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SKILLED TRADES TASK FORCE HARD AT WORK

COCA's Skilled Trades Task Force is beavering away under the competent leadership of chair Steve Dietrich, developing COCA's submission to Phase 2 of the Mike Sherrard Expert panel on the Skilled Trades. The task Force met over Zoom recently and broke out into three sub-groups to develop responses to the panel's questions. The questions are as follows:

1. Trade Prescription and De-Prescription

Trade prescription criteria and process (naming new trades)

Criteria:

1. What criteria should be included in the framework for developing new trades? (for example, industry support for an apprenticeship program, labour market need, existence of the trade in other provinces and territories, etc.)
2. Should the same criteria be applied to all sectors? Please explain why or why not (for example, should the criteria take regional differences into account?). - Should the criteria be weighed equally?

Process

1. What process should the applicant be required to follow and what should be included in an application package?
2. Who should assess the application? Who should have the final decision on whether a new trade will be prescribed or not?
3. Who should be consulted to seek input on whether a trade should be prescribed? How should this consultation take place?
4. How should overlaps in scopes of practice between a proposed trade and existing trades be considered?

Trade de-prescription criteria and process

Criteria

1. What criteria should be included in the framework for de-prescribing trades? (For example, industry support for an apprenticeship program, labour market demand, existence of the trade in other provinces and territories, etc.)
2. Should the criteria be different for compulsory and non-compulsory trades?

Process

1. Should there be a periodic review of whether trades are relevant? Who should be involved in the review?
2. Who should be consulted to seek input on whether a trade should be de-prescribed? How should this consultation take place?
3. What should the wind-down process be for trades that are de-prescribed and what should be considered?

2. Trade Classification and Re-classification criteria and process

Criteria

1. What elements do you feel are essential to a compulsory trade compared to a non-compulsory trade?
2. Should there be any changes to the current criteria for trade classification reviews set out in O. Reg. 315/18? Are the existing criteria the right criteria? Should they be given different weight? Is there anything missing?
3. What role, if any, does risk of harm play in a trade classification/reclassification?
4. Should the entire scope of practice for a trade be a criterion for classification or re-classification? Please explain why or why not.
5. If the scope of practice for a compulsory trade is expanded after the trade is already compulsory, how should the new elements be considered?

Process

1. Under what circumstances/conditions should the government update and evaluate trade classification? What conditions should trigger a trade classification review?
2. Should a scope of practice review be a pre-

requisite for a trade classification review?

3. What role, if any, does the existence of other regulators play in the classification/re-classification process?

3. Initiatives that complement training of tradespeople

1. What would the relationship be between continuing education and existing apprenticeship programs? How do these complement each other and how do they differ?
2. What would be the objective and key success factors for complementary training?
3. Describe how formal recognition of complementary training could be beneficial. What are the drawbacks?
4. What other kinds of training would assist and complement existing apprenticeship programs? (for example, essential skills, mentorship/train-the-trainer skills, entrepreneurship, diversity/equity/anti-racism training, workplace harassment and discrimination prevention program, etc.)
5. Should there be professional development criteria for journeypersons? If so, should there be a difference between these requirements for journeypersons in compulsory vs. non-compulsory trades? Please describe.
6. What should the role of industry be in developing, assessing, and measuring complementary training? What other partners should be involved?

If you have some good ideas, the task Force would appreciate hearing from you.

COCA APPEARS AT BILL 288 HEARINGS

COCA's Immediate Past Chair and Skilled Trades Task Force Chair Steve Dietrich and President Ian Cunningham appeared at the virtual public hearings of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs on Tuesday, May 25th to provide advice with regard to Bill 288 Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act 2021.

We shared a 60 minute time slot with the OGCA and the Skilled Trades Alliance. Each organization was given seven minutes to make their presentations one after the other and then respond to questions from Committee members.

In our presentation, we offered our general support for the Bill, highlighted the foundational importance of the construction industry to Ontario's society and economy, outlined the need for an effective skilled trades and apprenticeship system and its requisite qualities and features. We did make our support provisional on two issues:

1. That all construction trades are transitioned into the new system exactly as they currently exist with regard to their classification and scope of practice
2. That there is absolutely no opportunity for portable skill sets to be allowed into the construction trades

In making the case against portable skill sets, we stuck to the message contained in our Phase 1 submission to the Michael Sherrard Expert panel on the Skilled Trades. Portable skill sets:

- De-professionalize the skilled trades (for example, there is pride in being a fully-fledged carpenter, little in being just a door hanger) and devalue apprenticeships
- Create short term jobs, not long-term careers
- Are simply a response to a temporary spike in

market demand for a narrow set of skills often within a limited geographic area such as the GTA

- Limit a worker's mobility and employability
- Ignore the highly valued national Red Seal program that allows workers with the Red Seal credential to follow the demand for work and practice their trades across the country.
- Limit a worker's ability to work more hours and increase earnings
- Complicate project scheduling
- Contribute to high worker turnover
- Diminish overall productivity
- Increase costs
- Run counter to training for other vocations where specialization is preceded by a fundamental grounding in most aspects of that vocation
- Increases the administrative burden on the system steward by requiring the establishment of training standards for, recognition of and issuance of credentials for five times the number of trades that currently exist
- Have not proven to be successful in provinces where they have been implemented; they were a disaster in British Columbia, according to a study conducted by Prism Economics

Bill 288 is what is often referred to as "enabling legislation". Much heavy lifting is yet to be done to stand this new system up. COCA looks forward to working with the MLTSD and other stakeholders in this important work.

