



House of Commons  
CANADA

## Standing Committee on Official Languages

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LANG • NUMBER 018 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

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EVIDENCE

**Thursday, February 17, 2005**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez**

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Thursday, February 17, 2005

•(0910)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.)):** Good morning, everyone. Welcome. We'll continue our work, which concerns, in part, the impact of the Action Plan for Official Languages, commonly called the Dion Plan, on the official language minority communities.

[English]

We're pleased to have with us this morning representatives from Canadian Parents for French. Thanks for being here with us. Welcome.

[Translation]

First, I'm going to make a few opening remarks. Then we'll move on to questions and discussion, as we usually do.

[English]

I once again welcome you. Please go ahead with your comments.

**Ms. Trudy Comeau (President, Board of Directors, Canadian Parents for French):** Good morning, Mr. Chair, honourable members. On behalf of all the members of Canadian Parents for French, CPF, I thank the committee for providing us with the opportunity to publicly state our concerns regarding the federal action plan for official languages.

Since the launch in March 2003, CPF has publicly supported this initiative, as we believe the goal to double the proportion of secondary school graduates with a functional knowledge of their second official language by the year 2013 is attainable. This project is important to our members, and ultimately to our children in the learning opportunities available to them.

CPF applauds the federal government's funding for French first language education, but that is only one part of the education area of development. We are here to speak about French second language learning opportunities for Canadian students.

The federal government has failed to renew bilateral and protocol agreements of the official languages and education program, the OLEP, with provincial and territorial ministries of education. We are concerned because the results of the negotiations are expected to lead to improvements in second language instruction and ultimately attain the goals outlined in the action plan.

There are four recommendations that we want the federal government to implement: transparency in funding distribution; an annual progress report on results achieved by each ministry of education; accountability in the subsequent implementation of the

action plan; and involvement of parents in the decision-making process.

We are here before you today as an association of volunteer parents with over 21,000 members. Canadian Parents for French, created in 1977, was originally founded by English-speaking parents who wished to increase student success in French second language programs. Today our membership continues to welcome English-speaking parents, but also Canadians whose first language is neither English nor French.

Canadian Parents for French is a national network that has branches representing every province and territory and community chapters that are led by parent volunteers. CPF values French as an integral part of Canada and is dedicated to the promotion and creation of French second language learning opportunities for young Canadians. Those FSL opportunities include French immersion, core or basic French, and alternate core French programs.

The members of CPF have demonstrated our ability to positively work with not only governments but school boards, schools, national organizations, and other education stakeholders. In partnership with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Privy Council Office, we conducted a symposium on official languages in March 2004. Symposium participants from the fields of education, sports, arts, culture, and business discussed challenges and strategies regarding the goal of 2013.

As a follow-up, CPF's own stakeholder consultations, held across Canada, demonstrated that FSL stakeholders are committed to providing recommendations and strategies to help the federal government reach the goal of 2013. One strategy outlined was the establishment of FSL proficiency standards for students. The issue is currently under review by CPF's board of directors. The standards will determine different outcomes for the graduates of the various types of FSL programs available.

Other recommendations included: exploring alternate core French delivery models to enhance French language outcomes; providing more opportunities to continue FSL studies at the post-secondary level, including career-oriented community college and trade programs; developing national competency standards for FSL teachers.

Our annual research reports on the state of French second language education in Canada have provided factual information for parents to use when making important education choices. With these reports we are also able to provide valuable and relevant information to decision-makers on improving FSL programs.

In support of the action plan and its goals, the 2004 report on the state of French second language education in Canada examined potential strategies that could be influential in attaining the goal of 2013, including alternate core French programming. We will carry on with the promotion of findings to education stakeholders who deal with FSL education.

Canadian Parents for French is calling for transparency in the distribution of the \$137 million targeted for second language education. The federal government must stipulate financial accountability from the provincial-territorial ministries of education along with the school boards and schools.

Parents are prepared to work with the federal government to establish reporting formats at the provincial-territorial, school board, and school levels. The flow of funding and the ultimate designations must be monitored.

By implementing policies guaranteeing transparency, funding information will be readily available to educators and the Canadian taxpayers. In order to effect change at the classroom level, we again stress the importance of signing the protocol and bilateral agreements.

