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Chair

Mr. Greg Kerr

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Greg Kerr (West Nova, CPC)): Order.

We're continuing our study of the delivery of front-line health and well-being services for Canadian veterans.

I want to welcome our guests. Thank you in advance for coming. We certainly look forward to your presentations.

I think you've been advised that we look for presentations within ten minutes from each organization, and then we go around with questions and answers. Please feel free to answer as it comes to you. Also, if there's any follow-up, we often ask if the organizations don't mind if we send along written questions, if they didn't come up during the day.

We'll start with witnesses from WCG International HR Consultants, Tricia Gueulette, national contract manager, CanVet Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Then we will follow with Bill Foster, director of program delivery for Career Transition Services, and Carol Hurst, operations manager for Career Transition Services.

It's very nice to have you here. Thank you for coming.

You're going to start, Tricia?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette (National Contract Manager, CanVet Vocational Rehabilitation Services, WCG International HR Consultants): Sure.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. It's a pleasure to appear in front of you today.

My name is Tricia Gueulette. I'm the national contract manager of CanVet Vocational Rehabilitation Services. I'd like to take some time this afternoon to tell you about our services and our role with Canadian veterans.

My company, WCG International Consultants, is a team of approximately 150 career development and vocational rehabilitation professionals. We began in British Columbia in 1995 as a small consulting firm and have grown over the years to provide return-to-work and human resources services on behalf of all levels of government as well as insurance organizations, companies, and non-profit agencies. Since 1995 we have placed over 53,000 people seeking work into long-term meaningful employment.

In 2007 WCG teamed with March of Dimes Canada and Innovative Rehabilitation Consultants, IRC, forming a joint venture called CanVet VR Services, which combined 40 years of experience to bid on a request for proposal to deliver targeted vocational

rehabilitation services to Canadian veterans and their spouses. In light of the fact that Canada has new veterans from Bosnia, Rwanda, and Afghanistan, these services were not being provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs. This new program is part of their broader rehabilitation program, and in 2009 we were delighted to be awarded the contract.

With respect to our joint venture, WCG is the contract lead and manager, and has overseen the development and maintenance of our comprehensive case management system, called CaseFLO, which is linked into the older Veterans Affairs client services delivery network system. CaseFLO is an integrated web-based tool that allows our customers to gain operational efficiencies, manage their finances, and generate up-to-the-second management reporting.

As well, WCG oversees the financial administration for our partners and all financial payments to our clients. We also provide direct client service in British Columbia and to clients living outside Canada who are referred to us from a Veterans Affairs case manager. Our partner, IRC, provides services across the prairies, and March of Dimes operates in Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic region. Our overall vision is to provide comprehensive, individualized, reasonable, and cost-effective measures to eligible clients that will assist them to prepare for suitable and gainful civilian employment.

My understanding is that a client who eventually is referred to CanVet from Veterans Affairs generally has been medically released from the Canadian Forces—National Defence. Following that release process, which could take up to three years, this client may go through SISIP—service income security insurance plan—long-term disability vocational rehabilitation, and then will eventually work with a Veterans Affairs case manager. Many years from the time of injury will have passed by the time these clients are referred to us by the Veterans Affairs case manager.

When a veteran is referred to CanVet, one of our vocational rehabilitation specialists will complete a thorough assessment of his or her medical, psychosocial, vocational, and educational history. Our role is to provide an objective third-party professional opinion on every client's vocational potential back to the VAC case manager. We consult with medical personnel, occupational therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists as required on each file. Our goal is to help every client develop a plan that uses their transferable skills, builds new complementary skills, and will ultimately help them to find long-term sustainable civilian employment in the shortest route possible.

A client's plan could include retraining, job search preparation, job matching through a job developer, assisted job search, and post-employment support once they have become employed. We work with clients all the way through their plan, and CanVet reimburses clients on behalf of Veterans Affairs for eligible costs, such as tuition, books, and supplies.

We started to deliver our services in April of 2009, and since that time more than 1,900 clients have been referred to us. The average age of a client coming through our services is 42. The majority are male and approximately 90% have post-traumatic stress disorder, often in combination with other physical impairments.

Many of our clients have gone through retraining post-injury while waiting to release in the Canadian Forces. Some have gone through additional training while on SISIP long-term disability. Our goal is to assess their current situation and build a plan that takes into account their disability while ultimately helping them back into the Canadian labour force.

Many of the clients currently in our program started their vocational plans in 2010-11, and we have started to see the early referrals complete their plans.

● (1540)

In 2011, 87% of clients who completed their plans and their programs to date had become employed. These clients are employed across many industries, and were able to build on their existing skill sets, often initially developed in the military.

Over the last three years working within the CanVet program, we have learned some real positives. We have developed a solid national approach to working with veterans to help them transition to civilian employment. This includes the creation of a knowledge database within the casebook system of OSI clinics—operational stress injury clinics—and we participate in a Canada-U.S. warrior wellness committee, where the latest information on helping modern-day veterans back to civilian employment is shared.

Veterans involved in the program are becoming employed and the program is seeing good outcomes. CaseFLO, the case management system developed to manage this program, has been an excellent tool and could be easily expanded to benefit all stakeholders. We envision a tool where employers who want to hire veterans could post their job ads, the department could access all client information quickly and easily, and clients could access and self-manage the information they need and send information directly to their files.

There are also some areas we can build on. Our number one priority is veterans' health and well-being as they transition to employment. The reimbursement rules for our clients who are completing plans are challenging and unclear. As well, the rules ask for clients to prepay their expenses and then get reimbursed by CanVet, which eventually gets reimbursed by the department. For most of our clients, who are not working, asking them to prepay large tuition, tool, and textbook bills means they may not be able to go back to training and work their plan. In many cases, clients struggle to meet these payments. Because of situations like this, CanVet has taken it upon itself to sponsor most clients' tuition and pay the institutions directly, which is outside of our contract.

We have also gone outside of our contract to pay for books, accommodation, tutoring, and other things for clients before they're eligible to submit their claims. We felt this was necessary to ensure many of our clients were able to keep going with their plans and to alleviate some of the stress brought on by these rules, which could have aggravated our clients' health.

The second area I believe we can build on is attempting to bring a holistic approach to vocational rehabilitation much sooner for wounded Canadian Forces members. As I mentioned previously, often many years pass from when a Canadian Forces member is injured to when we see them in CanVet. In fact, we have not yet really started to see the injured Canadian Forces members who were in Afghanistan. We know this is coming, and we believe resources should be brought in collectively and sooner. We could all do more.

