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Chair: Mr. John Aldag



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• (1550)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order. Good afternoon, everyone.

Welcome to meeting number 22 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee is continuing its study of creating a fair and equitable Canadian energy transformation. Today is our sixth meeting with witnesses on this study.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of November 25, 2021. Members are attending in person in room or remotely by using the Zoom application.

We'd like to remind all participants, now that we've started, that taking pictures or screenshots is not allowed, but we are being broadcast on the House of Commons website.

As per the directive of the Board of Internal Economy, all those attending the meeting in person are asked to wear a mask, except for those at the table. If you want to take off your mask while speaking, you're welcome to do that, but if you're moving about the room, please wear a mask.

For the benefit of any new witnesses who may not have testified before a committee like this before, please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, you need to click on the microphone icon to activate your mike, and we ask you to go on mute when not speaking. There is interpretation available for those on Zoom. You can choose "floor", "English" or "French". For those in the room, there is simultaneous interpretation, which you're welcome to use. All comments should be addressed through the chair.

On interpretation, I would like to encourage everyone to speak at a slow, conversational pace so that our interpreters can keep up. They're working very hard for the House these days, and it just makes their days a bit more manageable, so we ask for that assistance.

For those in the room, if you wish to speak, raise your hand. For those on Zoom, use the "raise hand" function. When we get into the questions and answers, I very much let the members control the time where they're directing it, so if you raise your hand and aren't selected, it's up to the members. Sometimes they have a specific line of questioning. Don't be offended by it.

We use a card system for timekeeping. The yellow card means that there are 30 seconds left, while red means that your time is up. Don't stop in mid-sentence, but do wind up your thought, and we'll move on to the next person.

I would like to welcome Madame Pauzé to our committee as a guest today.

Also, Mr. Morrice, welcome to our committee.

We have six witnesses—

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): I have a point of order.

The Chair: We have Mr. Angus on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, twice I have asked you to make sure that the Canadian Labour Congress could attend, and you have done that, so I want to put it on the record to thank you and to thank our excellent clerk for the work.

The Chair: Thank you for noting that.

Thank you to the Canadian Labour Congress, as well as all witnesses, for making yourselves available today.

We have six organizations. I'll introduce them. Each will have five minutes to do an opening statement.

I understand that Denise Amyot, the president and CEO of Colleges and Institutes Canada, needs to leave at 4:30. I would like to start with her so that we can get her five-minute testimony. We also have with us Janet Morrison from Colleges and Institutes Canada, who I believe will be here for the duration of the questions and answers.

• (1555)

Ms. Denise Amyot (President and Chief Executive Officer, Colleges and Institutes Canada): I'm okay now, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. I've already said you can start, so if you're comfortable going first, I will turn the floor over to you. I'll give you five minutes on the clock, and then we'll move through the rest of the witnesses for their opening statements.

With that, the floor is yours.

Ms. Denise Amyot: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good evening, members of the committee and fellow witnesses.

I want to acknowledge that I am speaking from Ottawa, located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation.

[Translation]

Colleges and Institutes Canada is Canada's largest post-secondary education network. Our association has close to 700 campuses and access centres, and it works with governments, industries and non-profit organizations to train millions of learners from diverse groups.

Our campuses are within 50 kilometres of 95% of Canadians and of 86% of indigenous peoples. We offer practical, flexible and affordable pathways for learners in urban, rural, northern and remote communities. We offer over 10,000 programs.

[English]

Our graduates are the backbone of the Canadian economy, the largest single group of Canadian workers, representing 34% of the workforce. Did you know that this means that 6.5 million Canadian workers are college graduates?

As we make the move to a carbon-neutral economy, it is a time of great uncertainty for many Canadians. In addition to appearing before you today, Colleges and Institutes Canada has been engaging closely with the Government of Canada on a fair and equitable energy transformation through written submissions, participation in round table discussions and delivering on green initiatives for many years.

[Translation]

We believe that win-win solutions are not only possible, but that they also already exist. They can lead to commercialization and export opportunities for businesses, while creating talent pools and meaningful, well-paying jobs for a green economy.

Colleges are committed to being catalysts and leaders in their communities and to putting their tools to work in decarbonization. For this reason, the Colleges and Institutes Canada network recommends that the federal government support the strengths of colleges to facilitate this transition, with three key recommendations.

First, we recommend supporting the implementation of national green skills training.

Second, we recommend supporting short course training options in colleges.

Third, we are requesting additional funding for applied research in colleges.

We can and want to do more.

[English]

I will now turn to my colleague, Dr. Janet Morrison, who will share how colleges and institutes are already preparing Canadians for this energy transformation and the net-zero economy of our future.

[Translation]

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Morrison, you have a minute and a half.

Ms. Janet Morrison (President and Vice-Chancellor, Sheridan College, Colleges and Institutes Canada): Thank you so much, Denise.

It is my pleasure to be here, both on behalf of Sheridan College as president and vice-chancellor and as chair of CICan's President's Advisory Committee on Sustainability. This is a pan-Canadian group of 12 presidents and 142 members in our sector who are providing strategic advice and fostering collaboration for our entire membership on issues of social and environmental sustainability.

I am just very pleased to be here today to talk about how colleges are actively supporting all components of a fair and equitable energy transformation in Canada. We would be very excited to talk with members about what that looks like in practice. We are already, and will continue to be, at the forefront of this transformation. There's more we can and want to do to leverage the strengths of our sector and provide Canadians with the skills and training they need to thrive in a net-zero economy.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to these discussions this evening. We look forward to your questions.

• (1600)

The Chair: Thank you. You were nice and tight on the opening statements. I appreciate it.

We're going next to Canadian Colleges for a Resilient Recovery and Mr. Agnew.

I understand that there were some challenges during the sound check, so if we have any problems with the connection, I'll stop you. We want to make sure our interpreters are able to hear. We'll give this a try and hope that it all works out.

Mr. Agnew, we go over to you for five minutes.

Mr. David Agnew (Representative and President, Seneca College, Canadian Colleges for a Resilient Recovery (C2R2)): Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and through you my thanks to the committee for providing me with the opportunity to address you today.

I am president of Seneca College here in Toronto, York Region and Peterborough. I have the honour to join you here today on behalf of the Canadian Colleges for a Resilient Recovery, or, as we call it, simply C2R2. I am calling in from Toronto, the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

C2R2 is a coalition of 15 climate-action-leading colleges, polytechnics, institutions and CEGEPs from across Canada from coast to coast to coast. We have the scale and the geography to reach thousands upon thousands of Canadians to help them move to new careers by enhancing current skills to support the transition to a carbon-neutral or low-carbon economy, as well as to foster equity, diversity and inclusion through a focus on women, under-represented populations and indigenous peoples.

My friends Denise and Janet are here as well from Colleges and Institutes Canada. Along with Polytechnics Canada, C2R2 has formed a special affiliation with a shared commitment to environmental sustainability and a resilient recovery for the economy. Together we're promoting our academic institutions as the key players in a people-centred just transition.

I want today to share with you three recommendations from our coalition related to the discussion paper.

My first relates—and it picks up on a point Denise made—to how funding opportunities are made available in our sector.

