's public awareness mandate, campaigns need to reach girls and young women on purpose. At our annual Dreamer Day event, which welcomes 4,000 every year, I've watched young women light up the first time they try a trade with their own hands. So many tell us it's the first time anyone ever suggested these careers for them.

Canada set ambitious goals on housing, infrastructure, energy and manufacturing, and each one depends on a bigger, more mobile, more diverse skilled trades workforce. This bill gives us the architecture, but this is bigger than filling vacancies. It's a chance to rethink how we build Canada's workforce and to create pathways where more people can enter, succeed and thrive.

Thank you.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Noronha.

We'll go to Mr. Lancaster, for five minutes or less.

Ken Lancaster (Chief Operating Officer, Mechanical Contractors Association of Canada): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, members of the committee.

I'll echo my colleagues' comments. I appreciate the opportunity to be here and provide our association's perspective on Bill C-266.

For context, our association represents mechanical, electrical and plumbing contractors in the industrial, commercial, institutional, residential and service sectors of Canada's construction industry. This also includes industrial process contractors, who are critical to our industrial capacity through their shutdown and turnaround work.

Our members build and maintain the systems Canadians rely on every day. They are the systems that power our economy.

In terms of contributions, I have some figures to put that impact into perspective. The mechanical and electrical contracting sector accounts for roughly 40% to 50% of all construction activity across the country. The sector supports more than 440,000 jobs across the

country, both on site and off-site. The sector contributes more than \$63 billion to the country's GDP.

The economy runs on the systems that our sector builds and maintains. We are foundational to Canada's economic growth and strength.

Regarding Bill C-266, the Mechanical Contractors Association of Canada supports the ongoing efforts to improve skilled trades mobility in Canada, while at the same time maintaining the highest standards of the trades. As construction demands are anticipated to increase, efforts to improve mobility and reduce administrative burdens are welcomed by the mechanical and electrical contracting sector.

As an association, we are pleased to offer the following recommendations for consideration by the committee.

First, our association is recommending the inclusion of an industry-informed labour market strategy as part of a national framework on skilled trades mobility. For contractors across Canada, a significant impediment to productivity is a misalignment of resources or a lack of predictability when it comes to construction and anticipated project demands. With new major projects alongside ongoing construction activity, it is imperative that contractors have a line of sight as to where the work will be, when the work will be and what trades are going to be required to do that work. Any national framework should utilize industry-led expertise to help inform and share data on workforce availability as well as requirements.

At the same time, this labour market strategy should consider some of the challenges we face with respect to labour mobility and harmonization. Specifically, consider the impact that harmonization may have on a population that cannot necessarily support outward mobility. Alongside industry partners, the national framework provides an opportunity to build a comprehensive and workable labour strategy for all regions in Canada.

Second, any framework with respect to labour mobility should extend beyond tradespersons' credentials and consider contractor mobility as well. While there has been important work to date on the harmonization of skilled trades, construction companies still face significant administrative burdens when working from province to province. Contractors are expected to register apprentices in multiple jurisdictions when working interprovincially, and redundant health and safety certifications, as an example, can add additional administrative challenges.

In a survey conducted earlier this year, MCAC members outlined several challenges, including but not limited to inconsistency in the definition of "identical hazards". As one member said, a common-sense baseline would improve mobility, reduce cost and allow organizations to focus resources on practical risk control, rather than on redundant training. Under this framework, there is an opportunity to undertake the national digitization of certifications and registrations, ultimately improving both labour and contractor mobility.

Last, our association believes any national framework should maintain the highest standards of the trades in Canada. While we know our industry will need more workers in the decades ahead, it is more important than ever that these tradespeople maintain the high standards in place under our current education and training regime. This is not to say there cannot be improvements made, but we must ensure that Canada's skilled tradespeople are recognized for their exceptional skills, training and expertise. The future of this economy depends on this workforce.

In closing, Canada's mechanical, electrical and plumbing contractors are ready to work alongside the government to reduce barriers to entry, eliminate administrative burdens and strengthen Canada's skilled trades workforce. If we are to build the housing, infrastructure and industrial capacity required to build a stronger Canadian economy, the intent of Bill C-266 could not come at a better time.

With that said, I want to thank you all again for your time, and I look forward to any questions there may be.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lancaster.

We'll move right into our questioning rounds, beginning with Mr. Genuis for six minutes.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Thank you so much.

Thank you to all the witnesses. I've appreciated the chance to engage with a number of them outside the context of this meeting.

I want to start with Ms. Noronha.

Our committee is about to study potential changes to parental leave. As part of that study, we are inviting witnesses—organizations and individuals—to submit specific, concrete proposals for how to improve the system. Our party has already put forward a number of policy proposals on improving parental leave with an eye to making it more flexible, including allowing learning on leave. Let's make it easier for, and clearer that, someone can take courses while on leave, which I think is something that would have a positive impact on apprentices who are also young parents.

In terms of facilitating the greater inclusion of women in the trades, I wonder if you can offer any suggestions to us ahead of that study on how parental leave interacts with some of the particularities of trades work and how potential changes in that regard could make things easier for women to consider this option.

• (1120)

Stacey Noronha: I can give you an example. We had an ESDC-funded wraparound support program that is a pretty proven model. We provided funding towards transportation, child care—particularly accessible and affordable child care assistance—equipment and all kinds of mental health supports and coaching. Ultimately, these were not extras. These were able to help the participants in our program secure apprenticeships, stay in them and advance to better-paying jobs.

We agree that this is ideal and something that's very important. The expansion of programs like this would really move the needle on completion rates for apprenticeships in particular. The national apprenticeship completion rate right now is 46%, but it is 36% for women.

Garnett Genuis: Thank you for that.

The study we're going to be doing will focus specifically on potential reforms to the employment insurance parental leave program. If you, other witnesses and anybody else listening to this have suggestions, there's plenty of time to submit written briefs in advance of the study. We'd certainly love to hear from people.

On the leave question, I wonder, Ms. Noronha, if you or others want to follow up.

What are the particular challenges associated with trades work that may be different from those of office work, in terms of when you need parental leave and the flexibility you need? I'm not just talking about apprentices. I'm talking about people who are fully qualified in their trades.

Stacey Noronha: Regarding parental leave and all of those kinds of supports—child care in particular—we definitely feel....

Actually, I'm going to give that to somebody else. I lost my train of thought.

Garnett Genuis: Does anybody else want to comment on this?

[Translation]

Jean-Philippe De Choinière (Director, Labour Relations, Association de la construction du Québec): In Quebec, a number of measures are already in place to support the inclusion of women in the construction industry. These include a publicly funded and accessible child care system. Parental leave benefits are also administered outside the employment insurance system. As a result, we already have a more generous framework in place.

However, we focus our measures on encouraging women's involvement in the construction industry. These measures are aimed directly at contractors and employers in order to promote the hiring of women. This is particularly true with respect to apprentices. Apprentice-to-journeyperson ratios are established, and in Quebec the ratio is more flexible when the apprentices are women, specifically to encourage their recruitment.

Therefore, Quebec has a number of initiatives in place, including the Programme d'accès à l'égalité des femmes dans l'industrie de la construction, which aims to ensure equal access for women in the construction industry. The program was established for many years and is administered by the Commission de la construction du Québec.

[English]

Garnett Genuis: Thank you.

I will just point this out: In Quebec's parental leave system, you have the principle of interruptibility. You can pause and resume your leave, which is something Conservatives have proposed be adopted for the whole country. It's more flexible for trades workers, I think, given the rhythm that sometimes exists there, but also for others.

In the minute and a half I have left, I also want to give you an opportunity to comment on the issue of appropriate PPE for women. I know this is a challenge as well. I think the Mechanical Contractors Association has been engaged on this, as well as, of course, Build a Dream.

Maybe I can give you each 30 seconds to comment on the challenge of appropriate PPE for women.

Ken Lancaster: As you mentioned, the Mechanical Contractors Association of Canada has, for some time, been advocating different tax incentives or programming that can help assist in covering the extra cost often associated with gender-specific PPE. What I think is important to note, though, is that we are starting to see this shift a little. We're starting to see some of that cost come down.

Fundamentally, it's so important. If we're going to attract people to the trades, they have to be able to see themselves in the trades. Having access to gender-specific PPE is so critical. We're demonstrating to those individuals that they can play a role in this industry—that there's a space for them.

