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Mr. Pablo Rodriguez

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•(0905)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.)): Good morning and welcome everyone. We have a busy, but very interesting week ahead of us. As the committee wished, the Honourable Liza Frulla, Minister of Canadian Heritage, is with us today. Welcome, Ms. Frulla, and welcome to your team as well.

As usual, we'll begin with a presentation. Normally, it should last 10 minutes, but, in view of the importance of the department in question, we'll agree to allow the minister a little more time. Then we'll move on to the question period, as agreed.

Minister, please introduce your guests and then make your presentation.

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Good morning everyone.

First, I want to say that I would have liked to appear before the Standing Committee on Official Languages sooner. Pablo asked me a number of times. But, as you know, Tuesday evening was a very important evening, and, on Wednesday, we defended cultural and official languages causes. I think everyone will be happy with that. The fact is that I'm here today.

I'm aware that I am talking to people who have worked very hard in the official languages field. I'm accompanied by Ms. Sarkar, Assistant Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Heritage, and Ms. LaRocque, Deputy Minister. Lastly, there are also all my people. If you have any technical questions to ask or suggestions to make, please feel free: that's why we're here.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Pablo Rodriguez on being named Chair of your committee. Among you I see women and men who have long espoused the cause of official-language communities and have always defended with vigour our linguistic duality. Among others, there is Marc, whom I know better. There's also Mr. Poilievre.

Lastly, we know that this issue is important and that our investments in official language cannot be evaluated solely in terms of costs and benefits. Contributing to the development of Canada's Francophone communities and helping to strengthen our linguistic duality—this is a task that involves more than figures: it's a question of culture and identity, a measure of success and a duty for each of us as Canadians.

Yesterday evening I attended the premiere of the film *Nouvelle-France*. This fine film reminded me of how deeply our linguistic duality is rooted in the very heart of this country.

•(0910)

[English]

Whether we are aboriginal persons, anglophone, francophone, Canadians by descent, or, like myself, the offspring of immigrants, we are all the inheritors of this country, which is defined by its bilingualism and by its diversity.

Today I'm honoured to have the opportunity, as Minister of Canadian Heritage, to play a key role in preserving and enriching this heritage. Official languages is a complex portfolio, and I still have much to learn and to discover, since I've only been here for four months. Rest assured, however, that I'm giving it my full attention.

[Translation]

As a Quebecker and a Francophone, it is a portfolio that matters to me personally. Last August I participated in the annual meeting of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, in Halifax. And a few weeks ago I met with representatives of minority communities from across Canada as part of the consultations on the Action Plan for Official Languages. These meetings were very valuable. They helped me get a clearer picture of the concerns of official-language communities. I also took the opportunity to extend a request to the different community representatives. I asked them to work with me in order to maximize the benefits from programs of the Department of Canadian Heritage, and to make the issues that they face government priorities.

In carrying out my job, I have set three specific objectives for myself. First, I want Francophones to be a strong voice within Canada's diverse society. Second, I want our linguistic duality to become more than ever an asset for our young people and our country. Third, I want culture to serve as a genuine catalyst for the economic and social development of official language communities.

My political experience has taught me that in this country nothing is impossible for those who see the big picture and who aim high.

[English]

I'm convinced that we can achieve still more progress on official languages if all the leading players make common cause. This is exactly what the action plan for official languages calls on us to do. The plan gives us the necessary vision and resources to help English- and French-speaking minority communities take a vital step over the coming years. It gives us the means to strengthen our linguistic duality. In addition, it helps us coordinate the efforts of all departments toward a genuine synergy for the benefit of official language minority communities. The plan calls for the Department of Canadian Heritage to play a role of the first importance.

May I remind you that of the \$751 million to be invested over five years in the action plan, more than half, specifically \$415 million, has been allocated to my department. This shows the importance of our programs and our policy. The new funds will enable us to increase our efforts in the areas of minority language and second language teaching as well as our direct support to the communities. And this is what we are currently working on with the department.

[Translation]

In our knowledge-based and innovation-based world, education is undoubtedly a sector of major importance, especially for linguistic minorities. Without the opportunity for each Canadian to learn our country's other official language, the roots of our linguistic duality will gradually wither.

This is why we are going to invest \$1.3 billion by 2008 in minority-language and second-language teaching. Of this amount, \$346 million will be distributed to the provinces as ear-marked funds: \$209 million specifically for minority-language teaching; and \$137 million for second-language teaching. In this way we will be able to work toward two ambitious objectives of the Action Plan, namely: to ensure that the proportion of Francophone children enrolled in French-language schools rises from 68% to 80%; and by 2013, to double the number of young Canadians having some knowledge of their second official language.

At present, with the provinces and territories we are negotiating bilateral agreements on ear-marked funds, to start in 2004-2005. I am confident that we are going to conclude agreements in the coming months, and that new activities will speedily be put in place during the current fiscal year.

The process may seem rather lengthy. But this is something entirely new. We must determine common objectives that are rooted in the situation and needs of each province and territory. During this process, it is important to ensure that the groups and associations that are the main stays of the education system are consulted by education ministries.

To give provinces and territories the flexibility for long-term planning, we are going to provide them with a predetermined annual envelope. In addition, a part of the new funds will be used to meet emerging needs, finance research studies or participate in multilateral projects with various governments.

●(0915)

[English]

Accountability will be a vital aspect of these agreements. It's important to measure the effectiveness of our efforts and demonstrate the greatest possible transparency.

With regard to base funds, we are currently negotiating with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to renew the memorandum of understanding for a five-year period. I am confident that the memorandum of understanding will be in place so that the bilateral agreements on base funds can be concluded with each province and territory by April 2005. This briefly is where we are in our efforts with regard to teaching.

One thing is certain. We are not standing idle. We are working in close cooperation with different partners to ensure that young people in official language minority communities receive high-quality education in their first language.

Of course, our education efforts contribute to strengthening our linguistic duality. Young Canadians today are the most bilingual generation in our history, but we can do better, and we are going to do better by doubling, as I said a little earlier, the number of young people capable of using both of our official languages.

One young Canadian in two has the opportunity of attending classes taught in his or her second official language—in most cases starting from elementary school. For our country this is also a huge advantage in a time of globalization, when borders are disappearing and exchanges are increasing.

[Translation]

As a result of bilingualism and its work force, Montréal has become a hub for cutting-edge industries such as aerospace and multi-media.

In recent years New Brunswick has also been able to put to use its bilingualism in order to attract to the province companies from abroad that work in the services sector.

This is why we will invest a total of around \$330 million over five years in second-language teaching—an increase of more than \$137 million.

This is also why we offer scholarship and exchange programs that each year enable close to 8,000 young people to discover other regions of our country and improve their second-language skills.

Last, this is why we support the efforts of organizations such as French for the Future and Canadian Parents for French, which do significant work in English Canada to promote the importance of learning French.

The role of the department is not limited to the education sector. Instead, we also seek to ensure development of official-language minority communities. The Canada-communities agreements have allowed us to make considerable progress over the past decade. Many new community organizations have taken root within communities, and institutional networks are stronger. In addition, recent years have seen the start-up of 18 French-language community radio stations, seven English-language community radio stations and 20 community centres. We have also supported hundreds of projects yielding social, cultural and economic benefits within official-language minority communities.

The end of the last five-year cycle of Canada-community agreements gives us the opportunity to check whether existing cooperation methods are still the best way of working together. In this regard, last August I announced that consultations would be held to better understand the ideas of the communities. I launched this process because I want to be sure that we are going not only in the same direction but in the right direction.

I want all the players in official-language communities now and in the future—youth, women, community, socio-economic, sport and cultural organizations, the education sector, the business sector, and all levels of government—to make their voices heard and to work in close cooperation. I want to lay the foundation for a new solidarity pact that will link us together. It is only by joint effort that we can develop a genuine synergy for the benefit of official-language minority communities.

[*English*]

Representatives of my department are now visiting communities in every part of our country. Participation is good. The discussions are frank and informative. The consultation will continue until early December. Afterwards we are going to be guided by what we have heard in order to determine the shape of our cooperation in coming years.