PREVENTION OFFICE REPORTS TO PREVENTION EMPLOYERS PARTNERSHIP

CPO Retiring

Ron Kelusky recently announced that he will be retiring effective September 30, 2021. It's anticipated that Kelusky will take advantage of some banked holiday time prior to his retirement date. Recruitment is already underway and that there will be a period of 3 weeks to a month when Kelusky's tenure will overlap with his successors. We extend our enthusiastic congratulations to Ron Kelusky for a job well done!

Health and Safety Representative Training

The provincial budget provided the Prevention Office with \$10 million over three years to ensure small businesses have properly trained safety representatives as required. The funds will be used to bring 60,000 small businesses into compliance. Training for small business safety representatives will be delivered at no cost to employers including the costs of the individuals' time. More details when they become available.

Supporting Ontario's Safe Employers (SOSE, formerly known as Accreditation)

Three employers were set to receive the SOSE recognition when it was discovered one was in default on premium payments to the WSIB. The WSIB provides all the financial incentives that are available to employers that earn the SOSE recognition, so it is important that employers seeking SOSE status are up to date with the provincial compensation agency. I presume the issue was fixed as the three were eventually and quietly recognized.

Provincial Health and Safety Strategy

Understandably the launch of the long overdue provincial health and safety strategy has been

delayed because of the pandemic. The development of the strategy is a requirement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The much delayed strategy will be launched in July.

Antigen Rapid Tests

The GVCA, following the lead of the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce which ran the successful pilot for association distribution of antigen rapid tests, is planning to be the delivery hub for the local construction industry for these screening devices. Deploying antigen rapid tests as just another screening tool will minimize the opportunities for the coronavirus to find its way onto construction sites. We understand that the LDCA is following suit.

Vaccination Clinics

Employers are now able to apply to the government to operate onsite vaccination clinics. Even though the vaccine is provided at no charge, the costs of operating a vaccination clinic are considerable and include security, setup, administering the vaccine and other administrative costs. As previously reported, EllisDon and its partners are operating a vaccine clinic available to all construction workers in the province.

PO Restructuring

The Prevention Office has been restructured to include an epidemiological unit. This will allow occupational health and safety to be evaluated through a lens similar to public health.

Labour Market Data

The Prevention Office has created some colourful dashboards derived from Statistics Canada labour market data.

NEW CEO OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO APPOINTED

Premier Ford has appointed Michelle DiEmanuele as the province's new secretary of cabinet and clerk of the executive council, effective June 20, 2021. It is the top spot in the Ontario public service and one that Senator Tony Dean, who once held the same position himself, referred to as the CEO of Ontario. Here are some highlights from DiEmanuele's resume:

- She is presently serving as President & CEO of Trillium Health Partners
- Prior to that, she served in the Ontario public service in many roles including Associate Secretary of Cabinet, Assistant Deputy Minister of Health and as Interim CEO at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation,
- Her private sector experience includes serving as Vice President (Branch and Small Business Banking, Retail Markets/Human Resources), CIBC and Vice President (Human Resources and Organizational Development), Brookfield Properties Ltd.
- She is also in the Hall of Fame of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women and was recognized as one of Canada's Top 40 under 40

DiEmanuele succeeds Steven Davidson as the province's top civil servant. Davidson will be retiring.

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE DENIED UNIVERSITY STATUS

A number of months ago I asked for your indulgence to allow me to write about an issue that had absolutely nothing to do with construction but one that had outraged me so much that I had to let you know about it. It was about Schedule 2 in Bill 213, supposedly a red tape reduction Bill that amended 28 statutes. Schedule 2 proposed to change the name of a private college of highly questionable repute called the Canada Christian College to Canada Christian University and allow it to grant Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees.

This Schedule raised a number of questions in my mind:

1. Why was this part of a red tape reduction Bill? It has nothing to do with red tape. In fact, it will require more regulation.
2. Why should someone of questionable character who owns and operates a poorly regarded private college and who is a friend and supporter of the government be allowed to follow a different process to become a university. The normal process is for a college to first apply to the Post-secondary Education and Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) and then once approved by PEQAB, to receive that status through legislation. The Bill 213 process was "ass-backwards".

Bill 213 passed Third Reading and received Royal Assent on December 8, 2020. However, because of the public outcry, Schedule 2 was not proclaimed. The government said that the proclamation of Schedule 2 would be contingent upon CCC's application passing the smell test at PEQAB. No surprise, it did not and the government has stated that Schedule 2 will not be proclaimed. It should at some future point in time be repealed.