I think that's what's so critical about a lot of these conversations, including conversations around parental leave and different reforms along that measure.

The Chair: You have six seconds.

Garnett Genuis: Ms. Noronha, do you want to comment on this at all?

Stacey Noronha: No, that's good.

Garnett Genuis: What's the cost multiple, Mr. Lancaster, so people know, between typical male and typical female PPE?

Ken Lancaster: We have seen numbers of up to an increase of 100% on the cost. As I said, we are—

• (1125)

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

The interpreters appear to be having trouble hearing the witness.

[English]

Garnett Genuis: If I could briefly repeat the question, it was on the cost multiple between the more common male model and what women need for PPE.

The Chair: Please give a short answer.

Ken Lancaster: We have seen costs up to and as high as a 100% increase.

Garnett Genuis: Thank you.

Ken Lancaster: I'm trying to keep it as short as possible.

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Joseph, you have the floor for six minutes.

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would also like to thank all the witnesses for being here today. I know it's not easy, and that they've had to make a great many sacrifices.

Ms. Sabourin, everything you've said has been fascinating. I myself come from the construction industry. I am from Quebec, and I am proud to be a Quebecker. I know that Quebec has its own particularities, and they must be respected.

That said, in your view, what would be the benefits of greater labour mobility for workers and contractors across the country?

Francine Sabourin: I will start, and then I will let Mr. De Choinière continue.

Given the labour shortage we're currently facing, everyone wants access to additional workers, provided that quality and competency standards are met. If greater labour mobility can provide that flexibility, we're certainly open to it. We see benefits in contractors having access to a larger workforce and, above all, to skilled workers, who are becoming increasingly difficult to recruit.

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: I think that answer was fairly comprehensive. We do indeed view increased labour mobility favourably. We need those skilled workers. The important thing is to ensure that standards relating to qualification certificates and equivalencies are properly established and that standards are not lowered. Quality standards must be maintained, as was mentioned earlier.

Natilien Joseph: Ms. Sabourin, you mentioned that Quebec will need 17,000 construction workers by 2030. Do you think that greater labour mobility would enable Quebec to attract more workers, regardless of the province they come from?

Francine Sabourin: I don't believe that greater labour mobility will solve our labour shortage problem. Could it help? Absolutely. However, a single measure certainly won't resolve the challenges facing our industry. The figure of 17,000 workers has risen over the past year. Previously, we talked about 14,000 or 15,000 workers. However, there's already a great deal of construction work under way. If we add the upcoming defence-related projects that are not yet included in projections, that clearly won't be sufficient.

Therefore, I think a wide range of measures will be needed to address this labour shortage successfully.

Natilien Joseph: Have any measures been implemented? If so, what results have they yielded?

Francine Sabourin: Earlier, I mentioned that the Government of Quebec and our organization have invested in promoting careers in the construction trades. I spoke about the Camp des métiers Construction, where we bring young people into our vocational training centres and give them the opportunity to try different trades over the course of a weekend. We've seen that this initiative, combined with a promotional campaign highlighting careers in the skilled trades, has increased enrolment in our vocational training centres.

We therefore need to reassert the value of skilled trades, which have not been as highly regarded in recent years, and re-establish the sense of pride associated with working in construction, particularly in Quebec. That's our objective. We need to promote careers in construction and show young people that they can build rewarding careers in the industry.

Natilien Joseph: How can the initiatives already in place, particularly the Red Seal certification you mentioned, serve as a foundation for improving labour mobility in Quebec?

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: The Red Seal program is a valuable certification that offers a number of advantages.

You asked me what greater labour mobility could bring. In Quebec, roughly 75% of workers begin working on construction sites without formal training. Greater mobility would certainly provide access to workers who hold that qualification or, at the very least, have several years of experience. It therefore helps provide access to a skilled and valuable workforce. Initiatives like the Red Seal program facilitate that recognition.

• (1130)

Natilien Joseph: Therefore, labour mobility itself would not be an obstacle for construction trades and skilled trades in Quebec, regardless of where the workers come from.

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: It's something we want to encourage. In fact, the Commission de la construction du Québec has made regulatory changes to facilitate the integration of workers from other provinces. There's a rule whereby, once a certain percentage of hours has been accumulated in a trade, credentials are recognized more readily in Quebec, making it easier to obtain a qualification certificate. So, no, it's not a problem.

Natilien Joseph: I have 20 seconds left.

Last time, I asked my colleague a question about language barriers. On construction sites in Quebec, people work in French. Could you briefly tell me whether language is an obstacle, either for an Ontarian working in Quebec or a Quebecker working in Ontario?

Francine Sabourin: Language can certainly be a barrier. Construction sites are hazardous environments that are constantly changing and where workers operate heavy machinery. Workers absolutely need to be able to communicate with and understand one another. As I said, it's a dangerous work environment. The injury record in the construction industry is never particularly good, so it's something we need to work on.

Natilien Joseph: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for six minutes.

Andréanne Larouche: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Noronha and Mr. Lancaster, thank you for being with us today. However, as a member from Quebec, I am going to direct my questions to the witnesses from the Association de la construction du Québec.

We see Bill C-266 as something of a continuation of what had already been announced by the federal government. In last spring's economic update, Ottawa announced its intention to train and hire 100,000 skilled workers and to invest \$6 billion in grants and programs to achieve that objective.

At the time, the Minister of Labour raised some concerns. He noted that this falls under Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction and that there was a risk of duplication. In your view, could there be duplication? If so, what would that look like?

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: There's no risk of duplication necessarily. It's more a question of understanding that, to establish the harmonization contemplated in Bill C-266, we need to fully grasp what is to be recognized. As we mentioned earlier, there are 25 regulated trades in Quebec. For each of those trades, a qualification certificate must be issued, and there's a related training program. Therefore, when we seek to facilitate the recognition of those skills, that could potentially involve changes either to training programs or to certification requirements. In our view, that's not necessarily a bad thing. However, once again, it's important to ensure that the standards established in Quebec are respected.

Andréanne Larouche: Speaking of standards, could you elaborate on your role and that of the Commission de la construction du Québec in overseeing construction worker training?

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: Certainly.

Because these trades are regulated, they're all linked to a vocational diploma. The Commission de la construction du Québec has a joint committee known as the committee on vocational training in the construction industry. It's made up of employer and union representatives who must jointly agree before proposing changes to training programs. Those proposals are then submitted to the ministry of education, which develops the program framework and returns it for approval.

As a result, everything must be done through a collaborative labour-management process. It's essential to agree on the standards we wish to establish and on how our training programs should evolve and improve, because the relevance and quality of those programs must be maintained.

● (1135)

Andréanne Larouche: As you've indicated, you're responsible for training across all these trades. Is it conceivable, or even necessary, to eliminate certain trades in Quebec?

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: Is that a possibility? It is certainly a highly regulated industry. It's important to understand what eliminating trades means. The trades will continue to exist, in the sense that some trades that are present on construction sites are not governed the same way in other provinces. In other words, the trades will not be eliminated.

However, when it comes to reviewing the framework, we can give that some thought, but, again, the Quebec contractors' business model has been built around this structure since the 1960s. We would therefore need to carefully weigh the pros and cons of these proposals.

Andréanne Larouche: My colleague asked you earlier about the benefits of increasing interprovincial labour mobility. We've already touched on that, but I would like you to elaborate on it.

Apart from the benefits, can you go over some of the potential drawbacks associated with greater mobility?

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: Certainly.

As we pointed out, Quebec's construction industry is governed by a single act, so there are rules that apply to labour mobility as well. The rules were made at a time of higher unemployment, when the goal was to protect trades in Quebec's regions. That's why there are restrictions on worker mobility now.

Once again, we are in favour of greater mobility within Quebec itself. However, if Canadian mobility rules were to be expanded, additional rights should certainly not be granted to workers from other provinces while available workers in Quebec face mobility restrictions.

Andréanne Larouche: To achieve that, does Quebec's vocational training system adequately meet the needs?

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: There are certainly challenges when it comes to the vocational training system. The Association de la construction du Québec has actually put forward proposals to overhaul entry-level training. There are a lot of challenges around updating programs, many of which have not been revised in years.

That said, with our apprenticeship system and the 2,000 hours of training required to obtain journeyman status, we still have a rigorous and robust system that ensures our workers are well qualified.