Further, we are going to continue to rely on the federal-provincial-territorial agreements on services, to which we will allocate close to \$80 million by 2008. Through these agreements, we have helped provinces such as New Brunswick and Ontario implement their legislation on services for French speakers.

We must also take into account the benefit of programs of the Canadian Heritage portfolio with objectives that indirectly serve the interests of official language minority communities. When we speak of quality of life and the vitality of these communities, it's impossible to overlook the importance of the arts and cultural sector. I'm thinking in particular of public institutions such as CBC/Radio-Canada. Its television and radio programs reach all francophones throughout Canada. I'm thinking of its little sister, RDI, which has 6.8 million subscribers outside Quebec.

● (0920)

[*Translation*]

I am thinking of the Canadian Television Fund. One-third of its support is reserved for French-language productions, and since 1999-2000, it has invested close to \$40 million in the production of French programs.

I am thinking of the National Film Board and Telefilm Canada. They too raise the profile of our two official languages, and support our creative people and our artists living in minority communities.

I am thinking of the Canada Music Fund, which devotes 40% of its budget to promoting the creation of Francophone content.

I am thinking of the Canada Council for the Arts, which directly funds the work of artists and organizations in these communities.

I am thinking of the Book Publishing Industry Development Program, which each year assists around 100 Francophone publishers throughout Canada.

I could go on and on because the mandate of my department is broad and its scope is very wide, but I think that you have understood that our cultural programs greatly help to increase the impact of our actions in the sector of official languages.

Having access to culture is all the more important for residents of a minority-language community since culture is closely associated with the identity of the community and the future of its language. This is why I want each program and each policy of my department to be able to make its contribution as far as possible.

[*English*]

This is also why I intend to fully perform the coordinating role conferred on me by section 42 of the Official Languages Act. Under this section I'm responsible for encouraging all departments and agencies of the Government of Canada to enhance the vitality of English and French linguistic minority communities. In this regard, the department has developed its interdepartmental partnership with official language communities, which seeks to encourage government organizations to work more closely with official language communities.

The objective is to promote shared cost projects so that different federal departments and agencies can forge lasting ties with the communities. Already 15 memoranda of understanding are in place dealing with critical sectors such as health, economic development, human resources, skills development, agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, and of course culture. This translates into \$23 million invested in specific projects, including \$17 million from federal partners and other players. I'm proud to announce to you that three more memoranda of understanding will soon be signed with three key players: Status of Women Canada, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, and the National Arts Centre.

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, this in short is where we are and where we are heading. Much work remains to be done, but our commitment is strong and we are making progress. All the ingredients are in place so that together we can succeed in giving minority communities the tools to realize their ambitions.

Over the coming months, I am counting on you to help us find new ways of meeting the different challenges we face. I'm thinking in particular of the aging of Canada's population and our low rate of demographic growth. These make immigration a crucial issue, especially in our minority communities. As I often say to my Cabinet colleagues, one of our biggest challenges is to ensure that not only the Boudreaults, the Lapierres, the Robillards and the Tremblays speak French, but that so do the Brunis, the Hamads, the Larkins, the Wongs and the Frullas.

This is only a cursory look at the task incumbent on us as elected officials.

[*English*]

I am convinced that we can meet these challenges and many others so that throughout our country our children and grandchildren continue to speak, write, and sing in French.

Again, thank you for having invited me to speak before you. I look forward to working with you. We're ready to respond to your questions.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister.

We now move on to the discussion period. I remind you, as decided by committee members, that speaking time in the first round will be seven minutes for each member, then five minutes thereafter. The speaking order is also reversed, as was decided.

We'll start with the Conservative Party. Mr. Lauzon, over to you.

• (0925)

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Welcome, Ms. Frulla. You clearly have a lot of responsibilities.

To begin with, I'd like to ask a question.

[*English*]

Over the past ten years, nearly \$2 billion has been invested in official languages and education program, making it one of Canadian Heritage's largest programs in financial terms. The Library of Parliament briefing note indicates that since 1988, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario have received more than 75% of that budget. Is the official languages and education program still the best mechanism for supporting the provinces and territories in the provision of minority language education and second language instruction? This is a question on my mind.

I have a second question. There are another seven provinces and territories. Can you explain why the government would not invest in the provinces where minority language and second language learning needs appear to be the most urgent?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Liza Frulla: First, it must be understood that, under the calculation formula, the investment is proportionate to population, and also to the Francophone population. That's why you see those figures for New Brunswick or the other provinces that you mentioned. That's why, as I said a moment ago, when you look at the financial statements, you have to go beyond the figures. The

figures say one thing, but the actual situation is quite different. That's what the figures reflect.

That doesn't mean that we aren't working with the other provinces. We're also working to reach agreements with them, just as we are currently doing in the education field. In certain provinces, however, the needs in certain provinces are greater than in others because of their populations.

[*English*]

Mr. Guy Lauzon: But with respect to the other seven provinces, if you're doing it strictly on population, proportioning it to population, there are other provinces, especially the western provinces and actually in Atlantic Canada, that are interested in advancing their duality of languages. Shouldn't some more attention be paid to jump-start the minority languages in those provinces?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Liza Frulla: There are two schools of thought on this subject. According to the first, you have to maintain an existing pool. Consequently, you don't have a choice. It's there, it's vibrant and you have to support it.

According to the second school, there's also a pool that has to be developed. It should not be forgotten that we're still working in cooperation with the provinces. These are partnership agreements with the provinces. Certain provinces are obviously more committed than others. However, we really have to work hard with other provinces, if only to convince them. Other provinces feel that their needs and, in some cases their involvement, are perhaps at a lower level. So work is required over the longer term.

Our investments will clearly be in relation to the changing situation. In fact, that's what we've already done in the context of the government's action plan, which has a \$750 million budget. Before I joined it, the government said that it was a stroke of luck to have entrenched protection for both official languages in the Constitution. So something has to be done because it needs a breath of fresh air. It needs a kind of crack of the whip, and that's what the action plan does.

That said, we're trying as hard as possible to introduce this interest in both languages and to protect minority languages. We're also obviously following developments in the provinces.

[*English*]

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I think, Minister, we have to make an investment. If we want to advance the minority languages in other provinces, we have to make that investment. It's fine to increase your investment in the three major provinces where the majority of the population is. In lots of cases we're making some advances, but for the plan of action in the last 18 months the commissioner said we're almost losing ground in those other provinces.

There has to be a critical mass. For example, you know full well if you have a minority language situation, you have to.... I'm not sure who it was, perhaps one of your colleagues said—no, it was the commissioner who said either you're going ahead or you're going back. You just can't maintain, especially if you don't have that critical mass in some of the western provinces.... They've made some inroads, but in just the last 18 months it seems it's gone backwards.

I think maybe we have to reallocate or change the way the 75% of the funds are going to these three provinces, and maybe take a look at changing the demographics of where the money goes.

• (0930)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Liza Frulla: I'm pleased you mentioned that, Mr. Lauzon, since the new investments under the action plan will take that into account.

We're currently negotiating on education, and I'm convinced we'll be talking about that again. I know there's a delay, but we'll take that into account. You have to strike a fair balance and support the critical mass in certain provinces. That will never satisfy us completely, even if things go better. On the other hand, you have to try to ensure a kind of influx to the provinces which may be a little slower. We're going to do that and we're doing it right now. You're correct.

It should also be said that we take into consideration the amount invested, but there's also new money from the action plan, among other things, and we'll be using that new money to do what you say.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

Monsieur André.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Good morning, Minister, Ms. LaRocque and Ms. Sarkar.

Hon. Liza Frulla: Ms. Sarkar is the one who deals with these questions in detail.

• (0935)

Mr. Guy André: I'm pleased you're here with us today to answer our questions. Thank you for coming.

First I'd like to address the question of the official languages support programs, the OLSPs. Those programs provide support to Francophone community organizations. Some Francophone communities that have contacted me have made new funding requests. I believe their budget is around \$24, \$26 or \$28 million; their request is for \$42 million.