In summary, I believe there are a couple of items that the committee might want to examine. We know that the demand for these services will increase. It is extremely important to prepare now. We can do this in two ways. Number one, we can ensure the holistic coordination of vocational rehabilitation services from the time of injury, when a Canadian Forces member is still serving, to the time when they're actually working with a Veterans Affairs case manager. Number two, we can make whatever changes are necessary to ensure that the Canadian veterans participating in this program don't face financial hardship or barriers to training from having to prepay their expenses.

I congratulate the committee on the timeliness of this study. We are dealing with complex medical issues in tough economic times, and it will be critical to direct our resources to optimize programming and services for best results.

Thank you very much for inviting me here today. I look forward to answering your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Gueulette. That's a lot of good information there.

Now we will turn to Mr. Foster.

Mr. Bill Foster (Director of Program Delivery, Career Transition Services, Right Management): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and honourable members of the committee.

On behalf of Right Management, we are pleased to have been invited here today to discuss our role as the national contractor for Career Transition Services, under the aegis of the new Veterans Charter.

My name is Bill Foster, and I am the director of program delivery at Right Management for CTS. Joining me today is my colleague, Carol Hurst, the operations manager for CTS, who will be answering questions with me following this opening statement.

Right Management is a leader in talent and career management workforce solutions within ManpowerGroup. Our clients are large and mid-sized businesses from a wide range of industries, and include over 80% of the Fortune 500 and 70% of the Fortune Global 500. Our firm has earned its reputation as a leader in talent and career management through the sustained excellence of our execution, for our responsiveness, and for the wisdom of our counsel. The scope and scale of our capabilities and solutions are unparalleled in our industry.

Right Management has developed extensive experience in and career transition solutions for various militaries around the globe. Since 1998, for example, Right Management has served as the sole contractor for the U.K. Ministry of Defence's career transition partnership, which provides support for an estimated 18,000 service leavers annually. Manpower, our parent company, also provides recruitment services for the Australian defence force.

To supplement the committee's understanding of the program, I will provide an overview of the following aspects of CTS, which includes CTS's program objective; CTS's program elements and deliverables; who can benefit; performance measures and quality assurance; and how members and veterans find out about the program.

The overall objective of CTS is to facilitate the transition to civilian work for Canadian Forces members and veterans by providing services to assist them to develop the knowledge, skills, and plan necessary to prepare for and successfully obtain suitable employment.

CTS's program elements and deliverables are comprised of three-day career transition workshops, individual career counselling, and job finding assistance.

The purpose of the three-day workshops is to begin the career transition planning process. Workshops are delivered on or near a base or wing, and are open to all CF members and reservists, both medically releasing and non-medically releasing. The frequency of these workshops depends on demand, with a total number delivered averaging approximately 150 per year nationwide. The classroom size is capped between 10 and 12 participants to permit maximum interaction and coverage of core job search topics, such as résumé writing and interview practice.

The content for these small group experiential workshops includes coaching and preparation of draft résumés; development of interviewing skills; identification of transferable skills and conversion of military language into civilian terminology; development of a job search strategy; and identification of other Veterans Affairs and Canadian Forces services. As well, workshop participants are eligible for an additional hour of individual résumé feedback and professional formatting assistance after completion of the workshop.

The objective in the individual career counselling and job-finding assistance phase of the program is to develop a customized career transition plan that assists clients in finding suitable employment.

The role of the CTS career counsellor at this stage is to help clarify and explore potential career options with the client, based on his or her technical and transferable skills, work experience, interests, abilities, and strengths, and assist in pinpointing educational or training options, where appropriate.

Additional outcomes of career counselling include résumé development, covering letter preparation, interview practice, market research skills development, and networking coaching.

When ready for their job search, CTS clients receive job-finding assistance tools and guidance to market themselves to potential employers and prepare for potential interviews. This includes, among other things, 24/7 online access to an exclusive CTS national job bank, comprising over 200 hiring organizations and search firms across 35 different industries; quarterly communiqués providing labour market and job search trends across Canada; access to an online database of 17 million companies worldwide for market research; opportunities to attend meet-the-employer events and career fairs; job offer evaluation; and social media training, e.g., LinkedIn profile development.

● (1545)

Who can benefit from CTS? Here is a list: CF members in the career planning process, allowing them sufficient time to obtain identified qualifications, education, and certifications required to support their civilian choice prior to release; CF veterans with two years of release seeking employment or a career change; reservists; survivors; Canadian Forces income-support recipients; and CF members anticipating being medically released.

The benefits to members or veterans of participating in CTS include the following. Availability: CTS is available prior to and after release from the military in both official languages. National coverage: CTS workshops are conveniently held near bases or wings across the country. Portability: clients can continue to benefit from their individual counselling program regardless of where they reside. Consistency: clients receive the same core service and deliverables across Canada. Coaching excellence: CTS clients receive guidance, support, advice, listening, and hope provided by a team of highly experienced civilian counsellors. Skills for life: CTS clients learn career management skills to adapt to the changing world of work. Confidence building: clients develop confidence, resilience, and self-reliance. Quality assurance: Veterans Affairs and Right Management are committed to service excellence.

Turning to performance measures and quality assurance, the success of the contract will be judged on the basis of achievement of certain critical performance indicators. The purpose of these performance measures is to demonstrate clearly the performance of Right Management in key areas crucial to a successful outcome for Veterans Affairs clients, to provide evidence of trends that underlie performance, and to provide information for future planning.

The key measures against which Right Management reports are timeliness of access to services; effectiveness of outreach efforts; effectiveness of the workshops; percentage of those who achieve suitable civilian employment within six months of commencing job searching; client satisfaction rates as determined from clients' satisfaction with key elements of the service provided and with the service overall.

Right Management also provides detailed management reports so that the level of utilization, quality, and cost-effectiveness can be assessed in detail across all elements of the service provided.

How do CF members and veterans find out about CTS? Right Management has a close working relationship with Veterans Affairs and the Canadian Forces to market and promote CTS through a number of communication channels, including but not limited to the following: Veterans Affairs Canada offices and employees; the Veterans Affairs website; marketing publications, including brochures and posters; Veterans Affairs newsletters and press releases; Canadian Forces base resources, such as base splash pages; the Canadian Defence Academy; Second Career Assistance Network seminars on CF bases across Canada; Canadian Forces release clerks; base commanders, senior administrative officers, and supervisors; personnel selection officers, PSOs, in both the regular force and the reserves; joint personnel support units and/or integrated personnel support centres; Military Family Resource Centres; Learning Career Centres, LCCs; the Royal Canadian Legion and other military associations like ANAVETS; Right Management offices; CTS workshops and CTS counsellors; hiring organizations; and perhaps most importantly, word of mouth.