Andréanne Larouche: Okay.

Our vocational training model is also unique to Quebec. Could you tell us a little bit about what makes our training programs unique?

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: That's not our area of expertise, but, again, the ministry of education treats it as kind of a separate stream in high school. It's very broad, obviously. Programs are developed in response to market needs. Construction training programs last from roughly 600 or 700 hours to 1,800 hours. Each program has its own framework and is specific to each trade.

Andréanne Larouche: I'll come back to that in my second round.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Larouche.

[English]

Ms. Falk, you have five minutes.

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Thank you very much, Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for taking the time to be here today and sharing their experience and expertise in this.

I would like to start with Ms. Noronha, if I may.

I thought it was an interesting exchange that you had with my colleague.

I had the opportunity a couple of years ago to meet with the Dirty Seahorse. I met with them and was blown away by the amount of work they had to do just to get prototypes.

It's very easy for people to sit in this place and say that we need to get more women involved in the trades. We need to expose them to that, but it's so much more than that. It's one thing to go into a trade school and maybe be intimidated when you're a woman going into a field that isn't dominated by women, so it's hard to identify with, but then you have to go to your practicum or even a work shadow. You're going to a workplace, and then you're told to put on some coveralls, and you can't even get them past your hips because they're not made for a woman's body.

This study is interesting, because we've heard so much about labour mobility and the barriers with that, but we're hearing that there's more than just a labour mobility barrier.

I was wondering if you could speak to some of that. What are some of the barriers? We have a labour shortage in this country. We have a skilled trades shortage in this country. We need to encourage Canadians to take up these trades, because they're meaningful and well-paying. Tradespeople literally build the infrastructure of our country. What are some of the barriers other than just mobility? I'm asking you from the women's lens, if I may.

● (1140)

Stacey Noronha: Yes, absolutely, that's a great question.

You're right. There is no single barrier. The career journey starts as early as awareness, learning more about the trades, understanding it. Some 67% of women have never considered their skilled trades career, and only 9% say they even know how to begin, so early exposure is really key.

My colleague here said representation is also really important. They need to see themselves. They need to have role models. They need to have leaders, women in leadership to be able to say, I could be her one day.

Then, once they enter the trades, there's access to apprenticeships. One thing we do see is that more retention needs to happen with mid-career skilled trades workers or trades folks. You need to have a certified journey person to be able to supervise an apprentice. If we don't have enough of them, and they're not retained in the industry itself, then it doesn't open up any opportunities for young people to enter. That retention effort really needs to start from the top in order to make it so that apprentices can join.

Once they complete their apprenticeship programs, or even during their apprenticeship programs or any kind of work employment, the barriers are everything from child care, which is certainly a thing, access to accessible and affordable child care that is available for the hours when they need to work and at locations in close proximity to their work site. Just thinking of those who are fly-in, fly-out trades workers, those who are in sites that are in rural communities, that's also a really important part of child care accessibility as well.

Then, once they are in their employment, there's the workplace culture. Do they have psychological safety? Does this workplace feel like a place they belong? That's really important and key, and there's an onus a little bit on employers. The government can create the pathway for it, but it's the employers who would need to create workplaces that are safe and secure and that feel inclusive.

Then, once they are in that workplace, it's around progression, career progression. A lot of women leave the trades because of lack of access to career progression and opportunities. If they're not able to advance, they will likely leave the industry altogether.

Rosemarie Falk: Thank you for that.

Mr. Lancaster, do you have anything to add to that in regard to barriers? It's not just necessarily women, because I have a husband who works in the trades. He works shift work. He works seven days in a row for 12 hours a day. Child care is an issue, and we need access to it, but there's also parental leave. When he went to request parental leave the very first time, they were like, how do we do this? We've never.... I'm just wondering, what about for men? Are there barriers other than the mobility that men may encounter?

Ken Lancaster: I think we've had a lot of conversation already about a lot of the barriers that exist. A lot of the barriers my colleague discussed with respect to apprenticeship and completion, those apply across the board. I think that's a conversation worth having. As an association, as a sector, we're quite enthused that we're having these conversations, because we've been speaking to a lot of these points for a number of years now. I think it's important that we're having the conversations now, because we really do need

to build a stronger workforce for the future of the Canadian economy.

The Chair: Thank you. I'm sure you'll come back to that.

Madame Desrochers is next, for five minutes.

[Translation]

Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for being with us this morning.

I'll start with Ms. Sabourin and Mr. De Choinière.

First, congratulations on your campaign to promote skilled trades and construction trades. It's so important. I had the opportunity to attend the fair in Trois-Rivières last year, which was a great event.

I have a number of questions, so I don't know if five minutes will be enough to ask them all.

First, do you have any data on the number of workers in Quebec who seek opportunities outside the province?

● (1145)

Francine Sabourin: We don't have that information, unfortunately.

Caroline Desrochers: Okay.

The flip side of that is the labour shortage, which my colleague talked about earlier.

Could the possibility of hiring certified francophone construction workers—such as workers from Manitoba or New Brunswick—help address the labour shortage?

I have another question related to that: Which province do you think would have the least work to do when it comes to credential equivalencies?

Francine Sabourin: That's a good question.

I'll let you answer it, Mr. De Choinière.

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: Regarding the provinces, we already have agreements, specifically with Ontario and New Brunswick, to facilitate recognition of credentials in certain trades, so it's certainly possible.

To your broader question, I would say that the pathways provided by the Commission de la construction du Québec are already quite broad. If a contractor has needs, the commission generally works with them to identify the right pathway and facilitate credential recognition whenever possible.

Caroline Desrochers: Perfect.

Earlier, we talked about the unique legislation that protects workers, which was put in place when unemployment rates were very high. There may be a connection there.

If this legislation were to be revisited, would you have any recommendations to facilitate that process while recognizing that this falls under Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction? Have you given any thought to that?

Francine Sabourin: We do have some recommendations. You talked about full mobility, which was one of the first things we advocated for. We have secured greater mobility even within Quebec, where there are restrictions.

We would also like more flexibility with respect to the finishing trades, but we don't want to eliminate them. As we have said, all construction industry stakeholders have business models built around the trades. Again, though, greater flexibility could help us capture all that.

The goal remains the same. From what I hear, both in Quebec and across Canada, our industry must be more productive. We also need to think about reducing costs through productivity. I know construction costs are now extremely high across Canada, so we have to find a way, with each separate jurisdiction, to remove the barriers that undermine productivity.

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you very much for your answer, which is super helpful. I completely agree with you. As the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, I know we need to build a lot more.

You talked about the team Canada strong initiative. How do you see it being implemented in Quebec? I know that our colleagues remind us that this is an exclusively provincial jurisdiction, but how can we ensure that Quebec doesn't end up at a disadvantage because of overly rigid measures that hinder implementation?

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: Quebec already has well-established institutions. The Commission de la construction works closely with the network of vocational training centres and the ministry of education. Employer and union organizations are directly involved in this. Therefore, we certainly don't recommend changing the existing structures. The infrastructure is already in place. What we need is funding to accelerate program updates and support larger cohorts, particularly in more remote regions where needs tend to be greater. That's really how the initiative can help Quebec within the existing structures.

The Chair: Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Andréanne Larouche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank Mr. Lancaster and Ms. Noronha once again. I would especially like to thank Ms. Noronha for her interest in the role of women in construction.

By the way, Quebec had the Chapeau, les filles! competition, which aimed to introduce girls to all kinds of skilled trades and encourage them to pursue non-traditional occupations. This competition is a great initiative for Quebec.

You also spoke at length about your trade camps. I'm going to look into that. I think that's something to be proud of. As a woman from a family of carpenter-joiners and masons, I can tell you that we still talk about those trades a lot on Sunday evenings at home.

I would now like to come back to what you said in your opening remarks. When the team Canada strong initiative was announced, it came with a funding envelope. You had begun to talk about that. What could that money be used for, and what are the consequences of not having it yet?

• (1150)

Francine Sabourin: As Mr. De Choinière mentioned earlier, our training programs are outdated. We need to update them, and to do that, we need money. School service centres need the money to make that happen.