I come from a community environment and have experience as a CLSC organizer. I've always found that the community dynamic was important for an area's vitality, to the extent, of course, that there is a form of commitment. As you know, some community organizations lack a little vitality. In theory, however, that's not the case when the community organizations work, when people contribute to them, when the community is taken care of and a set of services is offered. In this case, we're talking about community organizations that promote La Francophonie and that, in some respects, offer services to Francophone minorities.

I read this document in part, as you may have done as well. I also spoke to people, and it appears that there are some funding problems. We have a lot—not to say a multitude—of community organizations. I don't yet know the whole dynamic because this issue is new for me. As official languages critic, I'm going to try to be more informed, even though I'm already aware of the community dynamic. In your

opinion, what are the demands and the actual situation of these people? What do you see in the field?

I'd like to hear your comments on the subject, Ms. Frulla.

Hon. Liza Frulla: First, with respect to the OLSPs, I would note that we've invested \$300 million in the communities since 1994. Of course, there are two ways of doing things. I'll be very honest with you today. As you said, we are together and we learn together. Ultimately, our objective, particularly for me, a Quebecker and a Francophone, is to determine whether we can find the best possible ways so that things work well. The official languages, as a culture, are a cause.

We've invested \$300 million. In August, we wondered whether we would continue to do what we were already doing, without asking any questions, which would have been easy, or whether we would go into the communities and see whether this method, which has been used for 10 years, was still the right one. If necessary, we were going to continue doing what we previously did.

However, new organizations have been established, in addition to existing ones. In the community field, we know that, in some cases, certain organizations become more efficient than others. Sometimes they better represent the community.

We implemented a consultation process in August. I met the federation in Halifax, and I must tell you that people were reluctant at first. They wondered whether the consultation would result in cutbacks. I assured them that that was absolutely not the purpose and that the idea was in fact to determine what the needs were and whether we were going to continue as before.

Despite the reluctance in August, the consultation began. Then I went to the second consultation meeting, which was held here in Ottawa. I talked to the people, and I realized that they wanted to take part in the process. I think the mechanism is appreciated. The consultations will end in December. At that point we'll collate the information gathered. Hubert Lussier, who is here with us, will then meet with the communities to negotiate with them. Then we'll determine what organizations we'll support, what the needs are and the best way to proceed.

I think we'll have some nice surprises in January and February. With your permission—and I know there's a time limit—Hubert will tell you about the consultations and how they're being conducted.

Mr. Guy André: Yes, I would like him to give us more details.

The Chair: Mr. Lussier.

Mr. Hubert Lussier (Director General, Official Languages Support Programs, Department of Canadian Heritage): Thank you.

One of the challenges of the consultations, as the minister said, is to do more with what we have, with the benefits afforded by the action plan. Some resources have come from departments, others from Canadian Heritage. We aren't the only federal partner that can help in community development. This is an opportunity and it's also a challenge because it should be said that the groups have to match up with more departments than used to be the case. Health, Immigration, Industry and Social Development are all departments that have new resources, that can contribute and that are already contributing to community projects. During the consultations, we often wonder what we must do to get the most out of them and what Canadian Heritage's role is in helping the communities get the most out of them.

Mr. Guy André: I think I've finished.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Julian.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Ms. Frulla, for your presentation.

I represent a British Columbia riding. As you probably know, this year, the B.C. Francophone community became the fourth largest in the country, after those in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick. And yet we have a problem in British Columbia, as there is elsewhere Canada: for 10 years now, the Francophone institutions and French second-language learning institutions have been under-funded.

In my community, parents sometimes line up for two, three and four days to register their children at immersion schools. British Columbia also has the highest rate of immersion school attendance in the country. In the past 10 years, support funding for official languages, including education, has been reduced, from \$291 million to \$272 million, in absolute terms. In real terms, the loss is much greater than that. So we have a problem of funding for French education and Francophone institutions.

I'm very pleased to see that action is at last being taken in this regard. Two objectives are stated in the action plan, but no details are given. First, the government wants the percentage of Francophone children attending French-language schools to increase from 68 to 80 percent. What regions are targeted by this objective? What are the regions where the Francophone populations don't have these services and are targeted?

Second, the government also wants to double the number of young Canadian Anglophones who learn French, but the problem isn't always access. It's access to immersion schools, of course, but it's also the question of the quality of French that is taught in the schools.

I'd like more details on those two objectives and also to know what other responsibilities and objectives are described in the action plan that are your department's responsibility.

● (0940)

Hon. Liza Frulla: First, I should tell you that an additional investment of \$137 million over five years will be made under the plan, precisely to increase bilingualism. You're right about British Columbia. I've been there a number of times, and it fascinates me to see that, yes, people speak English in that province, but they also

speaking very good French. Whether it's in Kelowna and Vancouver, you see a lot of will and openness. A lot of people converse in French. That absolutely has to continue. You sense that there's a solid push on, a solid wave in that province, in particular.

Now we want there to be an increase from 68 to 80 percent. That's the objective. There are two things, as you mentioned. There's the planned amount of \$137 million, and I'll ask Mr. Lussier to give you an answer on the percentages, but parents must also be encouraged to ensure that their children learn both languages. That's not always easy when you live in a majority Anglophone environment. There has to be this encouragement and support, as well as good French-language instruction, as you say. I remember that, when I was in school, English-language instruction was terrible. We learned virtually nothing. So there are two things: encourage parents to tell their children that learning the other official language in a majority Anglophone environment is worth the trouble, and offer high-quality instruction.

The \$137 million I referred to must be used for precisely that: to work with the provinces. It should not be forgotten that education is an exclusively provincial jurisdiction. And provincial jurisdictions must be respected, both for official languages and for other programs. However, the provinces, including Quebec, agree that they will nevertheless submit progress reports to their populations and that they're on board on this. So we're working with the provinces in a bilateral manner. They're on board, and, even though it's their jurisdiction, they want to provide progress reports because it's important for us to know where we're headed.

That's the present objective of the negotiations in the two areas: education and support for minority languages, but also second-language instruction.

Mr. Lussier will speak to you more specifically about British Columbia.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: It's true that the very precise figures for the two items the minister mentions are known to the provinces, and it's on that basis that we're discussing right now. In Quebec, Anglophone rights holders are exercising their right, but the number of Francophone rights holders exercising their right to French-language education is lower in certain provinces, particularly in the Prairies, if my memory serves me. It's quite high in New Brunswick, and I think progress has to be made in British Columbia.

So we're investing \$200 million in education in the first language of the minorities, that is English in Quebec, but especially French outside Quebec.

As regards second language, considerable efforts, proportionately speaking, are being made as a result of the action plan funding. Provinces such as British Columbia are leaders. Provinces that have done a very good job, such as British Columbia, particularly through immersion, can share with the others and serve as models.

● (0945)

Mr. Peter Julian: The problem is a funding problem. Parents are waiting for that in order to enrol their children in immersion schools. Funding and institutions are necessary. The population is already there. If the schools were open, children would attend them.

Hon. Liza Frulla: I'm convinced we'll be talking about that soon, but I'll say briefly that that's part of our negotiations. I said I was determined that the negotiations—and I'm saying this in front of Mr. Lussier because he's negotiating with Eileen—should be completed by the end of March 2005. We're negotiating with the provinces. Once the negotiations are completed,

[English]

the money is going to be flowing.

[Translation]

However, we must complete these negotiations and establish an MOU. We're doing that bilaterally first, in order to be more effective. We've decided to do it bilaterally, province by province, but with common objectives, which are obviously different for Quebec, but nevertheless common. Those objectives will be part of an MOU that the provinces will want to sign. That's so that we can say we're in it together and state the major objectives we're pursuing.

The Chair: A little earlier, Mr. André talked about the OLSPs, the Official Languages Support Programs, and I would like to take the opportunity to mention that, next week, we'll be hearing from the representatives of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne. Moreover, you've received the schedule for the coming month.

We'll now move on to Jean-Claude D'Amours.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Minister for being here with us today.

As you know, I'm a member from northern New Brunswick. New Brunswick Francophones represent more than one-third of the province's population. They live in large part in the northern part of the province.

In your presentation, you referred to Francophone and Anglophone community radio stations. I must say that 17% of Francophone community radio stations are located in my riding. So three of the 18 community radio stations are in the riding that I represent.