In closing, we are proud to deliver career transition services on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada. Right Management will continue to apply its service excellence to the delivery of the program to meet the needs of CF members and veterans, helping them make a smooth transition to the civilian work world. More importantly, we are honoured to continue to provide support to individuals who have served their country with such dignity and dedication.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to the committee. Carol and I look forward to your questions.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Foster, and to all the witnesses today.

We go to the official opposition for five minutes. Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ladies and gentleman, thank you very much for appearing today. It is greatly appreciated.

I have just a couple of questions.

Madam, you talked about the fact that most of the veterans you see have been medically released. Do you deal as well with veterans who have been honourably discharged? Because one of the things we're finding is that for someone who serves, say, 30 to 35 years in the military and then leaves, many times it's difficult to adjust to civilian life. They are a bit lost because that's a whole culture that they've left and now they're into something else. Do you deal with any of those folks as well?

Do you do any referrals from the RCMP?

Also, do you have any family members? Because one of the things we have found is that one of these transition programs is to ensure that the families and the family members are step by step with these individuals as they go through the transition phase. I know you that you do have spouses, I believe, of those who have passed on, but do you have family members there as well?

I have another couple of questions.

For this next one, could you send it back to us? Because it will be too long an answer and I'll be out of time. Can you take a couple of examples...? Take Sergeant Joe or Lieutenant Anne. You walk them through a process. From when you first see them to when they successfully career...can you give us some examples of how that works?

By the way, thank you very much for, outside your contract, helping the veterans pay for these tuition fees and books. I think that's very noble of you. Thank you for those recommendations as well. But how, in turn, do you get paid for your services? Is it on a monthly basis? Is it on a weekly basis?

The last question for you: when does the contract come up? Is it up for renewal every three years, every five years, or whenever?

Again, I'm sorry for all the questions. Thank you very much for coming. I really appreciate it.

• (1555)

The Chair: I want to apologize in advance. These are five-minute sessions, so if we miss it, they do have the chance to re-ask some of the questions later.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Yes.

The Chair: Please go ahead.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Were these for me? I'm assuming so.

Mr. Bill Foster: For both of us.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Do you want me to go first?

Mr. Bill Foster: Go ahead.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Okay.

The answer to your question about serving folks who are honourably discharged is yes, we do. Anybody who is referred to us by a VAC case manager—that is the criterion. They must be referred to us by a VAC case manager.

At this point, we have not been referred any RCMP members.

We also work with spouses of anyone who has been totally and permanently incapacitated. They may not have passed away, but they can no longer work. We do work with those spouses.

In terms of an example of a process, a client is referred to us from the Veterans Affairs case manager. We go through an assessment process and look at their medical, functional, and psychosocial needs and their transferrable skills—everything that would take into account what they need to go back into the workforce. Once we go through that process and we've done that thorough assessment, we make a recommendation to the VAC case manager about what their vocational potential is and what steps would be needed to help that person become employed.

We build a five-point plan with that client, which in many cases will include retraining or augmenting the skills they have, preparing them to go into the job search phase, and supporting them through an active job search. We might do job placement with them through a job developer. Then, once they have become employed, we'll work with them post-employment to make sure they have the supports they need. Oftentimes, because we are working with people with physical ailments, we need to go into the workforce and help with ergonomics and that kind of thing, so we'll work through that process as well.

In terms of our contract and how we get paid, this is a fee for service. We won this through a competitive bid process. If we don't provide the service, then we are not paid. This contract was a three-year contract. It ends on April 15, 2012, with the option of two additional one-year renewals. We have received our first additional year to that contract.

Mr. Bill Foster: In terms of our program, I would have to check on those who have been honourably discharged. In the regulations, it's fairly detailed in terms of eligibility.

In terms of family members and spouses, if the member died while in service and was eligible for the program at that time, the benefits would be transferred to the spouse. In terms of family members, I would have to check on that too. As far as I understand it, the benefit would transfer to the spouse, not necessarily to the family member.

For the example of Sergeant Joe, yes, I could spend quite a bit of time on that.

The Chair: If I could, Mr. Foster, I'm going to ask you to—

Mr. Bill Foster: Yes, I think we could easily provide something in writing to that.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Mr. Bill Foster: Carol will address how we get—

Ms. Carol Hurst (Operations Manager, Career Transition Services, Right Management): If I could quickly speak about the terms of our contract, it's a two-year contract that started on August 1, 2010, and runs up to and including September 30, 2012, with an option to be extended for one additional 12-month period.

At the end of the contract, there will be a six-month wind-down period. "Wind-down" is defined as a six-month period when the contract is set to expire if it is not renewed or re-awarded. Basically, what will happen is that if the contract is going to be renewed for another year, they will give us at least 30 days' written notice. The

contract authority is Public Works and Government Services Canada.

As far the fee structure goes, it's fee for service.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Hurst.

We'll now go to Mr. Lobb for five minutes.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I wonder if you could tell us where some of your offices are. You said they were across the country, I think, and close to bases. Could you just let us know where some of those offices are?

• (1600)

Mr. Bill Foster: We have offices all across the country, many of them near bases. In some places, we have to service a base without an office nearby.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Would you have an office in Cold Lake?

Mr. Bill Foster: No, we don't.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Do you have an office in Wainwright, for example?

Mr. Bill Foster: No, we don't.

If, for example, the individual needed face-to-face coaching, we would provide that. What often happens is that we would have the individual coach or counsellor meet the individual at the base or in a mutually convenient place for them, or have that meeting at their house. In some places where we don't have an office, that's an opportunity to get together.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Do the men and women you're working with find this an agreeable situation?

Mr. Bill Foster: Yes, very much. It works out for them, absolutely.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Good.

Ms. Gueulette, one thing in your presentation I was interested in is where you talked about 90% of the people you have dealt with to date have PTSD. Are these 90% in a stable condition, or are these people...? Where are they in the process with PTSD?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Generally speaking, when they're referred to us, the VAC case manager has already consulted with a psychologist, and that client has been in treatment through the OSI clinics, for example. If they have not, then we often will have them assessed at that time by a psychologist and work with that psychologist.

Sometimes they are still in treatment. We would obviously never recommend moving forward with the plan until that person was stabilized.

Mr. Ben Lobb: You also mentioned in your presentation that people are moving through the process through National Defence and may or may not be on SISIP, and are then transitioning through and so end up on the earnings loss benefit. Are you familiar with this program, and are the people you are working with receiving benefits with the earnings loss benefit? Of the 1,900, there's a good chance that a large majority of them would be receiving the earnings loss benefit of some sort or another?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Yes.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Okay.

One other question I have is the cost. In your presentation—and Mr. Foster, if you want to add to it as well, feel free—your agreement is that if this is above and beyond your services, you cover some of the cost. What does the department say when you bring this up to them?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Everybody wants to help veterans; I mean, they are wanting to help them just as much as everybody at this table.