The NRCan discussion paper said that climate change is the challenge of our generation and that the transition to a low-carbon economy is also one of our greatest opportunities. Of course I couldn't agree more, and I'm sure all of the witnesses couldn't agree more, but with respect, I also want to suggest that the implementation of programs focused on those energy transitions must live up to the bold words in the paper and reflect the sense of urgency that I think most of us are feeling around the climate crisis.

Our institutions have to wait for open calls for proposals, perhaps once or twice a year, and then from a single department, and they often don't align with project opportunities. That creates an unnecessary rush for partnerships and proposals.

I would suggest, again with respect, that six to eight months is a long time to wait for the review of a project submission. We are encouraging more of a whole-of-government approach to funding programs, with cross-departmental collaboration on low-carbon projects. To expedite the implementation, we suggest programs of ongoing intakes, rolling application dates and multiple opportunities to submit proposals.

My second recommendation relates to understanding the needs of workers and their employers in the critical phases of transitions.

Workers across industry, from manufacturing to information technology, are approaching us, all of us, for short-term upscaling and retraining to prepare them for those new careers and opportunities, but it's important to understand that in many cases these are not new jobs but in fact only existing jobs that are evolving over time. A fair and an equitable transition for our workforce requires supporting workers at all steps along the way, not only when the roles have in fact transformed into something brand new. It's very important to provide workers with supports throughout all those phases of incremental changes. That's part of how we'll strive to leave no one behind.

Finally, Mr. Chair, as we said in our submission on the just transition legislation, the needs of the Canadian workforce are in fact nuanced, and it's important to recognize that there are distinct

groups of workers and they have different characteristics. The three large clusters are the upskilling workers, those already in the workforce who require short-cycle training and the incoming or new workers. These could be high school students coming into post-secondary education. They could be workers coming from entirely different careers or those returning to the workforce after having spent some time outside of it. Their educational journey will be much longer than that of those in the first group.

Then internationally, there are trades workers, workers who bring skills with them from other countries but who need supports. Each of these groups has different needs, and through the pathways and proven support systems that our institutions have developed, C2R2 has the strength to support all our learners, especially those who face added barriers through all stages of the transition into or within the workforce.

I look forward to your questions and the discussion, and again thank you for your time.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

● (1605)

The Chair: That's great. Thank you.

You were right on time and your audio was perfect. It looks as though we're good.

We'll go now to the Canadian Labour Congress. We have Mr. Rousseau, who will provide the opening statement.

It's over to you for your five-minute opening statement.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Larry Rousseau (Executive Vice-President, Canadian Labour Congress): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to say that I'm currently on the unceded territory of the Anishinabe.

Honourable members of the committee, thank you for giving us the opportunity to appear before you. My name is Larry Rousseau, and I am the executive vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress, or CLC.

The CLC is Canada's largest labour organization. We represent over three million workers on national issues, including workers in high-emitting sectors.

I will make my opening remarks in English, but I invite you to ask your questions in the official language of your choice.

[English]

For years the CLC has been a passionate national and international advocate for just transition measures. Energy and resource sector workers already understand the grim reality of climate change, because they are living it, and they get the need to transition to clean and renewable sources of energy, but they insist—and we insist—that the transition benefit workers instead of occurring at their expense.

Workers must see their own future reflected in a vision of net-zero Canada. Otherwise, uncertainty, resentment and opposition will continue to frustrate the accelerated transition needed to meet our climate goals.

There's broad interest in the concept of a just transition, perhaps without it being well understood. A just transition can do a lot of things, but ultimately it is all about jobs.

Affected workers need decent new jobs to go to or a bridge to a pension and security for a decent old age. New jobs should be of equivalent quality to the ones that are disappearing, or better. People will understandably resist a transition that expects them to trade their family- and community-supporting wages, benefits and pensions for precarious, low-wage or unsafe work.

Ultimately, workers and communities need a plan. Workers need to know where the new jobs are and what the pathways are for them to get from here to there. Will there be training supports to provide the skills they need for the high-quality jobs that will exist? What's the plan for those communities that rely on emissions-intensive industries?

Workers and unions must play a role in the decisions made about their futures and the economic futures of their communities. This is at the heart of a just transition, and it's well defined in the United Nations just transition guidelines that have been negotiated at the International Labour Organization, the ILO.

Canada's unions support the commitment to bring in just transition legislation, but legislation on its own will not be enough, and may in fact exacerbate existing fears and skepticism about whether the just transition can deliver on the promise of a low-carbon economy built on high-quality family- and community-supporting jobs.

We need a blueprint that includes the types and numbers of jobs that will be needed to meet the needs of a net-zero economy. What are the investments needed to drive that job creation? What are the levers to ensure that those are high-quality jobs?

On training, I'm glad to see so many folks from the training sector here. Training is going to be a key component of a just transition. We need to ensure that investments in training will deliver the skills that will be needed for a net-zero future.

Union training centres are well positioned, by the way, to ensure that workers themselves are receiving high-quality appropriate training that aligns with the job opportunities at the other end. These training centres are not for profit and jointly trustee, with a record of ensuring that both unionized and non-unionized workers

are trained to the highest industry standards. Their programs are accredited in every province, with the exception of Quebec, and training is delivered by quality, experienced instructors.

Finally, we urge government to be wary of for-profit training operators who offer quick-fix programs that are going to leave workers ill-equipped to succeed in the shifting economy.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, I think I've exhausted the time allotted to me, so I'll stop there.

I'm ready to answer any questions committee members may have.

• (1610)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you for your opening comments.

I want to also welcome Ms. Peel, political assistant to the president of the Canadian Labour Congress, as part of the panel today.

Mr. Larry Rousseau: Thank you for doing that.

The Chair: We will jump now to the Environmental Careers Organization of Canada, with Mr. Nilsen, president and CEO.

With that, I've reset for five minutes.

The floor is yours.

Mr. Kevin Nilsen (President and Chief Executive Officer, Environmental Careers Organization of Canada): Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for inviting me to share my thoughts on a fair and equitable energy transition.

My name is Kevin Nilsen. I'm the president and CEO of ECO Canada. ECO Canada is a national workforce development organization that's dedicated to supporting Canada's environmental sector from an HR perspective. We were established as a sector council in 1992, and we have since produced labour market intelligence to guide programs and services to support the sector's growth and help it reach its potential. We represent more than 3,000 certified environmental professionals with the EP designation, 35 academic programs that are accredited by us, and several thousand other stakeholders who work with us on training and employment programs.

I think it's important to look at the energy transformation as an opportunity rather than a threat. Clean tech, as an example, is a \$2.5-trillion industry globally. This is a tremendous opportunity for Canada to position itself to claim a decent slice of the pie.

Transitioning economies is not really a new concept. The industrial revolution and more recent advancements in technologies and artificial intelligence have caused all sectors of our economy to frequently change and evolve. At every step, there is a fear of job loss and interruptions, but with the proper steps taken, this natural evolution should be embraced, not resisted. I believe that if we stick to the notion of a people-centred approach, we will be successful.