In the past year, owing to particular circumstances, community radio stations have been in an extremely precarious financial situation, so much so that some of those stations in even smaller minority areas in New Brunswick are in jeopardy.

Minister, can we expect to receive good news in the coming months about support for our community radio stations, knowing that they are very important for the Francophone minority population?

Hon. Liza Frulla: If there's anyone who believes in community radio stations, it's me. A few years ago, when I was Minister of Culture in Quebec, the community radio stations were substantially funded by the provincial government. Why? Because community radio stations reach the communities perhaps more effectively than the major private radio stations or public television. We'll come back to that later.

The federal government funds community radio start-ups and also funds the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada. You say

that community radio stations are in trouble. That's often attributable to a lack of revenue or secondary funding. We want to support them, but we can't always replace other levels of government, which should accept their responsibility to a greater degree. This is happening in a number of sectors: people turn to the federal government after losing the support of a province, municipality or private sector. There always has to be a balance. You also have to realize that we have to cover the entire country in this area. We want to support them, but we can't take full responsibility for them. We're also funding all the restructuring efforts.

So we fund them at the start, we fund the Alliance des radios communautaires, and we also fund restructuring efforts as necessary.

Hubert, do you have anything to add?

● (0950)

Mr. Hubert Lussier: No. What you said was entirely accurate. I meet these people frequently, and I'm aware of their problems. The problem is that the markets are often very small, including in New Brunswick, despite the fact that there's a high Francophone concentration there. The problem also arises for certain radio stations in the West.

We're helping them develop a new model more appropriate to the size of the markets in which they're established. Will that be the miracle solution? Probably not. We may have to work with them in the years to come before the perfect model is found. It's a major challenge. We want the radio stations to continue to exist because they play a very important role.

Hon. Liza Frulla: So we fund them at the start, we support their restructuring and we fund the Alliance des radios communautaires. If there's a restructuring, it's as though it were a start-up, and we can work with them for a certain period of time. When there's a restructuring, we help them self-finance, as I've previously done at another level of government. Otherwise it would be endless.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Thank you, Minister.

Now I'm going to raise the question of the Arts Presentation Canada program. It of course concerns arts and culture, but this program is much more important for the minority population.

We know that the program must be renewed or re-evaluated. I would like to know your opinion, not of the program's importance, because I'm convinced that you consider the program extremely important for minority populations, but on what we should expect from the program in the coming weeks or months.

Hon. Liza Frulla: Thank you very much for your question. We're talking about community radio stations and programs, but it goes beyond that. There's also all the support for the department's cultural programs. That should not be downplayed.

On Tuesday evening, we had a long discussion on the Tomorrow Starts Today program, which is called *Un avenir en art* in French. This is an initiative that will terminate in 2005. We're working very hard, and I must say things are going well, to renew this initiative for at least four years. And once the programs have been well evaluated, we'll try to include this program in the department's base. Why? I'm now going to describe the link with the Arts Presentation program.

We've put everything relevant to the minority communities into this program. It's one of the most important tools for those communities. Whether it's for the minority communities or for Aboriginal people, it's fundamentally important, and that's why we're working so hard so that this initiative is renewed for a long period of time. The Arts Presentation program is flexible and enables us to support initiatives such as festivals, theatre plays and so on, what I call the living arts. It maintains the Francophone presence in a community and gives people in the Francophone minority communities a taste for French.

•(0955)

The Chair: Thank you. We'll now move on to the second round, which will be five minutes. The order will be slightly different: the Conservatives, Liberals, the Bloc, then the NDP.

Mr. Poilievre.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): I'd like to thank the minister for coming to meet with us.

Ms. Frulla, first I would like to say that my father is from a Francophone family in Saskatchewan. He's a Fransaskois. He comes from a small town called Leoville.

I'd also like to second my colleague Guy Lauzon's comments on the importance of the linguistic minorities. It is important that they maintain their culture and language. That's why I started by asking the question concerning accountability in the programs. You also referred to it. More specifically, I'm talking about the Official Languages in Education program. Two billion dollars has been spent on this program since 1993.

[English]

Thirty years after the Laurendeau and Dunton Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, should the OLEP program be audited by the Office of the Auditor General?

Mrs. Judith LaRocque (Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage): The Auditor General did come in about four or five years ago and do an audit of the official languages programs. There were some issues that needed to be addressed, such as tightening up processes and that kind of thing. We did indeed make changes in the way we operated as a result of those and worked with the communities as well to help them build the capacity that was required to address the issues raised by the Auditor General.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: And that was five years ago.

Mrs. Judith LaRocque: I came to the department in 2000 and I believe the audit was under way at that time.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Do you believe it's time to return the Auditor General to the file to conduct a new audit to ensure that the objectives continue to be met?

Mrs. Judith LaRocque: We are in a constant state of evaluation of our programs. We do it ourselves. We have our own audit and evaluation function within the department. In fact, as a result of the renegotiation of those agreements with the provinces, quite a significant amount of evaluation was done because we wanted to go into those negotiations knowing what we wanted to have addressed as issues.

Perhaps Hubert could add something to that.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Is there an advertising component at all to the program? For example, at any point have advertising firms been asked to play a role in the delivery of the program?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: To my knowledge, there is no private entity involved in the promotion of the program.

•(1000)

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: None whatsoever, no firms or consultants whose job it is to help with promoting the program?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: We've funded several initiatives of promotion, not of the program but of the availability of minority language education, for instance. You could call a lot of what Canadian Parents for French do, for instance, as promotional activity toward the availability of second language training.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: In these promotional activities, have advertising firms ever been invited to participate?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: Not to our knowledge.

The way it would happen is that some of the beneficiaries of our support would hire their own firms or consultants to develop pamphlets or approaches, but we wouldn't do it directly.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Have any of those groups been audited to ensure the dollars they are receiving are well spent?

Mr. Hubert Lussier: That would have been part of the evaluation. I'm not *au courant* that it would have been audited in the strict sense you're talking about.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: So you're not sure if they have been audited.

Mrs. Judith LaRocque: Those programs have been evaluated, but an audit and an evaluation are two different things. We do evaluations constantly. When there are large sums of money attached, we often will do what we call a recipient audit, which is the audit of one organization. We could get you more detail on that. I'm afraid I don't have it with me today.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Poilievre. Five minutes goes fast.

[Translation]

Mr. Desrochers, go ahead.

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank Ms. Frulla and the people accompanying her. My questions will be brief because I have a broadcasting bias and I want to get maximum benefit from the answers of the people here today.

You didn't talk about an action plan, Ms. Frulla. The Commissioner of Official Languages said there was a delay. There was the election schedule. Where do you stand now with the action plan as regards costs. Can you give us some figures?

Hon. Liza Frulla: I'd say that's more related to the negotiations. We have two components. We have the minority languages education and support component and we have the second-language instruction component. As I said a moment ago, we want to wrap up the negotiations we're currently conducting with the provinces in March 2005. In the meantime, however, we're working bilaterally. We're not depriving anyone, but we want to have an action plan that covers a number of years.

As I said a moment ago, there's the whole question of the provinces' accountability, in the sense that the provinces have agreed to join with us so that we can have reference points so we know exactly where we're headed. Whether or not we like it, we're nevertheless dealing with small communities and small amounts.

Second, consultations are currently on the way on community support. In that case too, the schedule for March 2005...

Mr. Odina Desrochers: You're not telling us about negotiation measures. I'm asking you how much money has been spent under the action plan.

Hon. Liza Frulla: I'll ask Hubert to answer because the money has started to go out to the communities in the meantime.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: We're in the second year of the action plan. I'd have to confirm the figures that I have in my books. Last year, some \$20 million under the action plan was allocated to Canadian Heritage. This year, it's about \$60 million. We're investing funds in certain areas, for example, to help the provinces offer services in the minority language.

As regards the education agreements, as the Minister said, we'll have to wait for the bilateral agreements to be reached for the money to begin to flow. In the other areas where there's money under the action plan, such as communities, for example, a fair number of projects are already under way, but I gave the order of magnitude.

Mr. Odina Desrochers: Ms. Frulla, are you satisfied with the action plan results to date, despite the delays?