They are bound by the structure they work within at this time. We all work together to the best end that we can, but we're all bound by the rules. It's not for lack of wanting to make a difference; it's just the rules we're faced with.

Mr. Ben Lobb: If you weren't covering the cost, how long do you have to wait to receive payment back?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Our contract stipulates that we submit an invoice, they review it within 15 days, and then reimburse us within 30 days.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Also in your presentation, you talked about maybe setting up a website down the road, a portal for job postings. DND has one already, and we have one—I guess at some point we'll be coming through with “Helmets to Hardhats”. Is this something that you can see yourselves kind of meshing together, to provide the ultimate portal for people looking for jobs? How do you see that? Is that something you've discussed with the bureaucrats at Veterans Affairs Canada?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: We've certainly never discussed it. It's something that we've experienced. We've had lots of employers phoning us who want to hire veterans. You have a portal, obviously, where you can post jobs.

I think at the end of the day we're all just trying to make a difference. We want to make it easy for employers to find veterans with these great skill sets and to match them to jobs.

The Chair: Did you want Mr. Foster to answer as well? You're near the end there.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Sure.

Mr. Bill Foster: I think Carol can address the payment piece; I just want to talk about the Helmets to Hardhats program.

Certainly that's a fantastic program. We are aware that it's still getting up to speed and getting organized. As we learn more about the program, perhaps we can have some conversations about the type of portal that's being discussed. It could be something that we could look at, perhaps, having jobs put on our bank that reflect the portal. There are a number of technical solutions that probably can do that.

I think it's really important, though, that the program get lots of publicity, because it will really benefit a lot of the veterans we're working with.

Do you want to add the other piece?

• (1605)

Ms. Carol Hurst: Certainly.

We're very much like CanVet; when we submit an invoice, VAC reviews it within 15 days, and we receive payment within 30.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Casey, you have five minutes.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Gueulette, your relationship with Veterans Affairs started when you responded to a request for proposals a couple of years ago. In terms of the services that you provide, were they provided either by government or by another company before you won the contract?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: They were provided by interim services while the contract was in the bid process. These are new services that were brought on by the new Veterans Charter.

During the bid process, which took some time to complete, Veterans Affairs arranged for interim providers to provide the services while the bid process was going on. Once the bid was awarded, we won the bid and took over those services. Now we're able to provide a national approach.

Mr. Sean Casey: Were you one of the interim providers?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Our company was not an interim provider.

Mr. Sean Casey: Okay.

We heard from Right Management that they're on a fee-for-service basis. Are you as well?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: We are on a fee-for-service basis, yes.

Mr. Sean Casey: Each of your professionals would have an hourly rate or a rate affixed to each task that they perform?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: It's actually a contracted rate, not just for each individual but across all of our contract.

Mr. Sean Casey: I spent 17 years selling my time and dividing each hour into six-minute segments.

Explain to me how you bill your client.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Sure.

We have a flat fee for assessment. If a client's going through a functional assessment or going through a “psycho-voc” assessment, there's a flat fee affixed to each of those phases, each of those pieces, depending on what the client needs. It's the Veterans Affairs case manager who approves each of those milestones.

There's a flat fee for creating the plan, and then an hourly fee for support while the client is working through the plan. It's very individualized, because it really depends on the client and what their need is at the time.

Mr. Sean Casey: Your contract started in April of 2010?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Of 2009.

Mr. Sean Casey: Okay: April of 2009.

Can you tell us what your total billing to Veterans Affairs Canada has been, including these reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses? I'm interested in the total amount that you're being paid by Veterans Affairs over the life of your contract. Or is that proprietary?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: No, we can tell you what we've billed to date.

We've billed just over \$11 million to date for 1,942 clients. That's everything, including all assessments, counselling services, tuition, books, supplies, everything, all of the counselling. The total cost per client at this point is \$5,664.

Mr. Sean Casey: So the \$11 million that you've billed is since you started working with Veterans Affairs in 2009.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Correct.

Mr. Sean Casey: Can you give me a comparison year over year? Do you have that further broken down in terms of time periods?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: I could certainly get it for you. I don't have it in front of me today. If you'd like me to get it for you, I could.

Mr. Sean Casey: That would be appreciated. I'd be most interested in hearing what the billings were in the first and most recent year of your mandate. Thank you very much.

Mr. Foster and Ms. Hurst, being in career transition services, it seems to me that there's a real growth opportunity for you with the employees of Veterans Affairs. There will be 500 of them looking for work over the next few years as a result of the downsizing. Have you had any discussions with the department towards offering your services to civil servants as opposed to clients of Veterans Affairs?

Mr. Bill Foster: We've had no discussion.

Ms. Carol Hurst: I know that one of the members of our civilian team recently discussed this with a member of, I would say, DND, in light of the recent announcement or recommendations on budget cutbacks and staffing levels. So a preliminary conversation has taken place. At this time, I don't know what the outcome was, but I do know that we have mentioned our services to DND.

•(1610)

Mr. Sean Casey: What about Veterans Affairs Canada? That's where there are a lot of jobs in play over the next little while.

Ms. Carol Hurst: Absolutely. We're all sitting, waiting to find out. Based on my understanding of what's happening, there are just recommendations at this point and we won't know the extent of it until the budget is announced. They are very much aware of our services. We have been an interim service provider, so if this conversation is an appropriate one to have at that time, we'll have it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bill Foster: It's not just about outplacement. We also do a lot of work with organizational development and change management. They're aware of our capabilities in all these areas.

Ms. Carol Hurst: We want to assist the individuals who are affected but not necessarily losing their jobs, where there will be a change within the organization. So that's an opportunity, but we're waiting until there is more clarity on the recommendations.

The Chair: Thank you both.

Now to Ms. Adams.

Ms. Eve Adams (Mississauga—Brampton South, CPC): Thanks very much.

As I understand, Right Management tries to find suitable employment for its clients. Can you tell me what your definition of suitable employment is?

Mr. Bill Foster: I'll give you a definition similar to what's in our contract: i.e., suitable employment means employment that is reasonable in light of each individual's aspirations, qualifications, experience, education, and geographic area of residence.

Ms. Eve Adams: Do you both agree to what that final outcome will be?

Mr. Bill Foster: Basically, that's how we are judged, by the type of employment that the individual eventually obtains.

Ms. Carol Hurst: But essentially the suitability is based on their goals. So they determine what is suitable for them. We just guide them through a system of achieving their goals.

Mr. Bill Foster: This is one of the objectives. It's not—as some individuals perceive—based on getting the same salary that they had in the Canadian Forces. It could be someone who has been a senior officer and decides he doesn't want to do senior executive work any more and would like to do part-time consulting. So when we mention “aspirations”, it's understood that they may aspire to do less. Some people may aspire to do more.

