

Journeywomen Ventures Ltd.

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The Honourable Paul Ramsey
Minister of Education, Skills and Training

Dear Paul Ramsey:

I am doing something I do not normally do, which is go over the head of the Provincial Apprenticeship Board, on which I have been sitting for 4 years, and where I chair the Equity Committee, whose recommendations, passed by the PAB in 1993, have yet to be implemented. It is hard being a lone voice particularly when the Chair does not focus on implementing these issues.

I am doing this because for the past 4 months, we have been assured publicly, at meetings, by the Deputy, George Ford, that Equity would be integrated into the Mandate/Responsibilities and documentation for ITAC: the new Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission which may take the place of the Provincial Apprenticeship Board and have fiscal responsibility for industry and entry-level training, as well as apprenticeship.

When I had the opportunity to look at the most recent draft, to be finalized next Tuesday to be presented to the Ministers on the 21st, not only was mention of equity missing from the mandate and responsibilities, but it was also missing in the recommended Committee structure, and its only mention was that the Lieutenant-Governor should have the ability to appoint extra members to reflect equity appropriately.

That is not good enough! I know how hard it has been to get equity taken seriously at the Board, even after the government's attempts to have the business and labour community reflect women and aboriginal people in the membership. The reality is, that those people represent the constituency they are designated from, i.e. business and labour, and particularly because they are designated group members, they bend over backwards to ensure that they are identified with business or labour, not as advocates for equity group participation in apprenticeship. You must have designated group members with familiarity with apprenticeship issues at the table to advocate for equity access to apprenticeship and training just as you have business and labour people advocating for their issues.

The reality is, while actual numbers of women may have risen in some trades (particularly those like plumbing and gasfitting, where the women in trades advocate at BCIT is a union plumber with 4 other trades qualifications, or boilermaking where their joint board coordinator is the first ticketed female in BC)....the percentages of women in

trades other than cooking and hairdressing have gone down steadily in the past 10 years! And that is not for want of trying to get in!

I raised this at the board, and let them know that I would be going forward with my concerns. I also let them know that the 8 men and 1 woman ministerial committee who approved that draft of that document, was not capable of seeing those issues clearly and making effective recommendations on equity issues. I say the same to you.

Since the demise of the BCLFDB, which at least had appropriate and somewhat effective equity representation, this is the first major change initiative related to education, training and employment. If the message that you send to the public is a denial of the inclusion of equity principles and participation, then this will become a government who loses a constituency who have been very important to the vitality it has been able to achieve so far.

With great regard for your sense of fair and equitable principles,

Marcia Braundy

CC: THE HONOURABLE JOHN CASHORE
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