Hon. Liza Frulla: I'm satisfied with certain results. I've been here for four months; I've just arrived. I'm satisfied with what's going on right now, based on what I hear and see. I can't say that I'm not, because I am.

When I got here and I was told there was a consultation plan, I wasn't very enthusiastic about the idea of conducting more consultations. But now, I'm really pleased that we're having these consultations. After attending some of them, I realize that a dynamic is being established in the community, as a result of which we're including other organizations, and the process is thus not a closed circle. In addition, the organizations are becoming aware of the fact that we aren't the only gateway. With the action plan, there are other departments that must be made accountable. Canadian Heritage isn't all alone in this. A lot of other departments must be very much aware of the fact that this is a crucial issue for Canada. It's important.

Second, the education negotiations with the provinces are going well.

•(1005)

Mr. Odina Desrochers: In her report, the Commissioner of Official Languages discussed the frequent delays caused by your department in renewing the education agreements. She said: "The

government is still on the starting blocks in the important field of education, which covers half of the investments under the Action Plan." What do you have to say about the comments of the Commissioner of Official Languages?

Hon. Liza Frulla: I'll let Ms. LaRocque speak because she was here before me.

However, I can say that we don't deny there is some catching up to do. Nor do we deny that we're dealing with areas of provincial jurisdiction. The Commissioner of Official Languages can't make any comments on that. I come from Quebec, and I can assure you that we're going to respect those areas of jurisdiction to the letter. Of course, it's always easier when you have full responsibility, as in the case of the Tomorrow Starts Today program, for example. In that case, we're operating in the field and we're all alone. But it's different when you're negotiating in a delicate area of exclusively provincial jurisdiction.

Of course a partnership has to be established. That's going very well to date, but we're in a negotiating period and not in a period of exclusive responsibility.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Desrochers.

Mr. Godbout.

Mr. Marc Godbout (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's our turn to speak. Mr. Desrochers, you'll undoubtedly allow us to take some additional time, since you took our place.

Minister, I too would like to welcome you here. I must say that we acknowledge your magnetism. I was so pleased to hear Mr. Lauzon and the Bloc québécois say that you clearly don't have enough money to carry out your mandate, which is very broad and vast.

I'm sure that, when your budget is being defended next year, the other political parties will form an incredible fan club.

With new programs in place, we see there is an idea in the Francophone and Acadian communities: build it and they will come. The community radio stations are thus just a start. We'll undoubtedly need additional investments. It's somewhat the same situation with regard to the establishment of schools management: there's a new kid on the block, duly elected French-language school boards, which in fact nearly constitute a level of government. How could we deal with this new situation in the negotiations with the provinces?

These boards are asking not only to be consulted, but also, to a certain point, to take part in defining these agreements which concern them directly. I also know that you've met them recently. Developments in this issue should perhaps be monitored in order to know what kind of room it should be given in order to ensure that these programs meet their needs. On the other hand, I agree with my colleagues on the other side: there should be a certain degree of accountability for funds spent.

Hon. Liza Frulla: As I told Mr. Desrochers, given that there are areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction, negotiations are being conducted government to government, as partners. However, we would like the bilateral agreements with the provinces, as well as the umbrella MOU that follows, enabling us to ensure that the provinces consult the school boards.

That's how we can ensure they are present. So we're negotiating government to government, which is consistent with any federal-provincial negotiation. However, we must ensure that the provincial government consults the school board. That doesn't prevent us from hearing the school board when we conduct our major consultations to establish our priorities and procedures in a future follow-up. The school board is still an important organization, a tool to ensure that we put good objectives in place. We'll also have to ensure that the provinces consult the school boards. Once again, the final negotiations are being conducted government to government.

● (1010)

Mr. Marc Godbout: After talking about community radio stations, I'd like to talk a little about educational and community television. A few years ago, we examined the idea of cross-Canada educational and community television. I think Canadian Heritage was involved in that. Where does that idea stand? Is it still being considered by the department? There's a French channel here in Ontario, TFO. In fact, I believe we can see it now in New Brunswick, which is very much appreciated. Moreover, the communities are asking that it be broadcast across Canada.

Hon. Liza Frulla: Since you're referring to a past initiative, I'll ask Mr. Bouchard to answer that question.

Mr. René Bouchard (Director General, Broadcasting Policy and Innovation, Department of Canadian Heritage): For the moment, there's no plan to homogenize or link together provincial or educational broadcasters. When the question was raised, one of the things that soon came to the fore was rights and areas that would have to be covered. Not all provincial educational broadcasters necessarily wanted cross-Canada educational television. As they play an obvious and essential role in each of the areas, I think it was preferable to let them continue operating as they are currently doing.

It should also be said that mandates differ from one educational broadcaster to the next. The types of programming and the programming niches are different. You realize, when you dig a little more, that it's harder to match up different broadcasters than it seems at first glance.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Julian, over to you.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian: Thanks very much.

I don't doubt your determination and your ability to push forward this issue on the action plan. I do have some concerns, though, about the determination of the government to do so after ten years of underfunding. We know there's a linguistic crisis as a result of that. The attrition rate in core French programs is extremely high.

As I mentioned a little bit earlier, in British Columbia, even though we have the highest participation in French immersion in the country, underfunding has meant parents basically have to stay

overnight in a sleeping bag to get their kids enrolled in the few immersion schools that are available. I don't think any parent in Canada should have to do that to have access to second-language education.

So we've had that crisis in underfinancing, and we also have a real issue around concertation. That means beyond your ministry to other ministries. I'll give you one example.

British Columbians have a lower participation rate in the federal public service. In fact, many positions aren't open to British Columbians. Positions that are open in the national capital region often have a geographical component to them, which means a person from British Columbia who may have gone to immersion school and may have learned French is not able to apply.

I guess my question to you at this point is, how are you going to convince your cabinet colleagues to go beyond simply issues that relate specifically to your ministry, so that we can address some of these other issues, such as geographical limitations in the federal public service and other issues that mean folks who do make the effort to become bilingual, do that training, and work those long hours may not have access to jobs that are bilingual as a result of government policies in other sectors?

● (1015)

Hon. Liza Frulla: This is why there's a plan of action. I was saying before that what was important was to put everybody together, like we did three weeks ago, when everybody came and we were around the table—I think there were eleven ministers around the table—and talking to communities.

You're really touching a very important point. A few years ago, before the plan of action, we were the only *porte d'entrée*. We were the only one, and the communities came to see us, *point final*.

[Translation]

You can't talk about official languages without saying it's a government objective. So we have to implement the \$750 million action plan. We candidly admit that there are delays in education. However, we promise we'll make up for time lost.

That said, you also have to realize that all the departments have to be involved and that it's our role to coordinate all that. Consequently, we establish memoranda of understanding with the other departments to ensure each department has a responsibility.

We can't make it so that people are bilingual if ultimately there are no bilingual jobs in any of the provinces. That's not a problem in Quebec, since people are required, or virtually required, to be bilingual there. However, it would be good for that obligation to exist elsewhere, because if there is not only a cultural incentive, but also a financial incentive—in other words, a value-added—in being bilingual, there will be more demand in the schools and more pressure at the federal and provincial level. Everything then follows. For this reason, we think it's very important that all the departments be involved. A culture change is required. A culture change is a lengthy process for a government, particularly at the federal level. However, we have an action plan that attests to our commitment. We have to do more, and, consequently, we have to support the fact that the Constitution states that there are two official languages in Canada. That's the bottom line.

There's nevertheless an additional investment of \$137 million, and that money will be used for second-language instruction in communities such as yours.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Julian. Five minutes exactly.

Mr. Peter Julian: Not even fifteen seconds this time?

The Chair: Not even a question of two seconds.

Mr. Scheer.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Thank you.

In the action plan for official languages, one of the department's targets is to increase the proportion of bilingual secondary school graduates from 24% to 50%. In the evaluation of the official languages education program, one of the criticisms is that there is not a tool to measure proficiency consistently across the country without interfering with provincial jurisdiction in education. Is it a concern to the department that you have a target for bilingualism, but the term "bilingualism" might be different from province to province in the qualifications?