I don't know if that gives you any additional clarity. We certainly work closely with people. We build a plan with them, similar to what CanVet does. They create what's called a career transition plan and then they implement that plan. It's based on their needs, on their goals.

Ms. Eve Adams: That's exactly the assurance I'm looking for. I'm looking to make sure that this is driven by the vets and that the final outcome is what the vet was looking for.

How do you measure your successes?

Ms. Carol Hurst: Bill mentioned some of the critical performance measures we're judged by. But as to some of the specifics, I can go through some numbers for you.

With respect to VAC performance standards and client satisfaction, at least 80% of clients who access CTS will report that their knowledge has increased in résumé writing, interview techniques, conducting job searches, labour market information, self-marketing, and job-finding.

Based on available data and client outcomes, we're averaging 91% satisfaction and performance against that metric. When we look at the effectiveness of the workshops, it's the same thing. We're averaging about 99% effectiveness.

Ms. Eve Adams: Just getting back to the veteran's final outcome, what ability do you have to match veterans to civilian careers? What we've been hearing a lot from our veterans during our travels is that they are having some difficulty in finding civilian careers. They very much enjoyed the work they did in the Canadian Forces, leading their peers, and the transition is a difficult one. Perhaps you could speak to your ability to match them to civilian careers.

• (1615)

Mr. Bill Foster: I could speak on that. I need a little clarification from you as well. If there is a particular type of veteran, I can tell you some of their challenges. If you're talking with someone who might have a combat arms background, or someone who has an engineering background.... Were there any groups you were hearing from that were particularly concerned?

Ms. Eve Adams: We've had a few. I suppose the one that was one of the most compelling.... I believe his rank was sergeant and he had served in the artillery, and he was very passionate.

Mr. Bill Foster: A lot of combat arms individuals—and I think Tricia can speak to this as well—do struggle initially because they don't see something that's the equivalent on the outside in the civilian world. I think where we come across as counsellors, our role is to help them understand what is out there in the civilian world in terms of options. We can certainly provide them with some psychometric assessments if they're really struggling with what it is they might like to do.

We're also seeing folks who, if after a little bit of counselling and coaching they do get a sense that there is something on the civilian side that they could do, then learn how to market themselves based on the skills they've amassed over the years within the military. Sometimes it's just a little bit of additional information and a lot of assistance around how to market yourself to the civilian world. It's not necessarily that they have to completely reinvent themselves.

For example, we've had folks who were in the artillery, and were able to—and I'm going to use the military word, remuster—reinvent themselves using those skills from the artillery. A lot of them have mathematical skills, the ability to talk about parabolas, etc. In a surveying type of role, that's really quite exceptional, so some of them have pursued those types of positions.

It's not a *fait accompli* that if you have a combat arms background there isn't an opportunity for you in the civilian world. It just takes a little additional work: your assessment piece or getting a better sense of what types of careers are out there in the civilian world.

Does that answer your question?

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Foster.

Ms. Eve Adams: I've got a question for Ken, but am I out of time?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Bill Foster: Sorry about that lengthy answer.

The Chair: We'll go to Ms. Mathysen for five minutes.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair

Thank you very much for the information you've provided—and more importantly, for what you do. I think it's quite remarkable. I certainly appreciate it. I know we all do.

I had a couple of questions. You indicated in your brief that your role is to support the veteran, and in order to do that you consult occupational therapists, psychiatrists, and psychologists, and try to match up the veteran with the right kind of job. I wondered, with some of the medically discharged individuals—and certainly some

of them would be very fragile emotionally and physically—do you also work with the employers to assist in the transition to the job?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Absolutely. That's part of the post-employment support that we provide, not only transitioning with the employer, but also for the employee at that work site, so making sure that ergonomically they can do their jobs. We have to be careful, because we have to get permission from the veteran, and not every veteran is willing to disclose. It's something we're always balancing, but we do work very closely with employers, yes.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: What is the usual time that comes between when someone is referred to you and them finding a job? Is it a matter of weeks, months, or can it be extended?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: I can speak for CanVet and say that it really is very individualized. It depends on the current condition of the veteran, what their medical issues might be. Also, some of them are going back to school with us, so they might be in school for a year or so, but after they finish their training we get them employed usually within three to four months.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: I know that you have a significant number of people working with you, and I wondered, of all of those folks working for WCG and Right Management, are there any former military people among your employees?

• (1620)

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: There are, yes. We have ex-military across the country, yes.

Mr. Bill Foster: It's the same with us.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: I'm sure that adds an extra, positive dimension to what you do.

I was very interested in the job fairs. You talked about job fairs, I think, Mr. Foster. Could you describe them to me? You also talked about job-offer evaluations. Could you explain what that entails? I thought that was very interesting.

Mr. Bill Foster: There are two ways job fairs enter the situation.

First, dozens of job fairs occur across the country on a weekly basis. We have a staff person who reports to me and informs the counsellors and the clients of upcoming career fairs in the areas where they are currently working. The key thing is that it's more of an information dissemination piece.

Second, we've also had, in various Right Management offices across Canada, a number of career fairs, and we continue to have them. Our civilian clients and our CTS clients—I say civilian clients, because that's the only term I can come up with—meet at our Right Management offices. We may have one employer. We may have a dozen employers. Sometimes it's a mixture of employers and recruiters. Our counsellors coach individuals on how to put together a résumé, how to come to a career fair, and how to speak to an employer. Sometimes at career fairs they network with the individual who's representing the company, or they may even do interviews. We've had that happen many times in Right Management and with CTS. It's a very effective way of doing things.

In terms of the job-offer evaluation, that happens when we're working with someone, and they'll say to us—it's a glorious time when it happens—"I have a job, but I have this job offer. Can you help me?" What we try to do with individuals is maximize their compensation. If the individual wants to bring the offer to us, we can coach him or her on various aspects of the job offer. It's very alien to say to military folks, "By the way, did you know that you can negotiate your vacation? Did you know that you can negotiate your bonus?" "I get a bonus?" they say. "Yes, if you're working in the private sector, you get a bonus."

I don't mind saying that over the years we have had a pretty good track record, as most coaches do, I think, who work with people, of taking that initial offer and maybe increasing it by 10% to 20%.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: That's impressive.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Foster.

Mr. Bill Foster: I should say, for clarity, that we coach them on how to negotiate. It's not us doing it for them.

Sorry about that, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: That's okay. As long as it's in response, we're okay with that. Thank you.

Now we'll go to Mr. Harris, for five minutes.

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, ladies and gentleman, for making your presentations today.