Upon receiving the funds from the action plan, an annual report on the progress achieved in French second language education should be provided by each ministry of education. Among other things, these reports should outline which French second language programs receive the funds and how they are applied.

The ministries, school boards, and schools must become accountable to the communities they serve and the children they educate. Accountability for the implementation of the action plan goes beyond the financial aspects. Ensuring program integrity and quality is of major concern.

CPF, in conjunction with various stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, researchers, and government officials, has identified 32 national criteria for quality FSL programs. These include provincial-territorial FSL policies or guidelines based on credible research, defining and monitoring the number of hours of actual instruction, ensuring availability of FSL programs at the post-secondary level so that students may continue their language learning, encouraging innovative approaches and evaluating their ability to increase achievement, and ensuring FSL programs are accessible to all students, including special needs and rural students.

Most importantly, the involvement of parents in the decision-making process is critical when the implementation of the action plan moves forward. CPF is in a position to provide pan-Canadian views of the state of French as a second language. We could assist in expediting the delivery of the agreements. Concern for the delayed delivery is our reason for requesting inclusion in the process. As parents we respectfully request the opportunity to express our views on this matter.

On page 71 of the action plan, one of the responsibilities outlined is to consult minority communities and other key stakeholders at least once a year. Who other than our children are the most important key stakeholders in the education community? We believe that we, the parents, are the significant decision-makers, for we determine early on what type of education our children will receive. We also have the most direct link to the important stakeholders. Therefore, not to be included in the current process is a serious oversight on the part of the federal, provincial, and territorial governments.

We are shortly upon the two-year anniversary of the action plan, yet there are no firm frameworks in place to ensure the French second language education is fully supported and enhanced at the school level. It is with that date in mind that we express our apprehension for the delay in signing bilateral and protocol agreements of the official languages and education program with the provincial and territorial ministries of education.

The over 21,000 members of Canadian Parents for French have embraced the action plan for official languages and have publicly supported it. We have stepped up and started initiatives to meet the goal. Now it is time for the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to do the same. We are calling on the federal government to ensure the following when implementing the action plan for official languages: transparency in funding distributions; an annual progress report on results achieved by each ministry of education; accountability in the subsequent implementation of the action plan; and involvement of parents in the decision-making process.

As parents, we are the most important stakeholders other than our children. In the past, parents have not been included in the decision-making process. The time to change that is now. Parents make the ultimate decision on which programs their children will participate in.

● (0915)

By working in partnership with stakeholders such as the federal government, Canadian Parents for French will maintain our commitment to the implementation of the French second language recommendations outlined in the action plan for official languages. As parents, we have the responsibility to guarantee quality French second language education for our children. It is their right.

I thank the Standing Committee on Official Languages for allowing Canadian Parents for French the opportunity to speak about the education of our children.

● (0920)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Madame Comeau.

[Translation]

As is our custom, we'll now move on to the discussion period. This will be a first round, in which everyone has seven minutes to speak with our guests.

[English]

We'll start with you, Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC):** Merci.

I'll not be asking and framing my questions in French. I apologize for that. I'm back into French lessons, but my kids, if they were here, would speak French better than I. We'll do the best we can today.

I have appreciated Canadian Parents for French over a number of years now, even as to the nature of how this group came together. You noted here in the middle of the first page that it was initiated by parents, English-speaking parents in this case, and it was a result of their desire for their children to have the benefit and enrichment of knowing the French language. To me, that's pretty core and pretty crucial, because it was an element born out of a need, a desire, and a sense of initiative, if you will.

What I'm getting at, simply, is that there was not—and there's a place for all the other groups that are presenting and testifying to our committee here—a coercive element. It was really a desire. I appreciate too that in the literature I get from Canadian Parents for French it talks about the enrichment from a second language; in fact, if we could, we might have a third language and so on.

Kids in the early years, the formative years, are much more able to catch...I struggle much more to work on the French language...and who knows the progress one is able to make, and not with the speed of young kids. I'm very impressed with my children and how well they do and hope for them to be truly bilingual. I think you have something very special there.