Hon. Liza Frulla: You're right, when we talk about bilingualism, we have to have the same or a similar definition. It could be modulated by provinces, because let's face it, the social context in certain provinces is different from that of the others. But you're right, we still have to have a certain standard.

I'll ask Hubert, because I think their standards are built in.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: We're working with the provinces so that this standard is being developed. It's one of the threads of our discussions with the provinces currently, to make them work together as much as possible to develop common standards. So, indeed, it's an important criteria, and one among many for which we want to have measurable standards.

• (1020)

Mr. Andrew Scheer: Another evaluation that was done on the official languages communities program stated that there's a proliferation of the number of organizations receiving funding assistance. Do you agree that there are too many community organizations receiving funding? It says in the notes here that there are 350-plus organizations receiving it. Does that maybe need to be streamlined into specific groups?

Hon. Liza Frulla: That's why we have consultations. There are organizations that have the funds and have received the funds since we started in 1976, and others that were added on that are very dynamic and answer now to the new social needs. That's why, when we started the consultations in August, we said we have to review our way of doing things.

Now, if we say we're doing fine, that's perfect, but we have to ask ourselves questions. That's why, in August, when we said we were going to consult...we're proceeding, and everybody has to be in it together. There was some reticence. There were some organizations saying, "Whoa, we've been there since 1976", and rightfully so.

With the consultations, I was worried about them at the beginning, but now I'm really into them because we can feel that there's very frank discussion. If those discussions mean the organizations themselves feel that either they have to work together or merge and they feel they would be more efficient just pulling together, this is fine, but it has to come from the grassroots. We can't go in and say, "Yes, you; yes, no, yes, no", because they all do a great job in a very difficult situation.

We have to at least support the fact that there's an evolution, and then support this evolution. This is the best way of working, because at the end you have people who are there, who are convinced. And again, let's face it, when you are in a minority situation, if you look at French minority communities and there are all these English communities, *c'est monolithique*, it's vast. We're not talking about English in Canada, because we have the United States also.

It takes a lot of courage to say, "We have our language and we'll keep it, and we'll work at it to keep it and to promote it". Sincerely, I have a lot of admiration for those who do that either in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, or British Columbia, or anywhere there are very few francophones compared to the great number of anglophones around them.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[Translation]

We now move on to Guy André.

Mr. Guy André: I'd like to come back to the Official Languages Support programs and to the community radio issue. If I understand correctly, you're currently in a period of consultation with a number of organizations to evaluate their situation, that is to say to determine their needs, to understand their performance in their communities, and so on. Are your evaluation criteria precise? What are the criteria for evaluating the performance of those organizations?

Hon. Liza Frulla: Your question on evaluation as a whole is similar to Mr. Poilievre's. Are there any evaluations? How are they conducted? This has to be done in a thorough way. I'm going to hand over to Mr. Lussier.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: That's a very good question. Evaluating community project results isn't an easy task. We very much insist on results. Insisting that client groups provide a measurable and accurate indication of results, rather than simply carry out their usual activities, was a complex change that was made roughly four years ago.

The problem we often see when we do business with a group engaged, for example, in community development with women or farmers in a rural area is the results are measured over the very long term because there's a social change. We conducted an evaluation of this community support program a year or two ago. That evaluation showed us that we had to make more progress, and we're very aware of that fact. It's often more a question of qualitative than quantitative measurement, since it's easier to do it in the education field, for example.

• (1025)

Mr. Guy André: You can see their community penetration rate, and so on.

Mr. Hubert Lussier: Yes, that's correct, but there are overall community development indicators in the provinces and regions on which we're working and which concern retention, the passing of the language to other generations, that kind of thing. We're also working on that.

Mr. Guy André: Should your consultation process be productive, and should you recognize that those organizations have needs and that they can't develop for lack of financial means, have you made provision in your budget for an increase in subsidies to those organizations and, if so, what is the order or magnitude?

Hon. Liza Frulla: There is a de facto increase as a result of the action plan. A new amount of \$19.5 million, which comes from the action plan, was added to support for community organizations.

Mr. Guy André: It stood at \$26 or \$28 million, I believe, and \$19,5 million has been added.

Hon. Liza Frulla: It's \$19 million over five years, so approximately \$35 million a year.

Mr. Guy André: Following the consultation, you therefore anticipate offering \$35 million to these organizations, which are seeking \$42 million.

Hon. Liza Frulla: Yes, but it shouldn't be forgotten that this is also a combination. The situation is often considered in isolation. You're correct: there are these funds which are intended for community organizations, and there's new money. Of course, the federations ask us for more; we won't hide that fact. They ask us for more, and, if we had more, we'd be pleased to give it to them.

However, I'll give you an example of something we're trying to do. If everything goes well, when we announce the renewal of the Tomorrow Starts Today program, we'll say in the basic statement that we're giving our support to the official language minority communities. We're already doing that because it's an inherent part of the program, but we'll also have to say it. So we're trying to ensure that all our cultural support programs have this component. We have to look at our programs very closely and beware when we go to the provinces with all kinds of cultural initiatives.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. André. That's all the time you have.

Mr. Simard.

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister.

I want to come back to a question I put to Mr. Bélanger the other day. It's probably more appropriate to ask you. It concerns the Canada-community agreements, a question Mr. André addressed earlier. The Action Plan for Official Languages and its objectives are very specific. In my view, it's a catch-up plan. Beyond the plan, there are communities that exist and have very particular needs.

We're told that the funding for the Canada-community agreements is the same as in 1993. I don't know whether that's correct, but that's the argument the communities advance. First I'd like to know whether you are aware of that fact and whether you intend to fund them adequately, so that they can continue to do their work. In fact, back home, without this policy structure, things don't work. This is what determines the vitality of our communities. That's my first question.

My second concerns Cultural Spaces Canada, an excellent program that has now been terminated. I'd like to know whether you intend to extend it, to put it back on the agenda or to increase its funding. Once again, the Action Plan for Official Languages and its objectives are very present in justice, education and health, but less so in the community and cultural areas.

• (1030)

Hon. Liza Frulla: Let's talk more about the community area, because I must say we're constantly looking at culture.

There have been some fairly significant increases. I think the statement that funding is the same as in 1993 should be corrected. Not only has there been an increase between 1993 and 2004, but, as I said earlier, as a result of the action plan, there will be a \$19 million increase over five years from 2004 to 2009.

Support totalled \$16,738,628 in 1998-1999, and stands at \$23,834,000 in 2003-2004. There has thus been an increase, and there's now an influx of money. The communities should receive approximately \$35 million this year.

Of course, the communities work very hard and would like to receive more. We're doing what we can to meet their requests, but you should also know that, contrary to what used to be the case, funding is now available in other departments.

When I was at Social Development Canada, I received funds designed to promote child development at the preschool level in the minority communities.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Allow me to comment on that. The action plan has had the contrary effect in some cases. Some departments tell us that we've obtained our funding under the action plan and that, consequently, they're no longer interested in us. There's been this impact back home, I can assure you.

Hon. Liza Frulla: Since we have to coordinate all the departments, let me know when that kind of impact occurs. We're signing MOUs with the departments.

You have to understand two things. Mr. Bélanger is responsible for implementation of the action plan. The action plan has to be reflected at the government level, and that's his role. Our role is obviously the implementation of part of the act as regards official languages. We also have to ensure that supporting minority languages and bilingualism is always a priority in the cultural field.

Now we're working on coordinating the MOUs with the departments. The departments are no longer entitled to do what you're talking about. There's the money we're receiving from the action plan, but we still have to look at our government actions very carefully, bearing in mind that we have a responsibility for official languages.

As for Cultural Spaces Canada, that's part of the big umbrella, Tomorrow Starts Today /*Un avenir en art*. I'm pleased to talk about it because we're taking part in it. I must say that Cultural Spaces Canada isn't being used to make major investments. They're sometimes \$50,000, \$100,000 or \$200,000. The most that has been requested was \$2 million, and that's really the maximum. That makes it possible to go to all the communities to help them modernize, improve and sometimes create cultural spaces. That's part of the Tomorrow Starts Today program, and that's why it's so important to renew that program for at least four years and, eventually, to make it part of the department's permanent budget.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Simard.

