

B.C. Federation of Labour

Moving Forward: Apprenticeship in the New Economy

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The National Perspective – National Standards, Red Seal and the Alberta Perspective

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I want to speak to the importance of national standards.

Vast country – relatively small population.

Growing mobility of workers across jurisdictions, primarily construction:

- Always had movement of workers. but Air Canada now has direct flights from Atlantic Canada to Ft. McMurray
- More workers from the industrial sectors that are downsizing will be traveling for cross-sectoral employment:
 - Many jobs will be temporary – 6-12 month
 - Employers increasingly want a “just in time” workforce
 - Most workers will want to maintain a residence so will not re-locate permanently
- Agreement on Internal Trade requires recognition of Provincial/Territorial certifications
- Rigorous National standards that are recognized in all jurisdictions can facilitate that process
 - If Canada had accepted national standards for all trades there would be no need for the AIT to include trades and there would substantially less of the current debates around the issue

Additional benefits of strong national standards

- Assessment of foreign trained workers
 - Will be a larger issue in future, demographics/birthrates
- Training
 - Program and standards development
- Attraction and retention

What should be the National Standard?

I have been, and continue to be, supportive of the Red Seal Program as the National Standard

There currently almost 50 trades for which a Red Seal designation is available

It has worked relatively well for over 50 years.....BUT.....

The Red Seal program needs to evolve

- Emphasis on meeting industry's requirements
- Must be responsive
- Cannot take 5+ years to develop new designations
- Demonstration of Skills Test (DOST), Practical assessment
 - (e.g. Foreign trained engineers and English language assessments)

Where to next?

- Expansion of Red Seal designations
- Greater consultation with industry
- Flexibility within jurisdictions
- Potential industry specific standards will fragment trades

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