Other than safety, I believe there are two fundamental areas that people care about as they relate to their work. Number one is the ability to provide for themselves and their families and achieve or pursue prosperity. Number two is the ability to utilize their skills and interests in building a meaningful career. If the transition to a low-carbon economy keeps these fundamental focus areas at the forefront, I think we can achieve the transformation while also seeing a strong buy-in among all affected people. The aim must be a win-win.

Another important point to not downplay is that we're not shutting down a sector. The energy transformation does not mean we will overnight shut down one area and pivot entirely to another area. We will, as an example, depend on petroleum products for decades to come—if not for fuel, then certainly in various petrochemical products used in clothing and hospital equipment, to mention a couple of examples. The transition we're talking about, at least as I see it, is that some workers will transition into new sectors, but others will transition their skill sets and remain in their current sector to help support energy efficiency, emissions reductions and so forth.

ECO Canada's focus is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of competent people to meet the current and future demand for environmental workers. The demand is high, and it keeps growing. During the first year of the pandemic, as an example, when Canada as a whole lost a million jobs, green employment continued to grow and had a net growth of 5%. Our estimates suggest that the sector will continue to grow at a rate of 17% to 2025. This growth, coupled with an estimated 30% retirement to 2029, poses some significant challenges for the sector, and attracting people from transforming sectors will be essential.

There are several great funding programs at the federal level to support this transition. Some of these include the sectoral workforce solutions program, the youth employment and skills strategy, skills for success and the Future Skills Centre. These and other programs that focus on employment support and skills enhancement efforts should continue to be prioritized to ensure that proper reskilling and upskilling is achieved as careers change and evolve.

I also speak frequently with employers, and a consistent message that I receive from start-up companies is that there's no shortage of support for R and D initiatives and start-up support. The challenge is that support ends before these companies are profitable. If companies are supported a bit longer, the investment will be returned to Canada in the form of income tax from successful businesses, and they will be capable of growing and competing globally. A scoping study we did on the clean tech sector revealed that Canada was number one globally in R and D investment per capita, but we only ranked 16th on the ability to generate revenue from it. This is another core focus area, as we need to ensure that our investments pay off for the benefit of all.

My final thoughts are centred around being aware of the unintended consequences of policy decisions. As we seek better and cleaner sources of energy, there are several unintended consequences that deserve more emphasis. With new technology, especially battery technology, we will increasingly be dependent on other countries for rare earth metals, parts and manufacturing. If manufacturing of parts, as an example, is done with the use of coal-powered energy abroad, this eliminates some of the emissions gain we hope to achieve globally. Where possible, we need to support Canadian mining and manufacturing, where we can more closely control the process while also ensuring that good jobs stay here.

Thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.

● (1615)

The Chair: Perfect. Thank you so much.

In person, we have Noel Baldwin and Tricia Williams from Future Skills Centre. I don't know who's going to take the five minutes or if you want to share it, but I'll turn the clock over to you for your five-minute opening statement.

The floor is yours.

Mr. Noel Baldwin (Director, Government and Public Affairs, Future Skills Centre): Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair and honourable committee members, thank you for inviting us to share with you some ideas on the skills and labour aspects of the transitions that are under way and those to come in terms of sustainable economies.

[*English*]

My name is Noel Baldwin. I'm the director of government and public affairs at the Future Skills Centre. With me is my colleague Dr. Tricia Williams, who is FSC's director of research, evaluation and knowledge mobilization.

Today we want to tell you a bit about FSC and share some emerging insights from our work that could support governments and other actors in their thinking about the skills and labour challenges to meet climate targets and build sustainable communities and economies for the future.

FSC is an independent, arm's-length action research centre hosted at Toronto Metropolitan University—formerly Ryerson University—and is a consortium formed in partnership with the Conference Board of Canada and BlueprintADE. It's funded through the Government of Canada's future skills initiative and opened its doors in February 2019.

In three years, FSC has carved out an important role in Canada's skills development ecosystems through \$176 million invested in innovation projects for skills development that are operating in every province and territory; more than 100 research publications on current and future skills issues; and a network of more than 1,000 employers, industry leaders, labour organizations and skills and training practitioners working on future-focused solutions across more than 20 economic sectors, including industries experiencing disruption and high-growth sectors alike. FSC is also supporting more than 10,000 Canadians in receiving hands-on training and is delivering insights and impact that inform and support a skills development agenda that can help populations, regions and sectors successfully transition to meet future labour demands.

The need to get skills right is real. Our friends at the Conference Board have estimated that unmet skills needs cost the Canadian economy \$25 billion dollars in 2020—about 1.3% of GDP—and that this figure has risen by 60% since 2015. The challenges ahead present an even more urgent need to do better.

I'll turn it over to my colleague Dr. Williams, who will tell you about some of the ways we're applying that framework to thinking about skills for sustainable futures for Canada's communities and economies.

Dr. Tricia Williams (Director, Research, Evaluation and Knowledge Mobilization, Future Skills Centre): Thank you, Noel.

Thank you to the honourable committee members for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Over the coming years, meeting net-zero targets will primarily be not a technology problem but a skills problem. This is a challenge that we will need to collectively solve together.

I'd like to share three areas of insight and recommendations for the committee as we face this challenge.

First, we've observed that nuanced regional understanding will be crucial for Canada. Transitioning to a net-zero economy may very well increase overall employment opportunities. However, we know that employment effects will vary by country and by region. Within Canada, we actually know very little thus far about how specific regions and sectors may be affected by energy transitions. In terms of labour and skills, that analysis simply hasn't been done yet.

Second, we need to support workers and communities. We do have some evidence emerging about what's working for individual and community transitions. In Calgary, for example, we're working with Calgary Economic Development to support workers in the oil and gas sector to retrain for in-demand roles in that city's burgeoning technology sector. The effort involves five local colleges and universities and dozens of employer partners. Most importantly of

all, the project is having tremendous success for the workers themselves in finding new roles and occupations.

Third, our research and innovation work is showing that there are some "sure win" areas for skilling investments. With the right support, Canadians are actually well positioned to make the necessary skill and sector pivots. For example, alongside Ocean Wise, we're supporting indigenous communities in Nunavut to be recognized for their sustainable fishing practices. There's also a need for targeted upskilling, as we've heard other witnesses say. For example, a carpenter or tradesperson learns about new technologies and new standards. We're testing approaches in projects with both SkillPlan and the Canada Green Building Council.

We know that there are several skill areas that are consistently reported by employers as difficult to find in the labour market but that will be critical to sustainable transitions. These are things like critical thinking, monitoring, coordination, judgment, decision-making and complex problem-solving. These are the social and emotional skills that are "sure bet" investments now and that without a doubt will yield dividends in the coming years regardless of the technological developments between now and then.

Thank you for your time and attention. We'd be happy to take your questions.

• (1620)

The Chair: Wonderful. Thank you for your opening comments.

Last but not least, from the Conference Board of Canada we have Mr. Michael Burt, vice-president.

If you're ready to go, the floor is yours.

Mr. Michael Burt (Vice President, The Conference Board of Canada): Thank you. I really appreciate the opportunity to present some of our findings to the committee.