Ms. Gueulette, I'm looking at your numbers, and it looks like there was an average over the last three years of about 550 jobs per year, based on your 87% number.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Not everybody has completed the plan. So 1,900 have come into the program, but they're not all finished their plans.

Mr. Richard Harris: The 87% is in 2011.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: It is 2011, but not everybody who's in the program has finished. Some of them are still in school. Some are still in the assessment process. Those are clients who have finished their programs.

Mr. Richard Harris: Okay. It says, "In 2011, 87% of clients who completed the program to date became employed."

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: That's right. It is the people who've completed the program. I'll have to pull the numbers for exactly how many that is.

Mr. Richard Harris: All right.

How many branches do you have across Canada?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: We currently have, I think, 32 offices across Canada. But we're much like Right Management. Our contract actually stipulates that when we do our initial assessments with clients, we go into their homes. We need to obtain a big picture of what's going on with them, and it's a much clearer way to do it.

• (1625)

Mr. Richard Harris: But each office would service its own area. Where is your biggest office?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Do you mean where are most of our referrals?

Mr. Richard Harris: Yes.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: We have a large number of referrals near Valcartier. We have Edmonton. We have a large number in Halifax and a large number in Victoria and of course throughout Ontario as well. We have large offices in Ontario.

Mr. Richard Harris: So through the three years, there were 1,900 clients referred to your 32 offices across Canada.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: They were referred to our program across Canada. That's right.

We also have clients overseas as well. I believe we have about 20 clients living overseas.

Mr. Richard Harris: When you say you're paid on a fee-for-service basis, is that a success basis, as in how many actually become employed, or does the fee-for-service basis determine whether or not they become employed?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: In our case, it's not that way. When they come in, we are paid for the initial assessment, and then we are paid if other components are required—for instance, if a doctor needs to come in and do an assessment. We get paid to do a labour market analysis to make sure that whatever job is chosen, there's going to be a job waiting for that member at the end.

Mr. Richard Harris: So there's no actual quota set? Out of 1,900 referrals, there's no quota for the number who must actually become employed?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: In our contract, there's no quota.

Mr. Richard Harris: I know that previously, for other service provider contracts, there has been.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: We certainly have worked on contracts like that.

Mr. Richard Harris: What's an example of the most popular job placements that have resulted from the work you do? I know there are probably lots of them, but maybe you could kind of bunch them together.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: We've had lots go into high tech, into IT. We placed one just recently in the aerospace industry. We have just about anything you can imagine. Again, we're looking at their transferable skills, what they've brought with them from the military and what they've done since then, and in our case, we try to find suitable employment. Some are driving instructors. Some are teaching. Some who were pilots are teaching at post-secondary institutions. It's very diverse.

Mr. Richard Harris: I guess those questions could refer to you too, Mr. Foster and Ms. Hurst, if you wanted to respond.

Mr. Bill Foster: Could you go over which ones again?

Mr. Richard Harris: The last one, for example, was whether for the clients you assist there is any particular area that seems to be the most popular that eventually evolves into employment.

Mr. Bill Foster: I would say we're seeing our folks landing in all industries at all levels. It really depends upon their objective. In our job bank, for example, we have everything from clerical positions all the way up to senior management positions.

The Chair: You have to be very quick, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Richard Harris: Do you feel, if you critique yourself, that you are underachieving or overachieving?

Mr. Bill Foster: I want a middle carrot. I feel we're doing our job.

Ms. Carol Hurst: I would also say that we get incredible testimonials from the individuals we've helped and continue to help. That to us suggests that we are doing our job and we're doing it well.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we go to Mr. Lizon for five minutes.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for coming here this afternoon.

The first quick question is for Ms. Gueulette. You mentioned that you have 20 clients overseas or outside the country. How do you serve them?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Under privacy regulations, the only way we're allowed to serve them is over the telephone and through the mail. We will often try to find third-party providers in the country where they're living. We have clients in the Netherlands, in Germany, in Thailand, and all over. So we often try to find other resources in those countries when we get a referral like that. But it's challenging, for sure.

• (1630)

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Do you look for employment services there?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Well, we will provide the services over the phone if we can provide third-party providers. Not every country is built the same as Canada, so it can be a real challenge. We often need to spend a lot more time finding out what the lay of the land is in those countries.

If we can't find employment supports for them in that country, then we'll provide them over the telephone. We've had some good successes, though.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: The second question is probably for all of you.

What would be the most sought after profession or trade by potential employers? Who are they looking for? Can you name several?

Mr. Bill Foster: That's the \$64,000 question.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Are they looking for IT engineers, mechanical engineers? Are they looking for bricklayers?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: It depends on which part of the country they're living in. Every part of the country is different. If they're living in Alberta they're looking for skill sets related to oil and gas. If they're living in other parts, then they're looking often for different skill sets. It really depends, from my perspective.

Ms. Carol Hurst: From what I've seen from some of our statistics, a lot of people are looking for people with an operations and logistics background: avionics, electrical, statistics, so they can do auditing and accounting, security enforcement, things like that.

Again, as Tricia said, the hiring depends on the region, the business tempo. I would say that generally they are looking for people who have the leadership skills, agility, organization, dedication, and commitment to the work.

Bill said it's a \$64,000 question, so I hope we've provided some guidance on that.

Mr. Bill Foster: I really think it's not just the technical piece. We always get focused on that. We get that question all the time from people.

It's the robust set of skills, and I would say there are a lot of interpersonal and attitudinal pieces that Canadian employers.... We've had a lot of folks come to us wanting to get on our job bank because they want access to leaders: people who can play on a team exceedingly well, who are mission-focused, get the job done, and are dependable. These are things that people in the military take for granted. It's a composite between the technical skills and the generic transferable skills.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: How many of your clients are not looking for employment with a company but rather going for self-employment? If they do, how do you help them to achieve their goal?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: We actually are bound by a return-to-work hierarchy within our contract. Our first goal is whether we can get them back with their current employer. Then, can we get them back to work with a different employer but doing a similar job? The very last rung of that return-to-work hierarchy is self-employment, because it often doesn't have as much success if it's not well supported.

We do have some of our clients who have gone into self-employment. Prior to supporting a plan or making a recommendation on that, we'll do a labour market analysis. We'll often do what we call a self-employment assessment to make sure the skill set is there to support building a business. We'll look at many different factors of the client's situation.

We do have a number of clients who have gone into self-employment and they have been quite successful. I can't give you an exact number, but I could get it for you if you'd like.

Mr. Bill Foster: If I could answer, it's similar: we would have to look into our number. What we do is we coach people around developing a business plan, so helping them learn how to do a market analysis, putting cashflow projections together. We're not accountants or lawyers, but we would teach them how to reach out to the appropriate business professionals.