Mr. De Choinière mentioned the various partners, but Quebec has the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail, the CPMT, which was set up for the express purpose of allocating all the funds appropriately. The CPMT is a labour-management partnership organization. Employer and union representatives work together to ensure that resources are distributed properly. It could be done that way, but the key priority is updating our vocational training programs.

We also need to be able to offer training that is broader in scope and much more widely available across Quebec. That is another one of the challenges we're facing. Certain cohorts—electricians, for instance—often face challenges. First, the program is outdated, and second, there are waiting lists. Some people wait as long as two years to get into the program, so they turn to other trades or decide to enter the industry through labour pools, without receiving formal training, as Mr. De Choinière mentioned earlier.

To address the labour shortage, we need people, but we also need skills. We are currently experiencing a shortage of both labour and skills.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Larouche.

[English]

Next, we have Mr. Reynolds.

We will conclude with the last two, Mr. Reynolds for five minutes and then Mr. Saini.

Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for coming today. We really appreciate your coming here today to talk about this important subject.

My first question is for Madame Sabourin.

Is the national Red Seal acknowledged and accredited in Quebec? It is. Thank you.

If somebody attained a Red Seal outside of the province, say, in Winnipeg, where we have a pretty large francophone community, and wanted to come work in Quebec, would that be relatively easy?

[Translation]

Francine Sabourin: As I mentioned earlier, when the CCQ issues a worker's trade certificate, the red seal endorsement will appear on it, so that will be recognized as part of the worker's qualifications.

[English]

Colin Reynolds: That's good to know. Thank you.

I know that some friends—this was quite a few years ago—tried to work in Quebec, and it was very difficult to do that. Obviously that's changed, so that's good.

Do you see any other things that could be added to help with skilled trades mobility, especially in and out of Quebec?

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: Out of Quebec.... Do you mean...?

Colin Reynolds: This bill is talking about skilled trades mobility across the country. There are probably some people in Quebec who may want to work outside of Quebec, and then vice versa. I am just wondering if this bill addresses any of those issues. What do you see that could be added to address those issues?

[Translation]

Jean-Philippe De Choinière: I would say training in Quebec is often more extensive than what is currently offered in the other provinces. In fact, the National Construction Labour Relations Alliance of Canada website enables comparisons of training rates and programs in the various provinces. We can see that training is more extensive in Quebec than in the rest of the country.

Right now, that more extensive training makes it easier for a worker in Quebec to move to another province than the other way around. Outward mobility is not an issue. Obviously, we have very significant labour needs in Quebec, so retaining our skilled workforce is top of mind for us.

• (1155)

[English]

Colin Reynolds: Thank you.

My next question is for you, Ms. Noronha.

I'm a construction electrician by trade. I have trained many women apprentices, and I have seen the barriers that you talk about. Many of them get their Red Seal, but retention is the biggest issue. Do you see anything in this bill that really addresses that?

I've even seen the women's PPE. I've actually been the one who's had to order the harnesses. It's a different harness. Those are definitely some barriers. Contractors are not always keen to order those things. They're expensive.

Do you see anything that we could do better with this bill to address some of those issues with retention of women in the skilled trades?

Stacey Noronha: I think asking the women themselves, as part of the consultation process to have women and women-focused organizations part of it, would be something. It wasn't as detailed in clause 3 in the sense of women being named for that, but I would say something like...if that would be part of it.

I think it's challenging for women to have to re-prove their competency. We are concerned around the idea of adding another hurdle to a career journey that already has multiple barriers. If retention is the ultimate goal, this could be another reason they would walk away.

Colin Reynolds: Okay. Thank you.

My next question is for Mr. Lancaster. The word “framework” in the bill has a pretty vague description. What does a national framework for skilled trades mobility look like to you?

Ken Lancaster: As has been addressed here already this morning, jurisdictionally this involves a lot of different players. When you're talking about a topic as broad as the skilled trades, there are a number of different jurisdictions, and there are a number of different stakeholders that should be involved in that conversation.

There's a lot of work that's already been ongoing in this area, too, and we, as an industry, continue to have discussions. How do we get completion rates higher? How do we get success rates higher? How do we assist across this large federation with a number of different jurisdictions to harmonize, not in a way of diminishing the standards but to do it in a collaborative fashion so all the stakeholders are engaged and those conversations are happening at the table?

Colin Reynolds: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

Next is Mr. Saini for five minutes.

Gurbux Saini (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for coming.

My question is for Ken Lancaster. In the time that we are going through, when the economy is suffering and we are facing tariffs from the U.S., there are studies that tell us that our economy is suffering close to 7% of the GDP because of interprovincial barriers. People cannot move from one province to another to do their job. Your trades represent 40% to 50% of the total construction industry. Can you give us your insight into this? Will Bill C-266 help to alleviate some of those issues?

Ken Lancaster: As I said during my opening remarks, the intent of this bill could not come at a better time. As you have alluded to, there is a significant amount of potential GDP that could be unlocked just by addressing interprovincial trade barriers.

This bill, as I mentioned—from contractor mobility to labour mobility, removing impediments to productivity—can help unlock the capacity that we currently have in the system. I think that's where we are enthusiastic right now, as an industry, because building a workforce takes time. Building a skilled trades workforce takes time. This is not something where we can turn the tap on tomorrow and expect to have the required number of workers in the trades that we will need. This bill and this legislation are about unlocking the capacity that we currently have in the system so we can, again, build a stronger, more resilient economy.

Gurbux Saini: Thank you.

My next question is for Ms. Sabourin.

I was very surprised to hear that there is still legislation across Canada that prohibits people from other parts of Canada from working in Quebec. We are one nation, one country. Do you think it's time to remove those barriers? Will this legislation help to do that? It also allows Quebecers to work across Canada. Language may be one barrier, which I can fully understand, but there are people in New Brunswick and Manitoba who also speak the language.

I'd like to hear your viewpoint on those things.

● (1200)

[Translation]

Francine Sabourin: As I mentioned earlier, the challenge in Quebec right now is that there are still barriers to worker mobility. Some workers can't work outside of certain regions. That's why the ACQ wants to see these barriers eliminated.

As Mr. De Choinière mentioned, agreements are already in place to facilitate the integration of workers from Ontario and New Brunswick. We support that, but there's still work to be done to achieve full labour mobility. We are in favour of full mobility all across Canada, but the distinct features of Quebec's system must be respected.

As we have said, our legislation also provides for mandatory union membership for all workers. That's not at all the case in other provinces, where construction sites are unionized. In Quebec, unionization is highly regulated. We just need to make sure that we keep refining our own model. Meanwhile, cross-Canada mobility has to respect the Quebec model.

[English]

Gurbux Saini: Thank you.

Ms. Noronha, first of all, I appreciate what you're doing for females and people who don't have the same opportunities in Canada. Would this legislation, in your viewpoint, help the economics and build more benefit and mobility for the groups you're representing?

Stacey Noronha: Would the bill help the economic piece for them? Yes. Would they be able to keep their jobs or have more jobs? I think so. I think it allows more mobility, as we have already talked about. It removes barriers.

From a woman's point of view and for under-represented groups, the idea that they could be able to move where they would like, as easily as possible, would be perfect, but a portable credential doesn't guarantee a portable worker. Child care, housing, transportation, relocation costs and all of those things need to be factored in. Those things are practical barriers as well. I think that needs to be part of the conversation as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Saini.

I would like to thank the witnesses who appeared in the first hour.

We will suspend for two moments while we transition to the next hour.

● (1200)

(Pause)

● (1210)

The Chair: Committee members, welcome back for the second hour of the committee meeting.

I'll take a few moments to clarify a couple of points to the new witnesses who are appearing.

You have the option to participate in the official language of your choice. Make sure you're on the channel that gives you the interpretation that allows you to fully participate in the meeting, if you're bilingual. Those appearing virtually can click on the globe icon at the bottom of the screen to choose the official language. I would ask you all to please keep the interpretation on for the full duration of the meeting so you understand all of the conversation in both languages.

If there's an interruption in translation services, please get my attention. We'll suspend while it is corrected.

This is a reminder to those of you in the room, including witnesses, to set your devices to silent mode.

Please refrain from tapping on the microphone booms, for the protection of our interpreters.

As well, please direct all questions through me, the chair, and wait until I address you by name before proceeding.

We have two witnesses appearing in the second hour, one virtual and one in the room.

From the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, we have Catherine Massé-Lacoste, chief legal officer, who is appearing virtually.