For those of you who aren't aware, the Conference Board is a non-profit research institute. We're now "virtual first", with staff right across the country. We conduct research in nine key areas, including economics, education skills and human resources, and of course we are a proud partner with the Future Skills Centre, with whom we've published nearly 100 different pieces of research content over the last few years and brought together thousands of people to talk about the future of work in Canada.

I am vice-president of research at the Conference Board. I am an economist by training and I'm the executive lead for the work that we do with the Future Skills Centre.

As all of the other witnesses have mentioned, the green transition is going to be a big change for Canada, with significant implications for our labour market. There are going to be increased job opportunities for some types of roles and reduced demand for others, and it will also change the skills required and tasks performed in many occupations.

This last point is very important. We need to talk and think about jobs in the context of the tasks that people are required to perform and the skills they need to succeed. This is because relatively few jobs will be exclusively green. In fact, most jobs will have green tasks embedded within them, and as a result, we'd like to increasingly think about jobs as being on a green continuum rather than being either green or not. What's more, where jobs stand on that green continuum is likely to change over time.

That said, in our research we did want to come up with a framework to talk about green jobs, so to do that we looked at the Canadian labour market in two key ways. First we looked at the industries where people are working, and what we found are three key areas where green jobs are present. First there's clean energy production, transmission and distribution. Second are businesses that are focused on energy efficiency improvements, primarily construction and manufacturing firms. Finally, there is environmental management and services.

The second lens that we apply is looking at the occupations where people actually work. We focus on three key criteria when trying to define green jobs.

First, is demand for the roles increasing as a result of the green transition? An example would be power line installers. Demand is rising as we transition to non-GHG emitting forms of electricity in our energy mix.

The second is jobs where the required skills are changing for existing roles due to the green transition. An example would be engineering or architectural types of roles where there's growing need to have knowledge about energy efficiency.

The final area is entirely new or emerging roles—for example, wind turbine technicians.

Using this definition, we found that there are currently about 900,000 jobs in Canada today that are green. It's about 5% of the workforce. What is more, in our work with the Future Skills Centre we are forecasting over the next 20 years what the Canadian labour market will look like, and we find that the green share will steadily grow in the coming years.

Of course, those are the jobs that we define as green today. Keep in mind my initial comments that many jobs will move up the green continuum over that period of time, so more and more jobs will have green tasks or skills embedded within them.

How do we help people prepare for this? We find that most people who are at the highest risk of disruption, the people who are most likely to lose their jobs in the coming decades, are able to actually transition to green-collar jobs with one year or less of retraining. However, there are a lot of caveats inside of that. For example, there are many opportunities, but opportunities vary quite a bit depending on where you are in the country. For example, on a relative

basis, Ontario and Alberta have much more opportunity, while Atlantic Canada has less. The cost of training is also quite different, depending on what region you're in. In Alberta, it's very high. Quebec is the lowest in the country, and the gap is quite large. It's about a 30% difference between the two provinces.

The good news is that we've found that about three-quarters of people are willing to move into green-collar jobs, but in order to make this happen, there are a number of barriers that need to be overcome. The first one is fear. People need to know that new green-collar jobs provide job security and that they'll provide pay that at least is comparable to their current roles. They also need to be convinced that they're able to acquire the skills they need to be able to succeed, because some people have a fear that they're not able to learn these new skills.

The last thing is around helping people transition how they think about themselves. Many people strongly identify who they are with their current role, their current job title, and if that changes, there's fear associated with that change.

The second big thing is around supports to cover the cost of retraining, including employer supports so that people can take time away from work. Most people cannot easily take extended time away from work once they enter the workforce.

• (1625)

The third big thing is around equal access to training. In our research, we find that older workers, those without tertiary education and those with deficiencies in fundamental skills are less likely to be given training opportunities, but they are also the ones who are most in need of upskilling.

Just to close, because I'm out of time, transitioning labour markets toward green-collar jobs will be a marathon, not a sprint. Hundred of thousands of people will be entering and leaving the workforce every year. This means that we need to tackle the challenges at different levels. It will mean different changes for people who are in school and for people who are already working. It will mean that we have to think differently in different communities, because the transitions will be different for each of our different communities.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you to everyone for your opening comments.

Go ahead, Mr. Angus

Mr. Charlie Angus: As a point of clarification, I didn't hear the number you said for green-collar jobs. Did you say 900,000?

Mr. Michael Burt: Yes, it was 900,000.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It was 900,000. Thank you.

The Chair: We had a slight delay in getting started today. When I do the calculation, if everybody is tight with their questions and sticks to the time we have, we may be able to get through three full rounds of questions. That would take us to about 5:40.

If people go over their time, I may have to cut into the third round, so let's try and stay as close as we can to the time. If our witnesses are available to stay for a few minutes beyond 5:30, which is what we had requested, that would be appreciated, but if you do need to drop off, just let us know.

The first round is one set of questions of six minutes for each of the parties.

We will start with Mr. Bragdon for six minutes.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to each of the panellists and guests today. We appreciate hearing from you, the insights you provide and the work you do.

It is obviously a very important subject that we're discussing today. Coming from the Atlantic region, which you just referred to, Mr. Burt, there are challenges there, but also opportunities.

I want to preface the question with an observation. We're hearing great concerns across the country from various sectors regarding the future of employment and being able to provide for families. We're already arguing about the huge rise in the cost of living and inflationary pressures. People need good-paying jobs. We know the jobs that have been in the natural resource and energy sectors have provided good-paying, meaningful work for many Canadians.

Many of us on the east coast have had family members travel to the west coast and to other places to work in the resource sector. Many are wondering about a very legitimate question. We have heard today, and we're understanding, that many of the manufacturing jobs that are being produced in the new green economy for things that are being transitioned to are often in other countries. They're offshore.

There seems to be a transition from the production and use of the resources that our own country is blessed with in ample supply to where we're headed, largely based offshore. That could mean a meaningful transition of jobs offshore as well. That is the concern we're hearing from many of our constituents.

I'd be interested in hearing from you, Mr. Nilsen, and then Mr. Burt. What are we going to offer Canadians who are concerned about the fact that they see their jobs going offshore, and not necessarily in a more responsible environmental fashion? We're just replacing our workers here with workers in other jurisdictions.

Canada has the best environmental regulations among many resource countries in the world. Maybe we should look at ways of continuing jobs in this sector within our economy rather than offshoring them.

Have you any comments? I'll start with you, Mr. Nilsen, and then Mr. Burt.

Mr. Kevin Nilsen: Those are things we grapple with all the time.

To address a bit of the pay concern first, that was a bigger challenge five years ago than it is today, for two reasons. One is that salaries have increased significantly within the environmental sector. We do compensation studies every year. We're about to publish one in the next couple of months. Salaries are going up there. Oil and gas salaries went down significantly. They started to go down in 2014 after the price of oil and gas started to decline a bit, so we're seeing that salaries aren't as high as they were. With the new uptick we have right now, we'll have to monitor to see how that's going, but environmental salaries are increasing, and you are very capable of having a meaningful career and providing for your family while working within the environmental sector.

Local manufacturing is a big focus. It should be a big focus from an environment point of view, as I mentioned in my opening remarks. However, if we allow others to manufacture our parts and use coal-powered energy in the process, we're not seeing any gain. Canada has strict social guidelines and environmental targets. Other countries where we are manufacturing these parts may not have that.