It is a very small number. One of the things I do with Right Management, which I'm known for in the organization, is self-employment coaching. I've actually offered a number of programs within Right Management on this.

It's smaller than the civilian population, but we get people at both ends. We've had a few people buying franchises. We're getting a lot of people at the senior ranks getting into consulting. We've had very few people start their own small businesses.

We could get a number for you, but it's pretty small. It's a lot smaller than I expected when we started with CTS.

•(1635)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Foster. We're over our time quite a bit.

That ends round one of questioning. We will go into four-minute rounds next, starting with Ms. Papillon.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First off, I want to thank our witnesses for coming here to be with us today. I also want to commend you on your work; I know it is appreciated. I would just like to ask you a few questions.

What would you say are the specific needs of these veterans when they attend an information session or a job fair? I know a bit about what goes on. I know you work on crossover skills, résumés, and so forth. Which considerations do you feel are the most significant, from the outset, for veterans?

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Foster: If they're coming to a job fair, they can't just show up. They need to have some counselling and coaching, and they have to be clear about what their focus is. I think we had conversations over here about the notion of transferrable skills. They have to be clear about what they want. They have to be able to market themselves accordingly.

A counsellor will help them determine what their goal is in the job market and then build a plan to get there. That also includes building a strategy for marketing themselves effectively. Part of that strategy is developing a résumé. The résumé has to be clear about who they are, what their accomplishments and successes have been, their strengths, and how they relate to the employer they're thinking about. We would never coach someone to go to any career fair; it would only be a job fair that was relevant to them.

If they had an electrical trade in the military and they want to continue using those electrical skills on the outside, they should be attending job fairs where there are manufacturing, electrical trade types of opportunities, and meet employers who reflect their particular goals.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Annick Papillon: If I understand correctly then, the support is not all that different from, say, what a civilian would receive. There, as well, efforts are made to identify skills and help the individual readjust more effectively.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Foster: Absolutely. The hardest thing for military folks is taking the hundreds of transferrable skills they have and learning how to apply them. People often ask us about the greatest challenges we experience when working with them. It is getting them focused on the next stage of their careers. When they have clarity on that, the coach can help them learn how to articulate and communicate those skills into marketable skills for employers. But it's not up to us to make that decision for them. They have to make the choice of career based on their own interests, strengths, desires, motivation, and sense of mission and purpose—if that makes sense.

Did I answer your question?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Annick Papillon: So, basically, it is somewhat similar. There is some tailoring to the needs of veterans specifically, but the types of services are the same as they would be at other job fairs or information sessions.

I would like to give the next few minutes to Ms. Gueulette so she can tell us a bit more about her suggestions for the committee.

You had two suggestions. What would you like us to spend more time on? You can take the next few minutes to explain it in more detail.

[*English*]

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: I'd be happy to go through my two suggestions.

The first one I talked about is ensuring holistic coordination of vocational rehabilitation services from the time of injury. I know there are integrated support centres across the country, but vocational rehabilitation services for our Canadian Forces members and veterans is disjointed—not through the fault of anybody, but that's simply the way the system has been built up. We're dealing with two different departments, and sometimes that can be tricky.

When a Canadian Forces member is injured, once they have started to stabilize and are still serving it might be a good time to really have a look at what they can do next vocationally. I know there have been a lot of good intentions, but I'm talking about making it a more holistic approach. That is my first suggestion.

My second suggestion has to do with compensation for retraining. Again, this is no fault of anybody. It's simply the way the structure of the system is. Right now veterans are prepaying for their training, books, tools, and everything they need to work their plan, and that can be a hardship for many. My suggestion is to take away that hardship, that barrier, and tweak it. We're paying for those things anyway. It's an efficiency. It would just require tweaking the system to make it easier for them.

Those are my two suggestions.

•(1640)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Gueulette.

We're going to Mr. Anders. Following this pattern, we're going to give you a very generous four minutes.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Sure.

You were mentioning that a lot of the people you dealt with had post-traumatic stress disorder. I'm wondering what some of the more interesting scenarios are that you've had to deal with, the more severe cases, and what restrictions it posed for that person or persons in terms of finding employment.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Every person displays different symptoms of it. A lot of our veterans can't be around large crowds of people, they have difficulty sleeping, and loud noises are hard for them. So it requires that we be very sensitive to situations we're placing them in.

Some of our veterans can't work with anybody. They find it that difficult. So again, it requires that we be very sensitive to that situation. We'll often work right hand in hand with their psychologists or psychiatrists when helping them with their plan in those cases. Those are some of the more severe cases.

Mr. Rob Anders: Do you have any other stories about veterans?

Mr. Bill Foster: There's a fairly fundamental difference here between CanVet and ourselves, in that, primarily, our services are not for disabled members or veterans.

We do have individuals who have acknowledged that they have PTSD when they come into our program. The way we work our counselling with them is to focus on whether or not they're able to conduct a job search, and the vast majority can. In situations where these individuals are incapable of maintaining their job search or conducting a job search, we have a referral system back to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and then they have their own mechanisms, through case management, to be able to help these folks if they're having difficulty with some of the basic functions of conducting a job search.

Ms. Carol Hurst: And then placement to a more appropriate program that will meet their needs.

Mr. Bill Foster: Yes.

If they go into CanVet, they can be transferred into the rehab program. They're no longer part of our program.

Mr. Rob Anders: Okay.

To follow up on your commentary, you said they sometimes have troubles with large crowds of people. I take it that wouldn't be something that's directly attributable to a battlefield condition, because you don't normally fight among a whole crowd of people, but is it because there are so many stimuli that it sets them off?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Yes, exactly. You're walking in, and then there's the noise. Yes, you've hit the nail on the head.

Mr. Rob Anders: Okay, thank you.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I'll pass the time off to one of my colleagues if they so wish.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Adams.

Ms. Eve Adams: This question is for CanVet. Could you explain in some greater detail about your partnership with the March of Dimes?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Absolutely.

We have a contractual joint venture with both the March of Dimes and Innovative Rehabilitation Consultants.

As I mentioned before, we are the contract manager and provide services to veterans in British Columbia and overseas. March of Dimes provides the face-to-face services in Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic region, and IRC provides services in the prairies.

The Chair: Mr. Harris would like a question, if you want to share your time. He's flapping his hand at me.

Ms. Eve Adams: Sure.

The Chair: Ask a very quick one, Mr. Harris, please.

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Foster and Ms. Hurst, you mentioned that you contract with the government for recruitment.

• (1645)

Ms. Carol Hurst: In Australia, our manpower parent company.

Mr. Richard Harris: In Australia, okay.