I would very much encourage, and will continue to encourage, that in your promotional material, in the newsletters and so on, you continue to play up and use the statistics, the surveys, and the studies that show the tremendous enrichment and value for children to have that. I know many of us react and back away sometimes when the coercive element comes in, the heavy hand kind of thing, though there are places for that, I'm not denying that.

You have a beautiful thing here to motivate and give all those positive things, and the positive stories too are a wonderful thing. In fact, I was reminded of a bit of an overdue commitment I have to write a little story on our experience with Canadian Parents for French, which I referred to before, for our provincial newsletter. I've always found those stories very motivating; they provide the incentive for parents to have their kids in the summer camp programs and take advantage of the various opportunities there.

The one thing I would ask you is about the action plan's goal to increase it by up to 50% by a certain point just down the road here. Do you think that's a realistic goal? If it's not realistic at this point, what would it take to actually get it to that status? Money is a factor, obviously, but I want to hear more than just that more money is needed. Is it realistic? We're looking at 50% in just a few years down the road here. Is that realistic in your view, James or Trudy?

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** We believe it is. We use the word “attainable”, and we feel very strongly that it is attainable. If you look at the statistics of French immersion and isolate what French immersion has done, you see it's plateaued. One of the points in the action plan is to revitalize French immersion. There is very little late French immersion in western Canada, and in Ontario it's levelled off.

Atlantic Canada promotes late French immersion, “late” being that the entry point is at a grade 6 or grade 7 level.

I would like to put a lot of emphasis onto looking at what happens in Atlantic Canada, to see why those programs are so successful, and encouraging some of the other provinces to embrace those programs. I have felt in my years with CPF that what's happening across the country is not well known among the different provinces and territories. There are excellent programs, and this is why we're very pleased to bring this to you and why we have tried to develop what we call a pan-Canadian view. We do feel that goal is very attainable. It needs promotion of more late immersion.

Also in our last report we were looking very closely at another model for the basic core French. It's a model called “intensive French”, where you would take students in grade 5 or 6 and give them an intensive block of French learning, and it would be half of their school year approximately. They do language training within that year, and then the curriculum is condensed for the remaining part of grade 5 or 6.

The outcomes of that are very successful. This is a fairly recent development. It's been piloted in several provinces and territories and it's very successful. In terms of what a parent sees, what the intensive program does by putting the child into that classroom where there is primarily French for the majority of the hours of the day is that after a period of time the children learn to think in French.

Our children who are in the basic core program, where they have 20 to 30 minutes a day maybe four or five times a week, can tune out. They can never really get their brains to think in the second language. This is why these alternate core programs have to be looked at carefully. What we are calling the “drip feed”, which is 30 minutes a day, is not successful. The outcomes show these programs are not producing students coming out of grade 12 who can converse fluently.

●(0925)

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** So on my question it's yes, and it's pretty obvious. The studies pretty clearly point out that the core French is not producing the results, even though we'd like to make ourselves feel good on that. Clearly not.

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** No.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** A lot of resource dollars have gone into that when in fact we should maybe flip it into what you call intensive French. It would still be a kind of core French scenario, but it would be intensive French.

As to the late language, do we have enough of a track record on that so we can conclusively say it is effective in our country?

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** Yes, definitely, particularly in Atlantic Canada. All four Atlantic provinces have embraced the late immersion program to a very significant degree.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** Why would you say that's the case? From an educational psychology point of view, why is that? I would have thought my kids had an advantage starting it in preschool and going on into kindergarten and so on, but you're saying taking the late French is equally effective.

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** I didn't say "equally" effective, but it's very effective.

Jim, can I ask you to jump in on that?

**The Chair:** Mr. Shea.

**Mr. James Shea (Executive Director, National Office, Canadian Parents for French):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to speak to the issue of attaining the goal, because those children in a sense are your children; the ones currently in grade 4 are going to graduate in 2013. What we have to provide for those young people are additional opportunities, and hence there's the issue of later entry points. I think they are certainly effective models of achieving it.

The other issue is that we want to address the secondary and post-secondary because we found young people who have begun their studies in an immersion program for some reason or other are not continuing into completion of high school and perhaps are not continuing into post-secondary programs. Providing additional opportunities at the secondary and post-secondary will certainly raise the number of those who participate towards the target of 2013.