I'll use one example. We frequently talk about the need to stop travelling and have meetings over Zoom. That would be a great contribution to reducing emissions, but the world is—

• (1630)

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you, Mr. Nilsen. I'm sorry, but my time is short and I do want to get a few questions in. You've covered a lot there, and I appreciate that.

The big thing is.... You hit it. We have some of the best environmental regulations. We have the capacity to even increase our production of more of those needed resources here in Canada, while we're not even sure what the regulatory requirements are offshore or what kind of coal footprint or other energy footprint they may have there.

Especially since COVID, I'm seeing a huge increase in demand from Canadians to make sure more things are made, manufactured and produced in our own country. We have some of the best regulation in the world. That transition should consider more Canadian work for Canadian workers, including in the resource and energy sector.

Mr. Burt, maybe you have a comment along those lines as well. I'd be interested in hearing what you have to say.

Mr. Michael Burt: First of all, I totally agree with you that for a transition to be desirable, you can't have a big drop in pay or something like that, and it needs to be something in your community. You don't necessarily want to force people to move halfway across the country. I think those are both conditions that it would be desirable to implement.

That said, in our work we have found that there will be job creation in a variety of different green industries going forward. The opportunities will vary depending on where you are in the country, including in manufacturing.

To your point, we do need to make sure that we're not essentially exporting emissions. We need to ensure we set policies in place to ensure we're competing on a level playing field with foreign competitors. We do think there's plenty of room for growth and opportunities within Canada within the manufacturing sector.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you, Mr. Burt.

In regard to this, I'm thinking there's an opportunity here for Canadians to continue to work in these sectors. As we improve our technology, we improve our resource development practices, and perhaps if the emphasis is on more of it being closer to home, it's going to save a lot of the carbon footprint as we go forward.

I've reached my time. Thank you both for your input on that aspect. Hopefully we can employ more Canadians going forward.

The Chair: There may be a chance to pick up that train of questioning. For now, we're going to move to Ms. Dabrusin, who will have six minutes.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Thank you.

I was really interested when Mr. Nilsen said there was tremendous opportunity for new jobs. He then gave us some numbers of green employment increasing by 5% during the pandemic, I think it was. There was a second number, which I think was 17% by 2025, if I'm correct.

I was wondering if you had a breakdown for what that employment would be. When you're looking at green employment and a 5% increase in the pandemic, what was that employment?

Mr. Kevin Nilsen: I'd probably need a full hour to give you the full picture of that.

The quick story will be that it's in energy efficiency, clean technology and some of the new emerging areas like the blue economy. It's also in the traditional areas of environmental work, such as land reclamation. Canada has a lot of mines and old oil fields that need reclamation. A lot of effort is needed to clean up those projects. A couple of big ones in the north, like the Faro Mine and the Giant Mine, would provide jobs for the next 100 years in monitoring and reclamation.

• (1635)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Do you have any analysis of what the pay scale is for those jobs you saw on the increase?

Mr. Kevin Nilsen: It's always difficult to give specific numbers when we're talking about a sector that employs people from a grade 8 level of education up to a Ph.D. and who are working for both not-for-profits and for-profits.

The median salary within environmental work, if you count everything, would be \$60,000 a year, but that spans very much up and very much down. We have a detailed report, as I mentioned, coming out in a couple of months. We have that detailed report from last year that I'd be happy to share. It would allow you to see the nuances from certain factors.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I would love both reports, please. It would be great if you could provide the one you already have and send the new one when you have it.

I'm sorry, Mr. Nilsen. I'm still picking on you for my last question.

For that increase you see leading up to 2025, are those jobs in the same areas where you saw increases over the pandemic, or are there other sectors and other types of jobs we should be thinking about?

Mr. Kevin Nilsen: The sectors that we saw growing would be work that considers environmental protection, which would be air, land and water. It would be within the management of natural resources as well as sustainability.

One big shift we're seeing is that you need more people whose skills are less technical than people had in the past. That's one big transition. You need more people with commercialization skills, business acumen and marketing skills who can take the equipment and innovations that we have and make them profitable. That last little bit is where we're not as strong as some other competing countries.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I will go to Mr. Agnew.

You presented three sectors of training, I believe: upskilling; incoming, new or returning to the workforce; and international. These are the three sectors. It was mentioned that there are potential time challenges for people in any of these—what they have to set aside—and a bit of a crunch on the jobs or skills needed right now.

Is there an average timeline for, say, an incoming person or a new person entering the workforce to get trained for these new jobs? What timeline are we looking at?

Mr. David Agnew: I'm going to pull a Mr. Nilsen here and say, "It depends." There's such a big range.

Let's look at the range of credentials offered, for instance, at Seneca. It goes from microcredentials—these are short-term, literally a matter of weeks—to four-year degrees. It goes from one- or two-year diplomas to two- or three-year diplomas, or a year- or two-year graduate certificate. It really does depend.

I tried to set out those three sectors to say that you really have to be nuanced in what you're offering to each of those groups. A student coming out of high school doesn't traditionally need a micro-credential. They need a longer set of studies to acquire a career path or skill than somebody who's working now but needs a bridge to a new set of skills—we've talked a lot about upskilling—to continue in their work, because their work is evolving. It's not changing overnight.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Do we have enough people registering for those programs right now, in your estimation? Do we have enough people registering for the new skills?

Mr. David Agnew: The short answer is probably no.

This is very much industry-driven. What we need is a tighter connection with employers, which, of course, colleges are very proud to have. This isn't a theoretical exercise. We need to be right on point about what the skills are, particularly in microcredential and short-term courses. What exactly are the skills you need to take your current workforce to a new place?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I only have a very short bit of time for the Conference Board of Canada. I'm sorry.

I think you said it costs more for retraining and upskilling in Alberta than it does in, say, Quebec. Why is that?

Mr. Michael Burt: It's tied to two things.

First, the actual cost of tuition in the college program is higher or lower in different provinces.

Second, there is the factor of opportunity cost. In Alberta, average salaries tend to be higher. If people have to take a year off work to retrain, the cost to them in terms of lost earning potential is higher in Alberta than it is in some other provinces.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you.

[Translation]

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

• (1640)

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd also like to thank the witnesses for being here this evening.

My question is for Mr. Rousseau of the Canadian Labour Congress.

Almost all stakeholders so far would agree that the Canadian government has no plan to end to fossil fuel development.

The Commissioner of the Environment spoke about the employment and social development sector. He said that in 1992-93, the federal government had to act to help fishers and communities affected by the collapse of the cod industry. In the end, the federal government did nothing, and the cod population in Newfoundland and Labrador is at a critical low.

I could also give the example of the asbestos sector, which has been completely destructured.

Since there is no just transition plan, shouldn't we be concerned that the same fate awaits communities that depend on the oil and gas sector?

How do you think this plan should this plan be initiated to transform the economy and make a true green transition?

Mr. Larry Rousseau: Thank you, Ms. Pauzé.