From the National Association of Career Colleges, we have Michael Sangster, chief executive officer, who has appeared before the committee previously.

Each witness will have five minutes for opening statements.

We will begin with Madame Massé-Lacoste.

[Translation]

Ms. Massé-Lacoste, you have the floor.

Catherine Massé-Lacoste (Chief Legal Officer, Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec - Construction): Good afternoon.

[Technical difficulty—Editor]

[English]

The Chair: Madame Massé-Lacoste, I will have to suspend your part and go to the second witness, because there is a problem with the sound quality that is affecting the translation. The technical people will get in touch with you.

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: Thank you.

The Chair: We'll move to Mr. Sangster for five minutes.

• (1215)

Michael Sangster (Chief Executive Officer, National Association of Career Colleges): Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the invitation to appear today.

Canada is at a pivotal moment. Our skills and labour challenges are significant. Employers across the country need people with the right skills, Canadians need clearer pathways to good jobs, and our economy needs a nimble workforce that can adapt to technology and constant change. Meeting that challenge means making the most of Canada's greatest resource—our people.

We need to meet Canadians where they are, whether they are entering the workforce, changing careers, arriving in Canada, upgrading their skills or looking for a new opportunity. We need to give them the broadest possible range of high-quality pathways to develop their talents, build relevant skills and put those skills to work. There is no single pathway to a successful career. What matters is creating a system that gives people real choices, recognizes what they know and can do and helps them move towards the opportunities where they can succeed.

My name is Michael Sangster, and I am the chief executive officer of the National Association of Career Colleges. Our nearly 600 members are regulated career colleges operating in communities across Canada. We prepare Canadians with the practical, job-ready skills they need in order to succeed in occupations and sectors where employers are actively looking for talent. Our students include adults changing careers, parents supporting families, newcomers building careers in Canada and people looking for a direct pathway into employment.

I want to focus my comments today on three words: train, recognize and mobilize. If we want to improve Canada's labour mobility, we have to think about all three. Bill C-266 starts an important conversation about recognition and mobility. Our message is that training has to be part of that conversation from the beginning.

That brings us to our first recommendation. The entire Canadian training ecosystem should be represented in developing this framework. That means public colleges, regulated career colleges, universities, unions, apprenticeship organizations, employer-based training, indigenous partners, governments and regulators. If the objective is a national workforce framework, the institutions actually developing that workforce need to be at the table. To echo the views of prior witnesses, it is important that we are at the table not just in developing a framework but right through the implementation. As educators, we offer a unique practical perspective.

Second, we need greater transparency for learners and workers. A Canadian considering training should be able to understand the pathway ahead: What training do I need? What credential will I receive? What certification or licensing requirements follow? What happens if I move to a province or territory? Bill C-266 proposes identifying trades and mapping equivalencies among provincial and territorial standards and credentials. We encourage government to turn that work into something Canadians can actually use—namely, a Canadian skills mobility map. Make the pathways visible. Mobility should not become understandable only after someone tries to move. It should be clear when they begin preparing for their career.

Third, this framework must be built for the workforce of the future. Technology is changing almost every occupation. Artificial intelligence, automation, advanced manufacturing, digital infrastructure, electric vehicles and other technologies are changing the competencies employers require. A national framework should therefore do more than catalogue the skilled trades system we have today. It should evolve as occupations, technologies and employers' needs evolve. That adaptability matters for Canada's broader workforce needs. When demand changes quickly, our training, credential recognition and mobility systems need to be able to respond quickly as well. Canadians should be able to develop relevant skills and put them to work where employers and communities need them most.

Fourth, harmonization does not mean lowering standards or intruding on provincial standards. Health matters, safety matters, competency matters, and provincial and territorial jurisdiction matters, but maintaining high standards does not require unnecessary duplication. As other witnesses have noted, the focus on harmonization should be on learning outcomes rather than specific inputs or programs.

Finally, we encourage the committee to focus on measurable outcomes. A framework is valuable only if it produces clearer pathways and better outcomes for Canadians.

Chair, I will finish where I started: train, recognize and mobilize. Canada does not need simply greater labour mobility.

• (1220)

We need greater skills mobility—a system where Canadians understand where their training can take them, employers understand what credentials represent, regulators maintain appropriate standards at the provincial level, and qualified workers can take their skills to employers and communities across the country.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank the members of the committee for the work they did last year on the Canadian student grants issue. Your work and diligence researching that issue led to a successful outcome for our sector and for students across the country. On behalf of the National Association, I'd like to thank you for the hard work your organization did on that.

Thank you, and I look forward to your comments.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sangster.

I want to remind the committee that Madame Massé-Lacoste was audio tested yesterday. Her headset was approved for translation. There are still issues, so I've been advised to suspend for a moment while they do one further test before we proceed with Madame Massé-Lacoste.

• (1220) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1220)

The Chair: Thank you, committee members.

The committee is back in session.

We will now go to Madame Massé-Lacoste.

[Translation]

Ms. Massé-Lacoste, you have the floor for five minutes.

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: Thank you very much. I'm sorry for the interruptions.

We thank the committee members for the invitation. We hope to be invited to the consultation if the bill is passed.

The Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec-Construction, or FTQ-Construction, is one of Quebec's five union associations in the construction industry, and it represents nearly 96,000 workers in almost every trade in the industry.

We wanted to start by saying that at the heart of the bill is this idea of certification, which, for us, is inseparable from the concepts of skills training and workforce management. Those two elements are at the core of provincial jurisdiction. For FTQ-Construction, that means that any federal initiative in this area will have to fully respect provincial jurisdiction and recognize the Quebec models that already have proven track records in terms of skills and workforce management. In Quebec, we have a rigorous qualification, training and management system that contributes to the skills of workers, the quality of works and the safety on Quebec construction sites.

In a context of labour shortages, we recognize that the goal should not be to create more structures or relax requirements, but to strengthen existing mechanisms, invest in skills training and promote the retention of highly skilled workers. Indeed, we noted that there was a major labour retention issue in Quebec. We recognize that if we want to address a shortage, that's where action should be taken. A mobile workforce is important, yes, but a skilled, qualified and sustainable workforce in the industry is more important.

I'm going to quickly go over the specific circumstances in Quebec, since you have already heard from representatives of the Association de la construction du Québec, or ACQ.

Quebec's construction industry is a sectoral system. It is divided into four sectors and has a centralized workforce management program at the Commission de la construction du Québec, or CCQ. Union membership is mandatory, and the CCQ issues qualification certificates. It's an organization that is funded in large part by industry employees and employers.

This system is unique to Canada and offers a number of important benefits for workers, including the harmonization of benefits across all sectors in the industry and all employers. Our pension plan is the fourth-largest contributor to the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, with \$33 billion in assets.

There is also a detailed and centralized management of workforce skills. That means that only as many workers come in as are needed, so as not to further jeopardize workers. Yes, there's a shortage right now, but that isn't always the case. In the industry, there are periods that are quieter and more difficult. It's important to strike a balance.

Finally, I will mention union pluralism, which provides stability in labour relations.

The CCQ issues all qualification cards, maintains a comprehensive digital registry of all apprentices and journeypersons in Quebec, administers qualifying exams and manages the training fund for employees in the construction industry. This fund, which is funded equally by employers and workers, supports ongoing training, development activities and upskilling, thereby focusing on a skilled workforce.

The CCQ benefits from the expertise of 25 joint professional subcommittees, each made up of an equal number of union and employer representatives, to accurately diagnose labour needs and guide training measures accordingly.

As you heard earlier, the partners established that 16,000 graduates per year were needed to meet Quebec's construction needs for the period from 2025 to 2029. That was the second last forecast. On May 25, new analyses showed that, for the period from 2026 to 2030, 17,000 graduates would be needed per year. That means we have a high demand for graduates.

• (1225)

For the time being, there's a heavy reliance on workers who come in through the pools. The issue is that those workers have not obtained their degrees and will often leave the industry quickly, so that won't be a sustainable workforce.

In short, Quebec already has tried-and-tested structures and mechanisms to receive and administer resources for skills training to enable workers to get onto construction sites. For us, it's important not to undermine those mechanisms and not to cut corners in terms of training.

Over time, the construction industry has seen many examples of interprovincial mobility and has adapted to them. You were previously told about agreements with Ontario—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Massé-Lacoste.