To address that issue, I can say we believe it's attainable. Some significant changes are going to have to take place, and hence our presentation today says we're looking for models that will allow young people, after they've begun their school journey, opportunities to plug in and to have some additional opportunities. I think that's the key to it all—opportunities not only to learn but to use French.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** We'll continue with you, Mr. Clavet.

**Mr. Roger Clavet (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, everyone. I hope I've just woken up the last ones who were still sleeping. I apologize for being late. It's not a lack of respect for the Bloc Québécois, but matters being what they are... There are so many other things we care about.

Thank you for being here this morning. I've done my homework. This is the first time I've taken part in the Standing Committee on Official Languages, but I know about the reality of Francophone communities and official language minority communities.

Off the top, I want to tell you that I applaud the work of Canadian Parents for French. I want to offer a little testimonial. A family from Manitoba lived in Thompson for 10 years. Without Canadian Parents for French, those people would have been assimilated. They had two children. For those 10 years, they were registered at the French-language school through Canadian Parents for French. They gave me this little testimonial that I wanted to pass on to you.

I listened to Ms. Comeau's presentation, and I consulted the annual report, which mentions the major challenge in the Action Plan for Official Languages, which is to double the number of high school graduates with functional knowledge of English and French. That's quite ambitious. Some people wondered whether it was

realistic. Let's say it's courageous and ambitious, but there are a lot of barriers. On that point, I'd like to ask you whether the delay in renewing the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Canada and the Council of Education Ministers Canada—which expired in the spring of 2003, two years ago—may be a problem in the funding on which a scheme such as this is based. Is this barrier to be removed as soon as possible?

In your annual report, reference is often made to making core French education mandatory. Are you still going to make efforts to prove the importance of that?

I also saw something in the report that you may comment on if you wish. That was the matter of encouraging interaction between Anglophone and Francophone communities.

Let's talk about your recommendations. Let's start with the first barrier I mentioned. Does Canadian Parents for French still want to encourage interaction between Anglophone and Francophone communities?

• (0930)

[*English*]

**Mr. James Shea:** Mr. Chair, on the first issue, we all recognize that education is a provincial responsibility, and certainly there is a requirement for the department Patrimoine canadien/Canadian Heritage to undertake an entente with the Council of Ministers of Education.

We have gone on record as expressing our very serious concern with both the department and the Council of Ministers of Education that there has been a significant delay. We believe this is a barrier. It is 23 months later from the point of view of an action plan. We are certainly recommending some strong and significant action, and our president has recommended some intervention through the president of the Council of Ministers, who's the Minister of Education of Quebec.

The second issue is the issue of rapprochement, and Canadian Parents for French has undertaken a significant partnership with the Commission nationale des parents francophones. We've signed an entente with them in Winnipeg at their annual congress. We recognize that if we are going to work together, for anglophones learning French, there are some very significant resources within communities that come from the francophone community. In a sense we're looking to access those because it's an opportunity to use them.

At the same time we respect the establishment of French first language school boards across the country and we applaud that. We're not in conflict. We are working in partnership. Recently we have worked with La Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française to have immersion students participate from a fully integrated perspective into Les Jeux de la Francophonie. What we are looking for, indeed, are opportunities for anglophones to use and learn French. At the same time, on the comment about the issue of doubling the proportion of bilingual graduates, that challenge applies also to francophone unilinguals as well as to anglophone unilinguals. We would hope that a significant number from the francophone community would also participate in the process of learning English as a second language.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Clavet:** In the annual report, you've identified another major challenge in the number of provinces and territories, more particularly in Quebec. That challenge is to find teachers qualified to teach French as a second language. That's becoming a problem.

Do we have core French teachers who are capable of teaching the French program? Is it because too many teachers are recruited for the immersion programs that there are no longer many core French teachers? Is that a problem? Is that one of the answers?

• (0935)

[English]

**Mr. James Shea:** It could be one of the answers. Two years ago Canadian Parents for French issued a report and expressed a concern about the shortage of French second language teachers across the country, and it's certainly one of the challenges to be able to attract teachers. It would be nice if we could have some interprovincial exchanges. It's rather difficult. You can have international exchanges, but it's rather difficult to have interprovincial exchanges. It's certainly something we would be prepared to work toward.