You've put your finger on the right question. It is all well and good to talk about training and what we need to equip workers in the renewable energy sector, but if there's no plan, how can we say that we're going to depend on a single sector, whether it's the public sector or the private sector? When I talk about the private sector, I'm talking about employers.

Are employers going to invest the necessary funds to ensure that people are equipped and trained for the future?

The top priority for the Canadian Labour Congress is to ensure we have a strategic plan for—

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I'm sorry for interrupting you. We agree on that.

A representative of the FTQ, who appeared before the committee at a previous meeting, spoke about the commission the Scottish government had put in place to ensure a just transition. It was to provide advice, transition plans and appropriate approaches. There was even a process of accountability to Parliament.

Could this be a good approach for Canada?

Mr. Larry Rousseau: Yes, that could definitely be a good approach.

It is essential that the federal government take the bull by the horns and make it clear what the strategy will be to get there. I say this because we are dealing with national issues, but it applies equally to all the provinces.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Thank you for your answers, Mr. Rousseau.

I have a question for Mr. Agnew, from the Canadian Colleges for a Resilient Recovery, who was saying that he needed funding from the federal government.

Mr. Agnew, you talked about appropriate training and the public funding needed to ensure a real economic recovery. When representatives from Oil Change International appeared before the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, they said that the federal government was investing 14 and a half times more money in oil companies than in renewable energy.

I'd like to hear your comments on that, since you need funding.

[English]

Mr. David Agnew: I don't have the context of the comment, but in general there is a lot of money out there, at least on paper, in terms of meeting the needs of workers for retraining and upskilling and so on. Part of what I was trying to say is that from our perspective, there could be better ways of getting it out by working in the communities across the country.

Obviously the federal government has an extraordinarily important role to play in terms of the funding, but the provinces have a very large role to play in, for instance, control of the post-secondary system and in working very closely with the federal government on skills development.

Of course, as we all know, many of these important decisions and needs are best met through local conversations, not ones that are held at a national or even a provincial level. They need to be local. That's where I think, as Denise had talked about, the—

• (1645)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I have to interrupt you, Mr. Agnew. Indeed, in Quebec, we've had an agreement on workforce training since 1997.

Mr. Burt, you said in your presentation that people are afraid and that this was perhaps a barrier to the transition. So I understand there are myths and prejudices about the green economy. I'm tempted to tell you that there may also be prejudices that are conveyed by a number of elected officials.

What are the facts about the economy and the future of our jobs?

[English]

Mr. Michael Burt: Is the question where we'll have job creation going forward?

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: I just want the truth.

[English]

The Chair: I'll say be very quick. I'll give you 10 seconds or so. We're out of time on this one.

Mr. Michael Burt: Fair enough.

Broadly, yes, there will be job creation. We'll see it in every region of the country. We'll see it in a variety of different sectors. It's really driven by the investments that the businesses are undertaking to create those jobs.

Sorry; it's a really broad question.

The Chair: Thank you.

Sorry, Mr. Burt, you seem to be getting the tail end of the question period.

We'll go now to Mr. Angus. Mr. Angus, you have six minutes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, and thanks to all our witnesses.

Mr. Rousseau, I want to start with you.

Gil McGowan, from the Alberta Federation of Labour, came here and said the transition is under way and that workers are already living the transition. Is that the experience and the research that you're getting from the Canadian Labour Congress?

Mr. Larry Rousseau: Absolutely. We're in it now.

We have some catching up to do, and unfortunately too many workers right now are losing heart, feeling that they're getting left behind and that nobody is going to be there for them. This is of critical importance right now.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I think this is really important, because we've had Clean Energy Canada talking about new clean energy jobs in Canada being up 50%, to 639,200. We have research from Calgary Economic Development and Edmonton Global about the huge opportunities, but they have a big "but": They say there has to be investment. We can't just have an accidental new economy; it has to be a created new economy.

What you've heard from witnesses today is that the government hasn't even done its research as to where these new jobs are going to be. What does that say to workers in the energy sector who are asking where we're going with this transition?

Mr. Larry Rousseau: That's a very good point.

I'm going to ask my colleague Tara Peel to come in, because she has something that I think we should share.

Ms. Tara Peel (Political Assistant to the President, Canadian Labour Congress): That is a good point. We're currently dealing with a significant trust deficit. People are fearful. What they really need is a plan. They need to see their unions at the table helping to negotiate that plan. There are a lot of things that a just transition can do, but for it to really be a just transition, workers, through their unions, employers and governments, need to sit down together and negotiate the plan. That is what will give people confidence.

What is the plan for where the new jobs are, and how do we make sure those new jobs are as good as or better than the jobs that we know will decline over time? Let's be honest: The people who are doing this work have good jobs. They are jobs that support their family and their community. With a plan that they see their unions have had a part in shaping, you can build some confidence and trust that there is a future for them in this net-zero economy. It's going to look different sector by sector. It's going to look different in different parts of the country in terms of timelines. Unless you have unions and employers at the table, working this out, it's probably not a just transition.

I will bring it back to that point.

Mr. Charlie Angus: That's very helpful.

We had an excellent panel from Iron and Earth. They talked about the studies that are done and how workers are ready. They want alternatives and to look at this new economy, but they're saying, "Where is it?"

There's one thing I want to ask.

The Prime Minister went to COP26 and made a bunch of promises right after the environment commissioner pointed out that the government makes all kinds of promises and has failed to deliver on every single one of them. When Joe Biden was at COP26, the phrase he used all the time was that they were going to create good-paying jobs for American workers. That was the consistent line. When you hear the American Democrats talk about transition, they talk of good-paying jobs for American workers. I've never heard that from our government. I've never heard them say they're going to create good-paying union jobs for Canadian workers. They say we're going to meet our global obligations, and we're going to do this and that, but there isn't the sense that this is going to be a worker-centred drive. Without the workers at the heart of it, we are going to see resentment.

Can the CLC present us with recommendations that we need to look at to make sure that we are reassuring workers that the jobs that are being created are not going to be low-paying?

I heard some of my Liberal colleagues saying “Where are these new jobs you're talking about?” Either we're saying there are going to be better jobs, good jobs, or we're selling people a lie. How do we know that we can get this done? What can the CLC give us that we can look at in terms of recommendations?

• (1650)

Mr. Larry Rousseau: Quite a bit, my friend.

Tara, have we made our submission? Is it in?

We've made a submission to the committee. We can share that. We have—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I would like it if there are a few key points that you can put on the record now for us.

Mr. Larry Rousseau: Go ahead, Tara.

Ms. Tara Peel: It is key to remember that a just transition will help us meet our climate goals, but in itself, it is a jobs plan. It is a plan to create good jobs, and that is going to take investments. There is no question about that.

The best way that we can ensure that people have good jobs that support their families and communities is for them to be unionized jobs, truthfully. We can use the levers that we have to ensure that when governments invest, they come with good job strings, such as saying that we're going to build this infrastructure with community benefits agreements and other really concrete measures that help lift the quality of those jobs.

Be clear that we want this just transition to do a lot of things, including being the key to unlocking the ambition we need to meet our climate targets. Ultimately, however, it's all about jobs.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're now out of time on that round.