I wasn't aware that Canada had contracted on any of the—

Ms. Carol Hurst: No. That would be news to us as well. That would be in Australia.

Mr. Richard Harris: That was my only question.

The Chair: Okay.

It turns out to be bang on a four-minute session.

Now we'll go to Monsieur Genest for four minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Genest (Shefford, NDP): I would like to know whether your two companies are in competition with one another, whether they deliver complementary services or whether each provides its intervention separately? If there is a problem, is it always necessary to go through the government to switch from one company to the other?

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Foster: That's a great question.

Right Management is a career transition firm. We are not in the area of vocational rehab. I might be casting you in the wrong light here, and I hope I'm not, but we have no intention of starting to occupy that business space. They do a fantastic job, and we have our own world in career transition.

I hope that answers your question.

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: With respect to moving back and forth, in our world it's up to the VAC case manager; it's their decision where that client should best be served.

Ms. Carol Hurst: To add to that, we do have individuals who are anticipating medically releasing, so instead of waiting for I believe it's at least six months prior to their release, they come into Career Transition Services to get a head start on their career transition process and work with a coach. When their eligibility comes through for medically releasing, then they complete our program and move over into a vocational rehabilitation program. So we do complement each other, and there's absolutely no competition. It's a very robust service offering across the board.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Genest: Thank you.

That answers my question exactly, in other words, whether the government made companies compete against one another or whether it improved service quality for veterans by choosing companies with different specialities.

That is the case. At the municipal level, it is possible to use ten different companies that each contribute a piece of the puzzle. The same applies here.

[English]

The Chair: I must say, everybody very much appreciated the question.

You still have some time left on that side.

Mr. Genest, do you have another question?

[Translation]

Mr. Réjean Genest: No. I appreciate short questions and answers. When I am satisfied with the information, enough said. I'm not one for elaborating just for the sake of it.

[English]

The Chair: If only you could give seminars to Mr. Stoffer, we'd all love it.

Mr. Stoffer, you still have over a minute left.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: I just want to say thank you very much for the great work you do and I wish you continued success. Keeping an eye on our veterans and their families is a good thing.

If you are talking to DVA, I would only ask that you maybe allow the family members assistance as well, not just the spouses of the deceased members or the very seriously ill, but the regular family members. Under the new Veterans Charter, children and spouses do have some opportunities for education. We're finding that if the family is involved in the rehabilitation and the reintegration, the veteran himself or herself ends up becoming much better adjusted in that regard. So if you are talking about that, good.

Thank you very much for your service.

Mr. Bill Foster: I want to answer your earlier question about our program. Yes, if they're honourably discharged, they have access to our services. My brain wasn't working at that point.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now, for the last time slot, Ms. Adams, we're over to your side for four minutes.

Ms. Eve Adams: Following up on that great question, could you expand on how families are assisted through your program? They obviously are a critical part of the veteran's rehabilitation. Perhaps you can talk about the types of services you provide to families.

• (1650)

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: Our contract allows us to serve spouses of totally and permanently incapacitated members, or those who have passed away. Those are the only services we are allowed to provide at this time under the terms of our contract.

Ms. Eve Adams: What are your success stories, obviously without naming names? Could you give us a general overview of some of the stories you're most proud of?

Ms. Tricia Gueulette: One sticks in my head, because I just talked to this client. He was a security expert in the military. We helped him through a pipeline security course in Edmonton, and he just finished. It was a very short program, but he used the extensive skills he obviously had in the military. The company that trained him was so pleased and so excited by the work he did that they hired him right on the spot, as soon as he finished. So that's just an example of

the skill sets that can be transferred from the military into the civilian world. It comes to mind because I spoke to him this morning.

Mr. Bill Foster: I have a good example. Recently we had an individual who was working with one of our coaches in Ontario and she was really interested in aerospace. She came from the air force. She was working with a coach. She came across a job posting and the individual was wondering whether or not we could provide some connections to an employer. We had a relationship on our civilian side and also through CTS with a major aerospace company that does simulators and we approached the organization. They set up an interview.

The person got hired, and she's living in her community, working in an industry that's really taking off—to excuse the pun—and just absolutely head over heels in love with her job. And that's exactly the type of thing....

I think both organizations, if the committee wants this, can give you some testimonials. We'd be happy to do that, to give you some real-life experiences of people who have surmounted the challenges and been successful.

Ms. Eve Adams: I think intuitively Canadians would feel that members of the Canadian armed forces are unbelievably disciplined and they all have an incredibly strong work ethic, and that just about any Canadian employer would be lucky to have them on board. It's a message that we need to get out there. They've certainly served our country, and any employer would be so fortunate to be able to make use of those skill sets.

Ms. Carol Hurst: Many hiring organizations are aware of those skill sets. We've had corporations approach us, and because those skill sets are part of the military picture and not necessarily part of the civilian side, corporations are prepared to pay relocation fees to provide all the training, because the core foundation of what they're looking for is there. It's just on-the-job skills that the veterans don't have. The corporations are prepared to train them, to give them that skill set and that behaviour.

Mr. Bill Foster: Yes, it's about the attitude. You can't train attitude. It's impossible.

Ms. Eve Adams: Thank you very much.

The Chair: That does conclude both rounds of questions and answers.

We have really appreciated your presentations today and your candid answers. Obviously there's a lot to what you do and what you provide for veterans, so we appreciate that very much. On behalf of the committee, I'd just like to—

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Chair, I'm sorry, I have one quick question. I need clarification on something, on the contracts that these people have—

The Chair: What I would suggest—

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: —if that's permissible.

The Chair: The committee would have to agree that you can ask another question, because we've gone beyond our time.

Does everybody agree?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay, then. Go ahead.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: You mentioned that you won the contracts through a competitive process and you said that after a certain period it will be renewed. You will be notified for a year and then for another year, and then what happens afterwards? Will there be a new competitive process and new people will apply? Does it end? Is it capped somewhere?

Ms. Carol Hurst: That would be dependent on the Department of Veterans Affairs. Currently we won the existing contract with a procurement strategy of best overall proposal with a two-year contract with the option to renew for one year. After that, we don't know the future of the program and whether or not the deliverables will be the same.

So at this point in time—and I think for CanVet it will be the same—it's unknown to us what the future brings.

• (1655)

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you on behalf of all the committee. Please have a safe trip home. We appreciate your information today. Thank you.

Mr. Sean Casey: I have a point of order, Mr. Chairman, before we adjourn.

I would just note that Mr. Lizon received unanimous consent from the committee to ask a follow-up question. I think it's an excellent precedent and I hope a courtesy like that might be extended to other committee members in the future.

The Chair: I remind you that our committee will meet back in its regular committee room next week at 3:30.

Thank you all.

We are adjourned.

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