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Genuis, you have six minutes, please.

Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both the witnesses.

Mr. Sangster, in the training ecosystem for the trades, you have the union training centres, the public training institutions—public colleges—and the private career colleges, which you represent. That's basically the universe that exists for trades training. Isn't that right?

Michael Sangster: Yes, that would capture the vast majority of students.

Garnett Genuis: It's going to vary, I suppose, depending on which trades you're talking about and also regionally. There are some regions where maybe a higher proportion are trained by the public institutions and some regions where they're not. Union training centres are present for certain trades in some places and not others.

Can you give us a sense of the proportions between those different parts of the puzzle?

Michael Sangster: I don't have a precise number that I can quote back to you today. It does vary by region. It also varies by role. We'll train fewer in the Red Seal programs within our institutions compared to the public colleges across the country, and there's more support from government at times for the union institutions that are doing the training.

That's one of the things we do want to speak to in the long term: that equal funding should be across the different sectors, the different institutions that are doing the training. We'd like to see government focus more on that.

I'd also like to have a conversation.... We talk about our colleges. It's also the supporting roles that support the skilled trades that we need across this country as we build these massive projects. It's not just about the Red Seal role. It's also about a carpenter who comes in with a different level of training. That's part of the conversation we have to have when we talk about a skills road map for the whole country.

Garnett Genuis: Obviously, to get work done you need people with many different kinds of trade skills. Is it fair to say that this is like three legs of the same stool, that if you lose one of the legs, that infrastructure for providing the training can collapse on you, as opposed to just like...? It seems implicit in some of the things the government's doing, this idea that you can dispense with one part of that ecosystem and focus on another or on two out of three.

Right now, certainly, given where the trades training is happening, we need all three. Is that correct?

• (1230)

Michael Sangster: Absolutely. We need all three. It is a true ecosystem of an education system that trains for different levels to come into different roles across the country to ensure that we can get all these big, great projects done.

That's why I applaud the work of the committee and Parliament in looking at this bill and thinking about how we can make a road map for this, how can we have a view of what's needed across the whole country. We need to have an education system in place that involves student aid, student grants, student loans and other things to ensure that we get the workers we need in this country. We have to look at immigration as well.

Garnett Genuis: In terms of working together, I also know that there are some people at the political level who want to imagine or create a kind of ideological opposition between these different parts of that training ecosystem. However, my impression—and you've confirmed it—is that there isn't really that tension or competition between the different parts of the sector; it's that people do work together, want to work together, and want to see that support available so that a student in Newfoundland, where the local institution is a private career college, Academy Canada, can get the training they need where they live and someone else who has a union training centre or a public institution close by can use that.

Michael Sangster: The demand is so high to do the training that there is a role for every single one of us to play across the country.

You mentioned the Academy Canada example. It and the College of the North Atlantic work alongside each other. They co-operate and make sure that the ecosystem delivers what Newfoundland and Labrador needs.

Garnett Genuis: Yes, I was visiting both of them during the same visit recently to western Newfoundland, and they both confirmed that.

Let's talk in the midst of this about the student grant issue, which I saw and see very much as an attack on your part of the sector, the leg of the stool that you represent. You mentioned that there had been some progress around that, and I think you're referring to the fact that after saying student grants won't be available to any students at private career colleges, the government decided to exempt certain trades, and have a process for that exemption. However, you continue to have a system, essentially, of discrimination. A student at a university, for instance, who is not studying in the trades, a student at a university, regardless of what they study, regardless of the relationship to labour market need, is guaranteed, if they meet the other requirements, to have access to that student grant.

Meanwhile, if you're at a career college, you are almost certain not to be able to access the grant, except if you fit into these narrow exceptions, and the exceptions, as they're currently enumerated, fall far short of the areas where there actually are acute needs in the labour market.

From my perspective, on a level it shows the impact of the advocacy—that there was a step that was made in a positive direction—but the policy is still fundamentally unfair.

Do you want to comment on that?

Michael Sangster: We would agree. Fairness has been brought back to four employment categories that needed the support of that grant because there's a huge job need in this country. We applaud this committee for the work it did, and we applaud the government for the exemption process it put in place to go beyond that next year.

I will also mention that there was significant growth in the sector around some of these grants, and something did need to be done. We worked alongside the officials in the department. They came up with the four, and this committee had a role to play.

We're excited to see where we go in the next year. Those exemption applications have to be in by October 15 from our institutions, and we hope to see a lot more of those roles that are crucial to the development of Canada's economy being brought back into those grants on two-year programs.

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Desrochers, you have the floor for six minutes.

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for taking the time to join us this morning.

Ms. Massé-Lacoste, you may have listened to the discussion with representatives of the Association de la construction du Québec, who told us about the labour shortage. This issue affects all sectors, but I'm particularly concerned about it as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure. We're talking about a shortage of around 17,000 workers per year between now and 2030 in Quebec's construction industry. That's why the work being done to promote the skilled trades and the building trades is absolutely important.

The program we have put forward, team Canada strong, will also encourage young people to pursue these skilled trades by promoting them and giving young people substantial financial support so that they can finish their studies instead of just starting them.

It's also important to reduce barriers to mobility, and that is what my colleague's bill proposes.

There's one thing I'd like to understand. I asked a question this morning, but there weren't any data available for me. I often hear colleagues or people from industry associations in other provinces say that Quebec workers can come and work with them, but that workers in those provinces can't go and work in Quebec, even when they meet the requirements and speak French.

Is there any data on the number of Quebec workers who go and work outside the province?

Please answer quickly, because I have three other questions that I would really like to ask you.

• (1235)

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: I don't have the data you're asking for at the moment. However, the Commission de la construction du Québec collects a lot of data. We can check with them and send you the answer, if necessary, because the commission is exemplary when it comes to data.

However, for Quebec workers, I can tell you that there are also multiple challenges with going to work outside Quebec, particularly in terms of union memberships. There are workers who are being forced off construction sites, so there are challenges for everyone. There are also challenges with insurance plans, because we have a very specific plan here. Bringing insurance or pension plans back here is also a challenge.

That's what I can say quickly on that.

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you.

It would be beneficial, then, to sit down together to better harmonize things and find ways to reduce barriers.

On the topic of barriers, there was also discussion on the legislation that protects workers. It was an opportunity for the Association de la construction du Québec to say that there could be improvements to that legislation. Obviously, we understand that this is completely a provincial jurisdiction, and we respect that. That said, as the government responsible for all of Canada, we certainly want to make sure that we maximize the productivity of our industries. The more productive they are, the more progress can be made.

How can that be encouraged? Do you have any views on that?

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: Are you referring to the discussion that took place on mobility in the province of Quebec?

Caroline Desrochers: Yes, absolutely.

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: You know, that's a really complex topic, and we could talk about it for hours. In fact, it's priority hiring for workers in the region, so it doesn't prevent hiring. If there are no workers available, the employer can hire workers from anywhere in Quebec. For us, that doesn't constitute a barrier to productivity or anything else.

According to certain standards, permanent employees can actually move anywhere, depending on the hours they have accumulated. For us, it isn't a barrier to productivity or mobility; it's just a hiring priority.

Caroline Desrochers: Okay, thank you very much.

I'm going to turn to Mr. Sangster.

[English]

Thank you so much for joining us here in person.

I'm just wondering, with respect to interprovincial standards, and maybe you don't have that answer, but when we're looking at all the provinces, is there any model that would sort of be the gold standard that we should look to and that would make it easier to achieve harmonization, as a baseline for labour standards?

Michael Sangster: That's a very good question. To be honest with you, I would like the opportunity to come back to the committee in writing on that. I don't have that as a top-of-the-head answer, and I don't want to dilly-dally on it. I'd rather just leave it there for today.

Caroline Desrochers: No problem. Thank you.

[Translation]

I'm going to ask you a similar but different question, Ms. Massé-Lacoste.

Are there any provinces that are easier to deal with when it comes to equivalencies between trade credentials?

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: What I'm being told is that things are working well with the three provinces that have interprovincial agreements with the CCQ. Those are agreements that have been well thought out, and things are working well on the construction sites. That's the news I have been given.

Caroline Desrochers: That could be a basis for a more pan-Canadian model, then.

• (1240)

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: Absolutely.

Caroline Desrochers: Thank you.