The next round we have is two for five minutes, two for two and a half minutes and then two for five minutes.

Starting us off will be Mr. McLean. You have five minutes.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Thank you very much to all the witnesses.

We always have this confusion when we're drafting these reports—and my colleagues will know this—because nobody comes up with definitions.

I'm going to ask Mr. Baldwin first of all. Can you please give me your definition of a just transition?

Mr. Noel Baldwin: I was going to defer to my colleague.

Dr. Tricia Williams: It's on you.

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Baldwin, time is short here. Please answer.

Mr. Noel Baldwin: I think we've talked about it today. These are economic transitions that meet climate targets and provide people who are transitioning, whether for opportunity or as a result of disruption, with the kinds of jobs that allow them to support their family, meet their obligations and have dignified work.

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you very much. We'll note that.

Industries are moving their skill set requirements forward to address the jobs they think they require. Many of those jobs will be the result of changing government regulations—and government is changing regulations—and they're adjusting, but now they have a new study here that's going to say, “Here's a just transition” layered on top of what they're looking for, which is foresight, a line of sight on what those jobs are, and they're trying to meet those regulations.

Tell me how your activities, through this collective bunch of organizations here, are helping with that process, as opposed to layering in another bureaucracy on that?

Go ahead, Mr. Baldwin.

Mr. Noel Baldwin: Future Skills Centre is a partnership, but a pretty lean organization.

We referred to a number of research activities, including in partnership with the Conference Board, that are starting to identify where those transitions are and where opportunities are in the future, both for workers and industry, as well as the skill requirements. We are leaning in further to that through some partnerships that will be announced in the coming months to try to get below national-level projections into some sectoral and regional ones as well.

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you very much.

I'm accustomed to provincial governments identifying the skill gaps in the regional economies and filling those skill gaps with their post-secondary institutions at the provincial level. There are various institutions—colleges, technical institutions and universities—that the provincial governments work with, and they spend a lot of money doing it, I should point out.

I see that the federal government is funding your organization in excess of \$380 million to do what is really an overlap of the same thing. In addition, many of these organizations around the table are funded for hundreds of millions of dollars more in order to do this, and you're all working hand in hand.

This is an expensive, non-productive bureaucracy, in my opinion. My constituents are going to ask, "What is the value for this work you're doing?", when it's really just spinning paper with no real eyesight on the outcome here.

That will be my last question for you, Mr. Baldwin: Can you say why you don't see this as a direct overlap with what's already being done at the provincial level to address the jobs of the future?

• (1655)

Mr. Noel Baldwin: We work very collaboratively with the provincial and territorial governments across the country as well as with local partners to identify what their needs are. Our approach is not to go into communities and tell them what they need; it's to go and listen and work with them to try to support that.

We're supporting a number of initiatives that are designed to test how we can do things like support people moving from one sector to another or one occupation to another more rapidly to maintain good work or find new opportunities.

We talked about an initiative in Calgary with Calgary Economic Development. That was one that was developed by those partners—CED partnering with the post-secretary institutions in the city—to meet a need they had identified.

Mr. Greg McLean: Thank you, Mr. Baldwin. I'm not sure that answered the question I asked, but I appreciate it nonetheless.

I'll go to ECO Canada here.

ECO Canada, thank you very much for a very good submission. In it you talk about providing \$144 million in wage subsidies to produce 14,000 wage-paying jobs. With quick math, that is \$10,000 per job, none of which may have stuck, but that's what it is. There are also other studies that say that it's \$20,000 per job. With the limited jobs you're talking about here, there are very few jobs you can identify that are going forward in the equation.

Tell us, Mr. Nilsen, where you think this gap of old jobs versus new jobs is, because the Conference Board says there are 27 jobs in the new green economy for every 100 jobs we're going to lose in the other economy.

Mr. Kevin Nilsen: Sorry; I didn't quite get what the question was there. Was it about a math question? Because we have support—

Mr. Greg McLean: It is a math question.

Mr. Kevin Nilsen: Yes, we offer up to \$20,000 in wage subsidy placements to support job creation and training, but the average might be lower because sometimes the jobs don't last for the full 12 months. They are shorter in duration; therefore, the average might be lower, if that's what you're referring to in the \$10,000 versus \$20,000.

The environmental sector has grown at such a tremendously rapid rate that we need to do whatever we can to support job

growth. That's what we're focusing on. Employers come to us all the time saying they don't have enough people. They have started reducing the skills requirement of the people they hire because they're desperate.

We're postpandemic now when it comes to the economy. More and more organizations have more project volume than they can handle, and they need people. That's why they come to us. That's why these wage subsidy programs are really great. It's because they help them get the people they want, help them train them, help them bring them up and take away a little of the development costs they are faced with.

The Chair: We're over time on that one, so I'm going to jump right over to Ms. Lapointe for her five minutes.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Thank you.

My questions are for Mr. Burt.

You made some interesting comments during your opening remarks that I would like you to expand upon.

In terms of skilled and general labour needs for the clean economy, you said with regard to people who are still in school that we need to build green skills into the educational programs so that those entering the workforce will have the appropriate building blocks to either—

The Chair: If I could stop here, the bells light is flashing. Is there something happening?

Just so the witnesses know, if we end up with votes, we get notice, and in order to continue, we need unanimous consent of the committee. I wasn't aware of anything happening, but we need to check.

Do we have notice?

A voice: Yes. These are 30-minute bells.

The Chair: Okay, we have 30-minute bells. Do we want to continue?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Chair: How much time do people need to get to the House—15 minutes, 10 minutes?

An hon. member: Ten seconds.

An hon. member: Can we vote from here?

The Chair: I can't make people do that. They need the option to get to the House if they want to. I think it's 10 minutes, and I need three to—

• (1700)

Mr. Charlie Angus: We can do another 20 minutes here, then.

The Chair: We will go another 20 minutes.

Okay, where were we?

Please continue, Ms. Lapointe. You have four and a half minutes left.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: We were talking about building green skills into educational programs so those entering the workforce will have the appropriate building blocks to either enter green-collar jobs or move along the green continuum over the course of their careers.

What are your thoughts on early partnerships between educators and industry to ensure that the training or academic programs on offer will provide the skills needed for the sectors in the green economy?

Mr. Michael Burt: I think it's critical. We can't be developing these programs without understanding what the employers' needs are.

We have a number of colleagues here from the different colleges who could probably speak a little bit more to the program development that they're doing, but I think it's very important for the needs of the employers to be built into these programs.

I think flexibility is the key. It's hard for us to say what the skills will be 10 years or 20 years from now. That's why I focused on building blocks, because those will enable people to be able to adapt over the course of their careers.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: You also stated that the clean energy transition will look different across communities, depending on local conditions, and that opportunities vary widely by region.

Can you expand on or give examples of regional differences and how we can plan to have infrastructure and training in place to accommodate regional needs? For example, my riding is in northern Ontario, in Sudbury, where resources are plentiful but people and infrastructure are lacking.

How do we plan now, so that we have what we need later on?

Mr. Michael Burt: There are 4,000 communities in Canada, so it's hard to say what each one will do. What we've been trying to do is build an archetype of maybe 10 or 15 different types of communities that we see in Canada and what those transitions look like.