On the issue of teaching core French, the reality is in our discussions with the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, there are still examples where anglophones are teaching French. I think that's a major concern to us in that we would like people who have the ability in a language to be able to teach it. The reality is there's an example at the University of Saskatchewan where the French methods course is taught in English, so we have some significant concerns about the ability to provide those professionals, those teachers, before classrooms.

And the issue of French immersion teaching is that it's a métier, a specialty all unto itself. It takes more than just having a francophone background, for example, to become a French immersion teacher. There are specific skills that are required to be able to work with an anglophone population to teach them French.

The issue of quality of teachers, of course, is a function of the numbers of students you have, and it's particularly an issue in smaller, rural communities.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Clavet.

Mr. Godin.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to welcome you.

[English]

I'd like to welcome you, and, as I said when you came in, I want to go on record about this because I think it's important. I was on the plane going back home. You have to go around the country before you get to Bathurst. It was Ottawa-Montreal, Montreal-Fredericton, Fredericton-Bathurst. If I'd had a parachute, I'd probably have arrived home faster. But while I was travelling, it was interesting, as I met this person who was telling me he wanted to put his kid into immersion but there were not enough places.

I think it's a shame because we have two official languages in our country, and we're screaming that people don't want to learn the other language. The reality in the field is not that, as I see it today. It's that people want to learn the second language but they don't have the tools to do it.

I'd like to know this from you. In your association do you encounter that often—complaints from people who say they want to send their children to immersion, want them to learn the second language? I know you spoke a little bit about the hard time you have getting teachers. Is that the problem, or is money the problem? What is the real problem?

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** This is a problem, and it's a big problem in several areas of this country. As CPF representatives in our provincial branches, we talk to different school districts, and they will tell us it's an issue of money. As an organization, we're not always convinced, because the transparency isn't there.

We do know that school districts, school boards, receive funds through the official languages in education program. Are those funds going directly to French language training? We're not sure. When we go to the school boards and say, "We want to see more programs," they'll say, "We can't afford it." We will ask for the numbers, but we're not given them.

But there are problems across the country. In Labrador, there has been a very, very successful early French immersion program, which a year ago the school board said it will not continue this fall. CPF has gone on record, and we have really opposed that decision.

In that particular case, there is a declining population, and they're worried about the compromise to the English program, because more children there subscribe to the French immersion program. It gets to a difficulty in teacher allocations. There are only so many teachers allocated within the funding of a school board, and it gets quite complicated. But the bottom line is that the school board has made the decision, and it has not yet been changed. We still have until September, and we're still working with them and trying to have them talk with their ministry in Newfoundland to have a resolution, particularly in Labrador, on the border of Quebec, as to why they would discontinue that program that has been highly successful.

We have an issue in the Halifax region where, in that particular school board, they have not truly embraced the whole philosophy of bilingualism, as near as we can tell. There has been a lot of French immersion, but the actions over the past two or three years have been to close the only single-track early French immersion school that had 300 students in an elementary school. They split that group of students into three other schools and subsequently lost a lot of students out of the French immersion. Again, CPF was there. We tried to explain that it was not a positive move for the children in that area. The decision was made. So we see this as a real dilemma in terms of the administration of a lot of our school districts.

In Vancouver, they have a situation in some of their school districts where they have caps. They have a limited number of spots for students who would like to subscribe to French immersion, and they use a lottery. They simply pull names out of a hat, and if you're the lucky one, you get to go into French immersion.

In Canada today we should not have that. For every family that wants to have the opportunity to have their child in French immersion, that should be available to them. This is a bilingual country. So it's—

• (0940)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Going from this, from the child learning French, what is alarming, though, is that we had the president of the union saying here last week that in the public sector, the government, in their high-level supervision...for example, a francophone speaking on the job was reprimanded because she was speaking French. Imagine, she was reprimanded because she was speaking French in an establishment that is supposed to be officially bilingual.

My worry is this. What about the poor anglophone who wants to practise his French? The opportunity will never happen. I'd like to hear your opinion about that attitude—and it's not only learning.