[English]

Mr. Julien.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you.

Coming back to my question from the last round, you have section 42 responsibilities for other departments and agencies within the government, and the issue of geographic restrictions for the public service is an important one, as is the issue around the underrepresentation of certain provinces—I'll say British Columbia because that's the most blatant example. That underrepresentation in the federal civil service is an important component.

I'd like to come back to my question from the last round. What are you willing to do, what can you do with your cabinet colleagues and under your section 42 responsibilities, to address issues such as the underrepresentation in the federal civil service of provinces like British Columbia, and geographic restrictions that mean young, bilingual Canadians who are qualified and professional and who've done the work can't get in because they're not in the right place?

• (1035)

Hon. Liza Frulla: I'll tell you, Mr. Julian, although we have the responsibility of section 42, we have the responsibility of getting protocol, the specific responsibility for the issue you're mentioning goes to Treasury Board. That's why I was saying we can't do it all. Every department now has to think about official languages, and that's why we have the action plan. This is the discipline we want to instill within the government. And you know, this is a good example; the responsibility goes to Treasury Board.

The minister responsible for Treasury Board could come here and meet you for an hour if you want, and you could ask for specifics. It would be good for the other minister also to come here and have this discussion with you.

Mr. Peter Julian: We know this is an issue.

Mr. Simard mentioned the whole aspect of other departments and agencies saying, well, it's a Canadian Heritage responsibility. And that's a problem that goes right across the country. So that is an issue, and—

Hon. Liza Frulla: But this is specific really, and they have the rules; Treasury Board sets its own rules. We can't go into the departments and tell them what to do. The only thing we can do is.... Do we have a protocol? Okay, make sure you consider official languages.

But we don't have the responsibility, the legal responsibility also, for another specific department, if you want.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian: My second question concerns visible minorities. They're not mentioned in the action plan. In British Columbia, because of its diverse population, more than 100 different languages are spoken in my riding. So there's a considerable presence of visible minorities in both the Allophone and Francophone populations. The growth of B.C.'s Francophone population is due in part to immigration from the Francophone countries of Africa, the Maghreb, etc.

Since there's no reference to this in the action plan, I would like to know your opinion on increased representation of visible minorities in the departments. Also do you think reference should be made to this in the action plan and that it should be taken into consideration when money is paid to the Anglophone and Francophone minority organizations that deal with visible minorities? Shouldn't visible minority participation in the public sector be included in the action plan to guarantee bilingualism and services in both languages, but also to ensure that the composition of the public sector more faithfully reflects the population of Canada?

Hon. Liza Frulla: We fund the integration of new Canadians through aid to the Francophone communities. That's how we ensure they are integrated.

In addition, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration has a responsibility for integration. In any case, when Francophones immigrate to Canada, they come to Quebec. We have our own immigrant selection mechanisms, as a result of which Francophone immigrants are welcomed to a greater degree in Quebec.

Mr. Peter Julian: There are more and more of them at home as well.

Hon. Liza Frulla: That's good news. In fact, we did it in Quebec to ensure there were mechanisms for preserving our language. We introduced legislation to promote French as the province's language precisely to support the language. The more Francophone immigrants there are in other provinces, the more enthusiasm there will be for French, which will progress further.

So there is support for Francophone immigration through the communities so that the second generation remains Francophone instead of automatically assimilating to English. There's also the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, which attaches more weight to knowledge of both languages.

● (1040)

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We have just enough time to do a fourth round. Perhaps you'd like to come back to that.

Mr. Lauzon.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Ms. Frulla, this morning, we've talked a lot about the education negotiations with the provinces. In her last annual report, Ms. Adam stated, and I quote:

[*English*]

The government is still on the starting blocks in the important field of education, which covers half of the investments under the Action Plan. Initiatives in this area have not been implemented, as the government has not yet reached agreements with its provincial and territorial partners. The situation is urgent.

When you go a little further, Minister, she reports that most of the five-year agreements that are struck with the province are signed in the third year of the agreement. In one case there was one that was signed in the fourth year.

Mademoiselle LaRocque spoke to the evaluation of the programs. If you're not signing an agreement until the third and fourth years, doesn't that make evaluation rather difficult?

The subsequent question to that would be, you said the agreements are evaluated, but they're not audited. Do you not feel that audit is the real value for dollar?

Hon. Liza Frulla: I'll leave the evaluation out of it because they have done it before.

The only thing I can say is that even if we don't have the final *protocole d'entente*, we're still working with the provinces.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I realize that, but—

Hon. Liza Frulla: I know what you mean, but we do have standards. We're not saying, "We're sending you the money, so do whatever you want with it and eventually we'll have an evaluation", or that we'll have standards and then we'll have an evaluation. That is not the way it works.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Ms. Frulla, we have Dyane Adam saying the action plan is not being followed, especially in the education area. Of course it's not. We're three years after the fact.

Hon. Liza Frulla: I had a good conversation with Dyane Adam. The plan of action is to get in and have a protocol and standardization—well, standardization, but modulated by provinces and negotiation by one province and the other.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: But just as a policy, shouldn't we have the agreement signed when the agreement begins, not in the third year?

Hon. Liza Frulla: Yes, you're right. That's the ideal situation.

The thing is that we get into a process with the evaluation because education is a provincial competence and we have to be respectful of that too.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I realize that, but that gets back to the audit question.

If we don't have an agreement, I understand why you're not auditing, but we're not getting bang for our buck—at least, you can't show me that you're getting your bang for your dollar until the fourth or fifth year.

Hon. Liza Frulla: No, that's not true. I'll leave that to Judith.

Mrs. Judith LaRocque: We do evaluate all of those programs.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: That's not an audit; that's an evaluation.

Mrs. Judith LaRocque: But my understanding is that the Auditor General does her audits on the basis of a risk assessment. So on the basis of that risk assessment, she came in and looked at our programs four years ago, and I'm quite sure that based on her risk assessment she will come back to those programs when she feels the risk is there.

But the actual books of the provinces have to be audited every year by their own auditors. We get copies of those reports, so we know where the money has flowed.

Just to clarify a matter, the money is flowing right now to the provinces, this year, based on the old agreement. So it's not being flowed to the provinces without parameters and guidelines.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: But I feel that if I had a third of a billion dollars exposed, I would certainly want an audit and I would want to know that I'm getting full value for my dollar. I'm not suggesting we're not; however, how the heck do we know? We don't know. You can't really assure me that we are.

● (1045)

Mrs. Judith LaRocque: One of the objectives we're trying to achieve in this new round of agreements is much better measurement capacity, and much better measurement capacity across the country using the same standard of measurement, which is something that regrettably we did not have in the last round of agreements. It's one of the reasons it is taking a little bit longer, because of course it is a matter of provincial jurisdiction. So we are working in concert with the provinces to get agreement on what would be...I don't want to use the expression "national standards", but an agreement as to even the basic vocabulary we use in measuring and in showing how we will show results concretely in the future.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: It's fine to say that education is a provincial jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the federal government is funding it. I'm convinced that we could get a deal done a heck of a lot sooner than in the fourth year.

Something has to be done. I'm concerned about having a third of a billion dollars exposed and we really don't know if we're getting value for our money. We might be, but...

The Chair: Thank you very much. Time flies when we're having fun.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Are we having fun?

The Chair: Yes, we are.

Monsieur Godbout.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Godbout: Minister, you have a number of mandates. I'm going to consider Radio-Canada. That's obviously an agency that reports to you. It's unfortunate that my colleague Yvon Godin isn't here because he would definitely have some things to say. We always have to come back at the charge because we often get the impression we're watching Radio-Québec rather than Radio-Canada. I was in Vancouver this summer and I watched the *Téléjournal*. I saw advertising for Brault et Martineau. I was wished a good night at 8:00 p.m., and the national news about Quebec.

Can you help us convince Radio-Canada to make some changes? We've been hearing about that at the CRTC since 1990. It's talked about every time there's a licence renewal application. Radio-Canada really has to be made to understand that it must not insult communities across Canada by not respecting their identity. I think this is quite serious.