A lot of this boils down to what your industry mix looks like in your community right now. If you have a coal mine in your community, this might be a very different conversation from the one you would have if you had a new windmill farm built just outside of your community.

It's understanding what you have, where you need to go and how you can make that connection. If you have a good understanding of what the skills are in your community right now, it can give you better guidance in terms of where you go when you're talking about economic development efforts. Otherwise, you end up with everybody chasing after the same ball, if you will, or the same ideal.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: When you say that many jobs we did not define as green-collar jobs will move up the green continuum over the period, were you referring to skilled trades? Are the trades adaptable to a green economy?

Mr. Michael Burt: It could include skilled trades. Basically, almost any role could move up the green continuum over time. Certainly the skilled trades could be part of that. The construction sector we see as a big part of it, particularly the energy efficiency industry that we talked about in our particular paper. Yes, definitely skilled trades would be part of that.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: I'd like to provide Mr. Agnew with the opportunity to also respond to my first question about early partnerships between educators and industry on training and academic programs.

Mr. David Agnew: Absolutely. Every one of our programs has what we call a program advisory committee. We also use those in program development. These are committees made up of people from the industry we serve or that program serves.

It's absolutely vital, not only at the beginning and development of a program but ongoing, to make sure we understand how the industry is evolving and understand the new skills that are required, both from an entry level and also, as we talked a lot about today, in the reskilling and upskilling of existing workers.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Thank you.

How much time do I have time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You still have half a minute left.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Also, what are your thoughts on that green continuum over this period for the skilled trades?

Mr. David Agnew: I'll confess that we don't do trade programs, but that's absolutely essential. The built environment is a huge source of the challenge on the climate crisis. The construction trades, for instance, are going to have to be a kind of front line in the march towards the low-carbon economy. It's really critical.

• (1705)

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Thank you.

The Chair: Now we're going to go over to—

Go ahead, Mr. Maguire.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): I would suggest that we hear the Bloc and the NDP and then let our witnesses go.

I also want to make sure, though, that we get the full hour if this happens again when we're having a vote, and that we do get the full hour with the minister on the Wednesday coming up, because it's on estimates.

The Chair: For Wednesday, we have the minister until five o'clock, or two rounds. We'll see what we can get in there. I think there are a couple of votes on Wednesday, so we'll get started as quickly as we can.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Yes, that's fine, as long as we get the full time that was allotted for it.

The Chair: We'll squeeze every minute out of it that we can.

We'll go now to Madame Paupé for two and a half minutes.

For the witnesses, this and the next two minutes will go quite quickly.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Paupé: My question is along the same lines as Ms. Lapointe's first question, but it will be for Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams, in your opening remarks, you talked about inequality between regions. The document you sent to us mentions this as well.

What is the reason for this inequality between regions? How can we fix this to restore equality between them?

[English]

Dr. Tricia Williams: It's a point that I think we've been focusing on increasingly in recent months. As my colleague Noel said, it's something that we're really attuned to addressing. I think it points to the diversity of regions and sectors across Canada.

To our understanding, there's been more of the 20,000-foot view and, really, if we need to land the plane, we need to understand what it looks like for sectors and regions specifically. We're working with hundreds of employers across Canada, if not thousands, and they're saying that it's different in each place.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Paupé: Thank you, Ms. Williams.

My next question is for Mr. Rousseau from the Canadian Labour Congress.

Mr. Rousseau, you are calling for the government to invest billions of dollars over five years to foster the development of renewable energy and support training in the field, as well as transitional measures. I'm thinking in particular of measures relating to energy-efficient home renovations, for which people already receive federal government grants.

In Quebec, the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail has established advisory committees further to an agreement with the federal government in 1997.

It would be a good idea for Quebec to maintain an open, integrated and universal model for public services related to employment and training, focusing on client needs. This would be helpful to the regions.

I imagine you would agree that this potential multibillion-dollar investment should include a mechanism for sending the funds to Quebec and the provinces and having them manage the money.

Is that correct?

Mr. Larry Rousseau: I'm not going to get into federal-provincial negotiations, but we have a model in Quebec endorsed by the Canadian Labour Congress. Our colleagues at the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ) often say that we

need high-level strategies. Labour, private industry and government must work together. It won't be possible to carry out a just transition without a partnership like that.

Ms. Monique Paupé: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but my time is up.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Larry Rousseau: All right.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Paupé.

[English]

We'll now go to Mr. Angus for his final two and a half minutes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

Ms. Williams, I want to follow up on something you said earlier and that I've been very perturbed by since I heard it.

When we talk with Alberta workers and they talk about the transition being under way already, to me that's a sign that there's a sense of urgency, because obviously this is a Canadian issue, but Alberta is certainly going to be where much of this is settled.

We've heard from people—organizations—who talk about the huge opportunities in green tech, but they all come with a big “if”—if there's clear investment and sustained investment, because this economy is not just going to create itself out of thin air—and yet you say the research on where these jobs are hasn't been done. That, to me, is a really frightening red flag. Could you explain?

Dr. Tricia Williams: Absolutely, and I couldn't agree more.

We're about to embark on a partnership with the Smart Prosperity Institute, and what we will be doing is regional and sectoral analysis very specifically targeted to where job opportunities are and where there are risks.

Without intervention I think we potentially risk people not being brought along and not being able to make those transitions. We've tested this on the ground with different organizations and different training interventions to find out how you take a person from point A to point B. We've done the numbers, not just on whether they finish a course but on whether they get a job at the end. What's their salary? What does that look like?

• (1710)

Mr. Charlie Angus: This concerns me. I've lived through unjust transitions in northern Ontario, and I've seen the disaster that it is.

The environment commissioner had said that the coal transition wasn't properly thought out, and that transition was of limited scale. We're talking about targets that we need to hit in 2030. That's just over seven years away, and suddenly we're going to transition an entire economy without a plan?

What do we need to do to put that in place, to reassure workers but also to make sure that we're going to meet our international obligations to transition to cleaner technologies?

Dr. Tricia Williams: There have been a lot of questions from the committee about employers being involved. I think we have to make sure that employers are involved, and labour, workers. We can't make a plan without any one of these groups.

Certainly I think the committee consulting with these groups is the right step, but it needs to be tangible, and they need to know that there are going to be supports and investments. At the end of the day, those will pay dividends.

Mr. Charlie Angus: If you have any recommendations, can you send them to our committee?

Dr. Tricia Williams: We will, absolutely.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Regrettably, folks, we're at the end of this round.

By the time we get to the vote, have the vote and get back, we're going to be out of time, so we're going to have to adjourn the meeting.

I want to thank all of the witnesses for your time. Again, I apologize for the interruptions that we've had, but we've had some very useful testimony.

I'd like to also invite you, if you have additional information, as has been discussed, or reports that you think would be relevant, to feel free to send in up to an additional 10-page brief if there are conversations that you feel you had more to add to. That can be directed through the clerk. Sooner than later is better, as we need to translate them and distribute them in time to provide the report, at least in the draft form, in June.

With that, thank you so much, everyone. To the committee members, we'll see you on Wednesday.

The meeting is adjourned.

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