The little bit of learning I had when I started to speak English was at the age of 16. I would never have had the little bit I have today if I didn't practise it. I'd like to hear about the attitude in offices, in buildings that belong to the federal government—that's where the two official languages are recognized—where they have this attitude that you don't speak the other language. Do you support that?

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** No. We feel that if there are individuals who can use their other language, their second language, that should absolutely be allowed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** The Commissioner of Official Languages herself said that it was taking time to implement the Dion Plan.

[English]

It takes time to apply it, to put it in place. Do you think French immersion will suffer from that delay, and will it be able to recover? The plan has to be done within five years, and we've had, what, a year and a half go by, and people are saying they don't see any results. Do you think you will be hurt by that?

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** I don't think it's a case of being hurt by it, but we would really like to see the funds start to flow. We do know that the provinces have put together plans.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** But again, you don't feel that the fund is flowing right now, and you haven't seen any change since the plan has been put publicly.

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** That's correct. We have not seen any significant change in French as a second language directly attributed to the plan. There are still funds coming through the OLEP that support French language learning in the country, but to our knowledge, the influx, that \$137 million that is going to give the thrust, the means to reach that goal, has not been released in any way.

• (0945)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Ms. Boivin, over to you.

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Allow me five seconds to officially say hello to a young lady, Stéphanie Houle, who is a student at École Escalade in Gatineau and who's with us today. She is an assistant to the Parliament of Canada for the day. I hope we'll make her day an exciting one. This is an extremely important subject. It's nice for a young 10-year-old girl to be able to have this experience.

Hello to you as well. I like the name of your organization: Canadian Parents for French. When you're Francophone, that encourages us and raises our spirits. I've always believed it was extremely important to know a number of languages.

That being said, I don't know a lot about your organization. My first question will be to ask you for a little background.

[English]

What is Canadian Parents for French? What is your mission?

[Translation]

I'd also like you to address the question of evaluation tools.

I'm originally from Quebec, a product of the Quebec school system. I experienced the opposite of what your young Anglophones must experience across Canada. I learned English at school by taking courses. I'm not prepared to say that learning a second language at school is a worthless exercise, but I admit that I mainly learned my English—I now consider myself bilingual—by practising it. I think everyone will agree with me on that.

However, I believe that core instruction is extremely important, precisely because it provides the foundation so that, when you're in an Anglophone environment, you can recognize things that the teacher taught us in grade 5, such as the “ing” rule.

You talk a lot about assessment tools in your report, among other things. There are no reliable assessment tools enabling us to measure second-language mastery across Canada in a standard way. I think that's a major problem. I'd like you to tell me about that.

I was somewhat astounded in reading this book. In fact, it's a bit like our public service. If people feel they don't need to use French, that language isn't spoken much. When they're surveyed, young people give the impression they don't think they'll need French. It can't be easy to go into an immersion program, which is quite demanding, unless you have a personal need or desire to learn languages. How do you motivate these people?

[English]

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** Thank you.



You started asking about our mission. What we are all about is providing opportunities for younger Canadians to learn and use French. When I joined this organization several years ago, my daughter went to a French immersion camp. After she spent one week in a French immersion camp—this was summer camp, out in the woods, where you swam and you played games, except you had to speak French—it was quite amazing for me to have her come at the end of the week and hear her just speaking in French, and she'd say, "Oh, I forgot, I should speak English now."

I look at it as a threefold method. We have opportunities outside the classroom, and I think they are our strength. When we began we were advocating for the programs within the classroom, but we realized they had to use the language outside of the classroom. So we have summer camps in many provinces across the country. We have thousands of kids going to these camps every summer. Some of them are day camps for younger children, and then there are week-long immersion camps.

We also work hand in hand with SEVEC for educational exchanges. We promote those and we support them, such that we take either classrooms or individual children to have an experience in the francophone milieu, in an exchange setting.

We have a public speaking contest that is well embraced across this country, the Concours national d'art oratoire. Each year students from grade 5 through to grade 12 prepare speeches. It's a competition within the school, within the region, within the province, and then at a national level. This year the students will come here to Ottawa at the end of May for a national competition. This has also been partnered with the Embassy of France in the past three years.

