



March 27, 2014

The Honourable Jason Kenney, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

During our last meeting we discussed the issue of labour shortages and skills mismatches in Canada. You may recall that I expressed skepticism regarding this being a serious problem for Canada, aside from some specific regions and occupations. You and I both agreed that more and better data was needed and I urged your department to devote additional resources to collecting reliable, timely, and detailed labour market information. This would ensure the Federal Government is making informed and effective decisions about labour market policies.

The Federal Government has argued that Canada is facing serious labour and skills shortages, based on job vacancy data provided by Finance Canada. Like most Canadians, this week I was shocked to learn that the data provided by Finance Canada is flawed and misleading because it relies, in part, on job postings listed on the website Kijiji. Anybody who has ever looked at job postings on Kijiji is aware that the same positions get reposted over and over again, and that many job postings are actually serious financial scams.

There are also many fake job postings on Kijiji which dramatically inflate job vacancy numbers. Some of the more infamous examples include:

- “Private firm wishes to hire time traveller to deliver confidential letter.”
- “Employer looking to hire someone to hand-feed mini-marshmallows to pet monkey—opportunities for advancement.”
- “Hiring: New coach for the Toronto Maple Leafs—serious enquiries only.”
- “Looking to hire someone to play a tuba and follow Rob Ford around.”
- “Home-wrecker wanted; will pay thirty bucks.”



The Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Conference Board of Canada say Kijiji is so unreliable as a job site that it can single-handedly explain away the federal government's claims about a major labour and skills shortages.

With the simple removal of Kijiji from the search, the steep rise in job vacancies that Finance Canada has flagged actually becomes a generally flat line. In fact, Statistics Canada has been collecting job vacancy data since 2011 and their reports, which do not include Kijiji job postings, show that Canada's job vacancy rate has been declining. It is crucial that your department work more closely with Finance Canada to ensure it produces reliable job vacancy data.

Once again, I urge your department to provide more resources for the collection of reliable and more detailed labour market data at the national, provincial, and local level. This is essential to enhancing labour market planning and policies in Canada.

Yours sincerely,



Kenneth V. Georgetti
President

cc Members of the CLC Canadian Council

ML:sd:COPE225