The Chair: You have 20 seconds left.

Caroline Desrochers: I will use these 20 seconds to talk about the team Canada strong program again.

How can we implement this program without getting caught up in the details and ensure that the program can be rolled out as quickly as possible in Quebec?

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: I think the best way is to send resources where they're needed and allow the structures that are already in place to do the work they're meant to do, while continuing consultations.

Caroline Desrochers: How do we ensure that the program parameters are—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Desrochers.

Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for six minutes.

Andréanne Larouche: Thank you very much to the witnesses for joining us today.

Mr. Sangster, it's always interesting to hear about training. However, I'm going to turn to Ms. Massé-Lacoste first.

When you finished your opening remarks, you were going to talk about the agreement with Ontario. My colleague Ms. Desrochers asked you a question about which provinces things were working better with.

At FTQ-Construction, what is your view on the recognition of prior learning across provinces? What are the obstacles to that recognition, and what is working well?

That may also give you the chance to add to what you were going to say at the end of your opening remarks.

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: The CCQ has all the right mechanisms in place. It has committees to look at what's being done elsewhere, and it currently does recognize the skills of workers from elsewhere. We don't really see any obstacles.

This could certainly be made easier with some more thought, but there are already such mechanisms to ensure that the people who arrive here meet the requirements of health and safety training, for example. Here in Quebec, there's a mandatory 30-hour course. In the agreements that were signed with the three provinces, care was given to include requirements equivalent to those 30 hours of health and safety training.

It's basically a matter of letting the CCQ take the time to carry out the analysis, because there are various ways of teaching things elsewhere in Canada that differ from what Quebec does. As mentioned earlier, we have diplomas of vocational studies, which is different. We also have requirements for the number of hours, which is different as well. It isn't just about mentoring. For us, these things are important for workers' health and safety.

We should let the CCQ and its partners, the committees, ensure that these are indeed equivalencies. Of course, we agree that workers should be able to join construction sites in Quebec.

Andréanne Larouche: You touched on the issue of labour. It's well documented that we have a unique system in Quebec, even for training. We can come back to that.

My colleague also touched on team Canada strong. During the previous part of the meeting, the people from the Association de la construction du Québec clearly demonstrated that what's currently lacking is funding.

How could that funding help you meet the current market needs?

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: In fact, we're in the same position as they are. For us, the big problem in Quebec right now is that we need skilled labour on construction sites. The CCQ's statistics show that employers are able to hire workers, but that those workers stay in the industry for less than five years. Those who leave are mainly people who arrived without a qualification certificate in hand.

For us, what's important for having workers who stay on construction sites and don't just pop in for a bit is to have the money to train people and encourage them to take high quality skills training so that they're qualified. When you're qualified, you're able to stay in the industry and make your own way.

Andréanne Larouche: Absolutely.

You mentioned something else in your opening remarks, and that leads me to ask you a question that I didn't have time to ask the previous panel of witnesses.

We're talking about labour mobility, but to build more and to look at all the problems in the construction industry, particularly regarding the labour shortage, there may be other solutions worth exploring.

You briefly touched on the issue of workers entering through pools. What other solutions would there be in that regard? Could you speak a bit more to the impacts of that?

• (1245)

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: The workforce entering Quebec through pools consists of workers for whom training requirements are minimal. As I told you, the CCQ looked at the implications and realized that these were people who were coming in and then leaving.

I know you're concerned about women. It's the same for women. It's very difficult, and it's even harder for them, because they face discrimination in hiring and psychological harassment.

The workforce really needs to be skilled. When workers enter the industry through pools, they haven't needed to obtain a professional diploma or accumulate the 2,000 or 4,000 hours required to obtain a certificate of qualification. They're supposed to train on the job site, with training, but it doesn't work. It works for some people, but we realize that people come out of the industry.

For us, this solution is like a band-aid. We have no choice; we need to bring workers into the industry, so that's what we're doing. However, if we want a long-term solution, we really need to focus on training, and to do that, we need funding.

Andréanne Larouche: You just opened the door to my next question. I am the Bloc Québécois critic for the status of women, and we know that things are being done in Quebec.

What is being done at FTQ-Construction to promote the presence of women in the construction trades? I know that this is of great interest to my Conservative colleagues.

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: As for FTQ-Construction, I can tell you that there are very few women in the industry. I think the figure is currently at 4%. There's no easy solution to this. Of course, we support providing guidance. We also encourage women to contact us. As soon as they encounter problems or experience psychological harassment on a construction site, we send representatives to support them.

There is better protection now when it comes to psychological harassment in Quebec. There are also new provisions in the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect against psychosocial risks in the workplace, so we hope that these new provisions will help us take swift and effective action on construction sites. The problem is that these incidents often go unreported. People in the construction industry are very afraid to do so.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Massé-Lacoste.

Thank you, Ms. Larouche.

[English]

We'll conclude after questions from Mr. Reynolds and Ms. Harrison.

Mr. Reynolds, you have five minutes.

Colin Reynolds: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for coming here today.

I want to start off by congratulating Mr. Sangster on his recent appointment as honorary captain of HMCS *St. John's*.

Michael Sangster: It's a huge honour to take on that honorary role. Thank you for noticing that.

Colin Reynolds: I'll give some credit to my colleague. She tipped me off.

My first question is for Madame Massé-Lacoste.

I'm wondering if there is any interest in Quebec in adopting the national Red Seal standard for skilled trades. I hear a lot of talk about construction jobs in Quebec and about training workers accordingly, and I know from your discussion that Quebec has agreements with several other provinces.

Is there any appetite to do that in Quebec?

[Translation]

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: We are in favour of systems that make it possible to recognize competencies, as long as the work has been done to ensure that there really is applicable recognition. However, we don't really have an appetite for changing our training requirements, which we want to adapt to our work sites and our reality in Quebec.

That is why we started by telling you that, for us, it is important to respect what exists in Quebec. We have mechanisms in place that are balanced and fair, and we think that's the best way to address the particularities that arise every day on Quebec shipyards.

[English]

Colin Reynolds: Okay. Thank you for that.

My next question is for you, Mr. Sangster. In your opening statement, you talked about transparency in industry and training. What would you like to see change to increase transparency?

Michael Sangster: I think that for us it's promotion of the roles and a better understanding of the opportunities, and just increasing the transparency for people as they enter into the training as to what the requirements would be should they choose to move from Ontario to British Columbia or from Manitoba to Saskatchewan, and whether they can transit those skills they've trained for to go and work in another province.

More transparency and more awareness of those kinds of things in advance would be extremely helpful to people as they enter their training and pick the institutions that they're going to be trained in.

• (1250)

Colin Reynolds: Okay. Does NACC work with industry to fill gaps in the training ecosystem?

Michael Sangster: I'm glad you asked that question.

We did research last year with Nanos Research. On average, our institutions have over 70 employer relationships. They're involved in our practicum training and our hands-on training. Our students are inside their workplaces and learning how to work. On average, about 60% of our workers end up working in those institutions after graduation, in that sector directly. There's a lot of good correlation.

I think it's very important that we bring the employer voice to this work you're doing and this future solution that's being built, because the employers know where the trends are going and where the workers are going to be needed. It's really crucial that they be at the table.

Colin Reynolds: What are the gaps NACC is seeing in the labour market and training and that you're currently working to address?

Michael Sangster: We can't speak specifically to the skilled trades, but in the broader concept, health care is a huge demand across the entire country. We cannot train enough people to work in health care or in cybersecurity and AI types of roles, so we're upgrading training around those kinds of things.

In the skilled trades, it's everywhere across the country. We hear it today. We're hearing all the stats from the other witnesses about 17,000 workers in Quebec today. It's across every trade. There's a huge demand.

Colin Reynolds: What kinds of outcomes are you seeing, especially in skilled trades, for somebody who comes in and takes their pre-employment training, in actually landing a job afterwards? There's a lot of talk about demand for skilled trades, but at the same time, if we are pushing out apprentices before there are jobs available, the retention will be low. They won't get a job right away. They'll decide to do something else.

We see that a lot in Manitoba, especially in the skilled trades. Things seem to be ramping up a bit in Manitoba when it comes to the construction industry in particular, but pushing out all these apprentices ahead of the work is putting the cart before the horse, and it doesn't help.