We support travelling performers. Students physically see performers come in and they engage them, particularly at the elementary and junior high levels. That's a huge component of what Canadian Parents for French does—and I have that in one block. And then there's the advocacy that we do when we make presentations to school boards.

The third part of it is the research, and in the past five years we've had this tool, this document that we've put together. In the past five years I have felt there is a need to look at French education in a pan-Canadian view. Because education is under provincial jurisdiction, there are too many very good things happening in French language education that other provinces aren't aware of. The pluses, the excellent programs that have been developed in one area of the country, need to be shared. This is partly why we've been putting this document together and why we want to see more dialogue across the country. We would like to see a standard delivery of French programs across the country so that we know all of our children will get a base level. That's our ultimate goal.

• (0950)

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** I commend you. That's great. That's stimulating. What about the evaluation tools?

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** Again, there are areas of the country that have done a lot of work on this. Nova Scotia has recently developed a tool for grade 9 that has been piloted, and the results are probably just getting put together now. Does B.C. know about this? Probably not.

There is a study happening within the Edmonton school board. They are partnered with using the Public Service Commission testing and are examining that with their students who have been in French immersion; they are doing an evaluation and a study.

We work with our teacher organizations, with CASLT, which is the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers. And there's also another organization, which is the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers, which I think is a very vital component to promoting French immersion particularly. They have also been looking at the tools for assessment.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Ms. Boivin.

[*English*]

We now turn to Mr. Lauzon, who has decided to share his five minutes with Mr. Poilievre.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[*English*]

By the way, I commend you on your efforts and your work. Your organization is a very impressive one. You have a big hill to climb, and I encourage you to continue your good work.

I get a little frustrated when I look at our educational system when it comes to English as a second language or French as a second language, more so with French as a second language, because we spend a lot of time and effort in trying to expose young people to the second language. In most cases it's French. My personal opinion is the younger we can do that, the more effective it is. And I think it has to be in big doses.

I agree with your report that says the core programs, I think they're called, are not nearly as effective as immersion. I noted that your report says by the time young people go through the educational program, I think only one out of ten continues to study French at a post-secondary level. We're spending so much effort educating these people, and then only 10% are actually going on to end up fluently bilingual.

As my colleagues have said, I feel that in order to sort of complement the educational system, as a person who is trying to become bilingual, I have to practise the second language.

I come from a community where there's a significant minority French population. The kids go to school and they learn the language, but they don't get an opportunity to practise it after school, actually in the schoolyards. And you made the point about the teachers.

How do we support the educational system so that we expose these students, in my case to the French culture, so they can use the second language they're learning in school outside of school?

Do you have any ideas?

● (0955)

**Mr. James Shea:** Mr. Chair, the question is a valid one. We believe that the universities and colleges have not recognized the added value of having a bilingual young person come into their system at the post-secondary level. What we find is that young people make decisions about where they want to go to university, and there's no value added to being able to study in two languages. They want to get the best possible marks to get into the program, and there are no programs out there that say, "Gee, if you want to study in two languages...". They're starting, but the reality is that our next FSL report will deal, not exclusively but in great part, with the post-secondary issue, because we believe that universities and colleges could go to great lengths to accommodate bilingual young people, graduates of French immersion programs, if you want, by providing them with opportunities to take courses in either French or English and to also provide a support system that allows them to continue.

In some discussions with some universities we have found that some universities are now offering scholarships. For example, Ottawa University has offered scholarships to Alberta and to British Columbia, and has currently offered scholarships to

[*Translation*]

our public speaking contest.

[*English*]

So some universities are saying that there is a value added there, but we haven't been able to market that.

I want to tell you that perhaps the French first language institutions are recognizing it and are seeing this group of young people as a market to go to. We applaud that.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** I can appreciate it, Mr. Shea. But my concern is that if we don't give the people the competence to be able to speak the two languages when they get to university age, if 90% of the kids are not going on because they don't have the ability in the second language, we have a problem.

My question is, how do we support the educational people who are teaching them the second language in our communities? You mentioned sending your daughter to camp in a second language for a week. We have to do more than that, I think.

The children come out and they go in. Francophone high schools have told me that kids speak English in the schoolyard. They go home and they turn on the English TV. Everything is in English. Obviously, like me, they're going to lose their capacity in French.

