

THE KEY CONCEPTS VOICED AT OUR HEARINGS

(133) The major imperative for our knowledge-intensive economy is that its members be well trained and well educated. A well-trained, well-educated population is the most important resource of our knowledge-intensive service economy and is necessary to ensure our further progress and material well-being. The real wealth of society today is knowledge.

(134) To transform information into knowledge in our information society, our people need basic, **core skills**: the abilities to **read, write, count and be effective** (see para. 7). Elementary and secondary schools should instill these core skills. We should also help people "**learn how to learn**". After they learn how to learn, we must give them the chance to continue learning and we must make this an attractive choice.

(135) Twenty per cent of our population have never learned how to learn and do not have the necessary core skills. These functionally illiterate Canadians are denied access to basic and further education and have few chances in the job market.

(136) Clearly, our education and training activities/policies are inadequate. The shortcomings must be corrected. **This is urgent.**

(137) We have no "quality control" in education and training. Agreed national/provincial standards of achievement at the elementary and secondary level and in vocational training, can ensure a higher quality of graduates as in Germany and Austria (para 54).

(138) Increasingly, the work place demands both specific "skills" and general "intellectual" ability.

(139) This need for both skill and intellectual depth is creating a new role for post-secondary institutions in the development of curricula which respond to the demands of the work place and the needs of the community. However, the emergence of this new role should in no way be allowed to detract from the well-established role of the university as a place of intellectual questioning, excellence and innovation.

(140) Many large businesses in Canada (IBM Canada Ltd. [Hearings, May 11, 1987], Esso Resources Canada Ltd. [Hearings, May 13, 1987], BC Telephone [Hearings, April 28, 1987]) under-

stand the need for intellectually excellent universities. These firms offer to their employees well-developed, far-reaching opportunities for further education and training — often in collaboration with universities and colleges; but these firms stand out because they are the exceptions.

(141) In fact, as our witnesses told us, few small and medium businesses provide any form of training (paras. 28, 38, 52).

(142) The private sector is concerned with profit, our witnesses said. This concern does not always accommodate training that meets the broader needs of employees. Though training is an investment in future success for employers, few of them realize this — for a variety of reasons. While some employers do not see the long-term advantages of providing training for their employees, others, particularly managers of small and medium businesses, simply do not have the means to offer training. Further, for those in the business community who "made it on their own", the idea of relying on anything other than one's own resources in order to get ahead seems foreign. The myth of the "lone ranger" is very present in our North America business culture.

(143) Employers, educators and students need to be aware of each other's needs, to ensure a smoother transition from school to work and from old job to new job. Training that combines classroom work with on-the-job experience is an excellent way to bridge the gap between school and employment, or between an old job and a new, more sophisticated job (paras. 33, 54, 63, 73).

(144) We do not have the effective, nation-wide collaborative approaches to classroom-plus-on-the-job-training that Germany and Austria have, for example (paras. 45 to 51, 72). We only have small-scale schemes such as those developed by the Industry-Education Council of Hamilton-Wentworth, co-operative education programs and some few collaborative efforts such as the joint IBM-Ryerson project (paras. 128 to 130).

(145) We do not have enough consultation mechanisms to devise agreed education and training curricula which suit the needs of employees and employers alike, locally and nationally. Nor do we have agreed standards that students and trainees