I know you meet with the president from time to time. I'm not necessarily asking you to comment, but to say what you could do to give us a hand.

Hon. Liza Frulla: Cuts were made at Radio-Canada at one point to correct an almost desperate economic situation across Canada, but funds were subsequently reinjected. However, it's not a question of funding at Radio-Canada. I lived there for four years, every day. It's also something else: there has to be a certain will. It's easy to ask for money, but, if you want money, prove to me that it will be put in the right place. So we're in conversation.

I met with the president of Radio-Canada, whose term was renewed for three years, and we talked about Radio-Canada's regional mandate. This situation doesn't exist for just Francophones; it exists across Canada. So we're conducting an evaluation to determine how much it will cost Radio-Canada, not to go back to the starting gate, but to plug back into the regional communities. Radio-Canada is supposed to submit its business plan to us by December and tell us how it intends to ensure that regional presence. Radio-Canada will also have to ensure—and it's doing this—that it works not only with Montreal or Ontario producers, but also with producers from across Canada who represent the minority communities. There's talent everywhere. There's also the Canadian Television Fund budget, approximately 40 percent of which must support Francophone production. In the circumstances, we must also ensure—and we're doing this—that there are producers everywhere.

To answer your question specifically, I'll say that Radio-Canada will soon be submitting its master plan to us, in which it is supposed to provide evidence of its will to plug back into the regions. Now how much will it cost to plug back into the regions that were abandoned, in some cases, 10 years ago.

• (1050)

Mr. Marc Godbout: I agree with you that it's not always a question of money. What I'm asking is that Radio-Canada's national news be truly national.

Hon. Liza Frulla: Yes, there is that. It's not always a question of money, but there's a money issue in television. So Radio-Canada will submit a plan to us, and I'm convinced that plan will require us to pay it additional money.

If the government decides to give Radio-Canada money to achieve its desire to be more present in the regions, it can grant it targeted funding and ensure that that funding is spent for that and not for anything else.

Mr. Lauzon, when you work at Canadian Heritage, you have to be more thorough. When I say Canadian Heritage, I mean the entire portfolio, and that includes culture, official languages and support for the status of women.

We work with programs and have direct clientele, not like others. When I was at Social Development, in negotiations, there was a community party, but most negotiations were conducted with the provinces, and they had ultimate responsibility for making things work.

When you work directly with clients, you make sure you exercise good financial control. That's very important. I must say we usually administer ourselves with less than 11 percent in all our programs and that we make audit requests to ourselves in order to be sure that we're headed in the right direction. We don't have enough money to afford to waste it. That also applies to the education agreements and the community agreements. In education, there's the audit of the provinces. We make sure, at the provincial level, that the money goes where it's supposed to go.

I know we want tighter standards, but, when it comes to an area of exclusive provincial jurisdiction, you have to convince the provinces that that's the way to do it. That's what's being done now, and the provinces know it.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Lauzon. Good luck with your other meeting.

Mr. Desrochers, go ahead.

Mr. Odina Desrochers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If we were talking about the phenomenon of the regions, Mr. Godbout, I could say that, in Quebec, we're experiencing out and out Montrealization. There too, we could talk at length about mandates and the editorial decisions that are made by bureau chiefs. We'd have a broad debate on that.

I'd like to make a very personal comment. I was watching RDI this morning. We talk about news from Ottawa and news from the Quebec City and the legislatures. This morning, they were talking about a news item in Montreal, and they said that Ottawa firefighters had come and given a hand to firefighters in Gatineau. When they aren't striking news stories, you'd say that our media aren't there.

I've spoken many times with Ms. Frulla on the question I'm going to raise. How are the negotiations going with Quebec? In looking at the table, I realized there was a delay in the last negotiations. How is that going?

Hon. Liza Frulla: There's a special situation in Quebec because we're talking about Anglophones. There are the Montreal Anglophones, of course, but, as Ms. Adam recalled in her report, it should not be forgotten that there are Anglophones on the Gaspé Peninsula, for example. There are Anglophone pockets. Of course, they have different services. In Quebec, services are offered in both languages, and it's easier to be bilingual in Quebec than elsewhere. Anglophones nevertheless have access to a lot of services.

So Quebec is treated differently because the situation there is different. Our negotiations with Quebec are being conducted bilaterally, and that's going very well. We negotiate with me on one side and Mr. Pelletier and Mr. Reid on the other. Mr. Reid agrees there should be accountability measures.

• (1055)

Mr. Odina Desrochers: Provincial measures?

Hon. Liza Frulla: Accountability measures with regard to the Anglophone community. In other words, Quebec will report to its population, like the other provinces. There are going to be accountability measures because the Anglophone community will definitely request them.

Mr. Odina Desrochers: Thank you very much.

Hon. Liza Frulla: May I suggest something?

The Chair: You can if it's brief.

Hon. Liza Frulla: It will be very brief. We hear about regional television, regional needs and all that. You have a marvellous committee. Radio-Canada is prepared to answer your questions. You've previously invited its representatives in the past.

The Chair: That's a good point. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Desrochers.

We'll close with Mr. Julian.

Mr. Peter Julian: I'd like to come back to the visible minorities question. First, I'd like to address the question of education and community visible minority groups, and then I'd like to discuss the public sector and the fact that visible minorities are under-represented there.

We have objectives regarding bilingual services. We have geographical restrictions, as I mentioned. How can all these aspects be reconciled? You may say it would be preferable for me to discuss this with the President of the Treasury Board, but I'd nevertheless like to have your opinion on it.

Second, I entirely concur with Mr. Godbout's opinion on the Radio-Canada issue. What do you see in the evening in Montreal? It's news from Montreal, which doesn't really have any connection with what's going on in British Columbia or elsewhere in Western Canada. Do you know whether, in the plan it's going to establish, Radio-Canada will take into account the regional aspect, which concerns, for example, the communities?

Hon. Liza Frulla: I'm going to answer the Radio-Canada question, and I'll let Ms. LaRocque talk about representation.

When Radio-Canada submits its plan, we'll examine it. But, as I said, there's nothing preventing you from discussing these matters with Radio-Canada, which will be pleased to come.

You're right, but you have to think about production costs. Television can't be completely regionalized, unless hundreds of millions of dollars are invested in it. That would be the ideal, of course, but we have to be able to pay for it. There are nevertheless ways of presenting regional news and having regional windows. I believe that deeply.

However, Radio-Canada is doing an amazing job. Radio is more flexible. There are good initiatives in British Columbia, where I visited Radio-Canada. I'm thinking of ZeD. There are amazing initiatives in your province, at Radio-Canada in British Columbia, which are broadcast across Canada. I'd say that production must be shared across the country.

So we'll be examining the regional plan, but invite Radio-Canada to come here. It would be good to have a discussion and to show the Crown corporation that it's being supported in this desire, to which Mr. Rabinovitch referred, to be more present in the regions.

Mrs. Judith LaRocque: Even though decisions concerning federal government hiring policies are a Treasury Board responsibility, I can tell you about what we're doing at Canadian Heritage to integrate visible minorities.

As you know, we have multiculturalism programs, and we want to be a model for the Canadian government. We want to be the department that, more than any other, encourages visible minorities to come and work in the federal government. To do this, we have been forced to take special measures. For example, we have established job fairs aimed specifically at visible minorities. We've also created mechanisms within our department. We have observed that, very often, even if we attracted visible minorities, they did not receive promotions or did not need special support to be promoted within the government.

I would also like to tell you that some of our mechanisms are now being used by other departments to attract people. We often manage more to attract people in the regions because they now have the necessary skills, including bilingualism. We can bring them back to headquarters, sometimes permanently. But sometimes it's on one-year assignments, after which they return to the regions.

We were forced to create mechanisms, and we did so.

• (1100)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Julian.

Thank you, committee members, as well. In particular, I would like to thank the Minister for coming to meet with us. Thanks to you and your team. We had an excellent meeting, which resulted in an abundant and productive exchange of information.

Colleagues, I invite you to the next meeting, which will be held next Tuesday.

Hon. Liza Frulla: We'll be pleased to come back. These exchanges are very helpful.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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