Michael Sangster: It doesn't help. That's why I think the work the committee is doing is so important. We have to look at that mobility and at allowing those workers to get trained to move around as the work moves. We've seen Newfoundlanders, as we talked about earlier, move to the oil and gas sector to work, and now they're coming back because of the projects that are starting there. It's about figuring that out and getting it right.

To go back to your question about employers, about 80% of our graduates end up working in the sectors they're directly trained for. One of the things that are not known about our sector is that, quite often, if there is not a job at the end, we can't start the course. Our regulators ensure that there's work at the end of the line for people, and because the vast majority of our programs involve a practicum or a work placement, they end up with an employer who ends up

hiring them. The ratio is incredible for how many of them end up right inside that company.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

Madame LaRouche, we'll end after you, after your questioning round.

Ms. Harrison, go ahead for five minutes.

Emma Harrison (Peterborough, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to ask this to both witnesses, if it's possible. Do employers care more about where the skills are developed or that the skill and competency are there? That's to either witness and for both.

Michael Sangster: I'll go ahead.

I don't believe the employers care about where the skill comes from. One of the great assets of our sector...and we don't talk competitively towards the community colleges and the universities, because we truly believe there is a role for us all to play. Our courses tend to be shorter, more compact, and around the schedule of our students. You don't go Monday at 10 and then Tuesday at three; you go for five hours a day, for five days of the week, because the vast majority of our students are parents, have other jobs.... They're a bit older. I don't believe the employers care. They're looking for the skills. Often, we're hearing more of this.

I do a lot of work with the navy—that was mentioned. They're looking for the skills, and they'll hire them and will take them to the next level internally. It's not so much about the institution but about getting the right outcomes. That's why we think policy needs to be fair across all.

Emma Harrison: Ms. Massé-Lacoste.

[Translation]

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: As for employers, it's hard for me to say. As a union representative, I get the impression that what's important for employers is having the most qualified workforce possible to do the job. You should have asked the ACQ what its members think about this.

However, I can tell you that, to have a skilled workforce, it's also important to take into account the environment in which the shipyards are located. That's why it's important for us that it come from measures already in place in Quebec.

• (1255)

[English]

Emma Harrison: Thank you so much.

I'll go back to Ms. Massé-Lacoste.

In your opening statement, you mentioned the retention issues. I was wondering if you could elaborate more thoroughly on what exactly the problems are there.

[Translation]

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: Unfortunately, I moved and don't have my notes with me, but I can send the committee the statistics and surveys that were conducted by the Commission de la construction du Québec on this. We noted that a large proportion of people entering the industry didn't stay for more than five years. So we can bring them into the industry, but we can't keep them.

When we conducted this survey and looked at the reasons behind it, we saw that working conditions played a role, not just financially, but on construction sites as well. Another major factor was, in fact, a lack of qualifications.

[English]

Emma Harrison: Thank you.

[Translation]

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: I don't have the other ones off the top of my head.

[English]

Emma Harrison: Thank you very much.

Mr. Sangster, I was wondering. When people approach the career colleges to go into the skilled trades, is part of the discussion—when they're trying to figure out where they fit best—about some of the roadblocks that they might face, such as mobility issues? Does that deter people from picking up that training?

Michael Sangster: I'll have to answer that a bit anecdotally, but I do hear that from some of our owners. We have a very stringent process that our colleges go through in enrolling students, making sure they meet the student aid obligations within the provinces where they operate. When those aren't met, we ask government to step in and intervene with those institutions to make sure they're no longer in our sector.

Yes, we do have that. We face that. We have a very honest process where we involve the student in making sure they understand the outcomes and the opportunities that are going to be at the far end of their opportunity.

I misspoke earlier. I'd like to just correct a stat I raised earlier, which is that 34% of our graduates often go with the employers where they did their practicum. The number I mentioned—60%—is actually the number who are employed within three months, so that answers another question from earlier about how fast they get into the workforce.

Emma Harrison: Thank you so much.

I'm good. That's all I have.

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Andréanne Larouche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Sangster.

Since I don't have much time, I will address the witness from Quebec, who represents the FTQ-Construction.

Ms. Massé-Lacoste, I'd like to come back to a question I asked the ACQ.

Do you think there are too many trades in Quebec? Should the number be reduced?

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: FTQ-Construction's position is that there aren't too many trades. In fact, Quebec has already implemented versatility measures to allow workers from various trades to carry out work on certain elements and in certain contexts. I don't think there are too many trades.

In fact, we've already done the exercise of comparing trades in the Red Seal program to Quebec trades, and they were very similar. They weren't all that different from one another, so I don't think there's a problem in that regard.

Andréanne Larouche: In closing, I would like to reiterate that this falls under Quebec's jurisdiction, that there is already an agreement dating back to 1997 and that, since 2017, additional measures have also been put in place.

As mentioned earlier, when we were hearing from the previous panel, we need to create a model that includes employers, unions and the education sector.

How does that make the Quebec model even more unique?

Catherine Massé-Lacoste: That's the case in every respect.

As it happens, we are also partners with the CCQ, whether for vocational training or employee benefit plans. Collective bargaining agreements apply to all construction sites in Quebec. Every worker, no matter where they work, has access to their pension plan. Their hours will count toward that pension plan. There is only one, and they will be able to draw funds from it at the end of their career. This really has an impact on every level. It's hard to describe it quickly.

As I was saying earlier, this is one of the problems people face when they leave Quebec. The hours won't count, or they'll have a hard time transferring the money back to the pension plan. It's important for the worker because there are certain benefits they may or may not be eligible for, depending on the number of hours worked. That's why I say it's really difficult. It's important to carefully coordinate the different plans and take the time to do things right.

• (1300)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Larouche.

[English]

Thank you to the witnesses.

This concludes the witness testimony part of the meeting, but I have a couple of administrative items that I wish the committee to deal with. I will simply advise the witnesses that they're free to leave.

Members, please stay.

Let me deal with the first housekeeping matter.

The clerk circulated the travel budget request that the committee instructed the clerk to prepare. You have it.

Do members agree with the adoption of this budget, which will then go to the Liaison Committee, if you agree?

Garnett Genuis: When do we need to have it approved by?

The Chair: We have to deal with it today so it can go to the Liaison Committee.

Garnett Genuis: I'm sorry. Is it November 20 or October 20?

The Chair: It can wait. This is what the committee instructed.

Garnett Genuis: Can we pause on it, come back in two minutes and deal with the other housekeeping first?

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Genuis, you had your hand up.

Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Chair.

There have been discussions among the parties. If you seek it, I believe you'll find unanimous consent for the following:

That...the amendment submission deadline for Bill C-266 be amended and moved to...November 6...; that...officials appear for an hour on the bill on...October 20..., followed by up to two hours of additional witness testimony on the subject matter of the bill; that analysts be asked to prepare a draft report on issues and ideas related to the subject matter of the bill that cannot be included in the bill itself; and that a government response be requested to the aforementioned report pursuant to Standing Order 109.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

The interpreters say they haven't received the text, so I ask that, in the future, you have the texts in advance, because it helps the interpreters do their job.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Larouche.

Are you going to circulate it?

It's been shared in both languages.

Garnett Genuis: I appreciate my colleague's point.

Just for clarification, when we're emailing in a draft, is there a way to email the interpreters in a committee room directly?

The Clerk of the Committee (Alexandre Longpré): I should have forwarded it.

Garnett Genuis: All right. That's the process. In the future, we'll send it to the clerk.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you. That's a valid point, Madame Larouche.

Does everybody have it?

Wait just a moment while it's being distributed.

I think we have agreement. We're going to trust that we don't have to see it. It's the one that's been....

Am I seeing consensus on the motion that was introduced by Mr. Genuis?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Do you want to revisit? It's immaterial to me. How do you want to deal with the travel request?

Garnett Genuis: If November 20 is the timeline, since we're talking about spring as opposed to fall, and because I think it was just distributed yesterday, we would appreciate being able to approve it at the next meeting.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, is there anything to speak to on the travel?

The Clerk: I think he is asking if we can talk about it at the next meeting.

The Chair: Yes. It still meets our deadline, doesn't it?

The Clerk: Yes, absolutely.

The Chair: On that, then, just be prepared to make a decision on the travel request the next time the committee meets.

With that, is it the will of the committee to adjourn?

The meeting is adjourned.

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