How do we change that trend? Have you thought that out?

**Mr. James Shea:** Well, it's a challenge. I guess the best we can do is look for additional opportunities. For example, we are partnering with the Jeux de la Francophonie. It's an example where you allow young people the opportunity to dialogue in French. You're right that we have to find more. We do bilingual exchanges, exchanges out of the province to other communities, and all of that.

I think there could be more done, hence our partnership with Commission nationale des parents francophones. In the smaller communities the resources are from French first language, so we're

asking for more of a dialogue in those smaller communities. I guess that's where you have to start. You have to start somewhere.

The reality is, we're inundated.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

[*English*]

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** So much to say.

**The Chair:** So much to say and so little time.

[*Translation*]

I'll now hand over to Mr. Godbout.

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

It's always a pleasure for me to see again former colleagues with whom I've had the good fortune to work at the Ontario provincial level. I also want to welcome Madam President.

It may be hard for you to answer my first question, but I believe your vast experience may help you. Let's talk about the various immersion programs across the country. There are French second-language programs, 50-50 programs and total immersion programs. I know that, at one point, there were full immersion schools in the region. That has changed, in some instances, for budgetary reasons, and so on. We would like children to be truly bilingual. If the various school boards had all possible resources, what kind of program would you recommend to them? That has a major impact on bilingualism in Canada. What model would you favour in that regard?

● (1000)

[*English*]

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** We feel there is nothing better than early French immersion. There are other models that are very good. In a perfect world, with all the resources and all the promotion, if every student could go to school in this country in their second language, we would have a bilingual country. That would take a lot of time, a lot of promotion.

I feel that now there are more families in Canada who would like to put their children in immersion programs than there are programs available for them. When surveys are done asking families if they value bilingualism, the numbers are astounding: yes. Do they feel it's important for their children? Absolutely, which is why we have so many anglophones in our organization who feel it's a part of Canada, and it's vital for our children for many reasons.

We need to have immersion open to all of our students. The promotion needs to be done so parents are aware that the programs are there. That's a lot of what we do. We just feel that having French immersion available to all our students is key.

**Mr. Marc Godbout:** By early French immersion, are you talking about 100% French immersion?

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** In an ideal world.

**Mr. Marc Godbout:** That's what I want to know—in an ideal world.

My second question refers to day care. We are in the process of launching a national day care program. What are your plans as an association in that respect? We all know that the sooner you get the kids into a language program, the quicker they really learn a language. I remember visiting kids who were completely unilingual in September, and when I saw them again in January in junior kindergarten they were fully bilingual. I couldn't believe it.

You said you were working with the Commission nationale des parents francophones, which was putting in place some day care programs. Do you have any plans to start even sooner than the regulatory school year?

**Mr. James Shea:** I think it's a very valid question. The quick answer would be, if parents could get their children into learning opportunities before school I think they would value that. The reality is, as a parent organization we advocate with the boards as to where they are providing universal programs. So while we applaud the initiatives with respect to early childhood education, Canadian Parents for French in a sense hasn't taken that on as an issue for the future.

**Mr. Marc Godbout:** I suggest you should, but that's your own decision.

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** What we do in a small way is... We have newsletters in each of our provinces, and often some of our chapters have newsletters. We provide the information where there are bilingual day care centres available. We provide the information to parents for those opportunities for preschool children.

• (1005)

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Godbout:** Do I still have any time left?

**The Chair:** You have two seconds.

Mr. Desrochers, you have the floor.

**Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Marc, if you had done radio like Françoise and I, you'd know that two seconds goes by quickly. When a producer says "15 seconds", it's already over.

Ms. Comeau and Mr. Shea, I'm very impressed by your efforts to make French more well known. Is the program funded exclusively by Canadian Heritage? Do you have any other sources of revenue?

[English]

**Mr. James Shea:** Mr. Chair, from the point of view of support for Canadian Parents for French as an organization, if that was the question, we get significant core funding from Canadian Heritage, and that is our primary source of funding. We also engage in fundraising activities. We're looking for a resource diversification that may be 10% or 15%.

In addition to that, we're always looking for opportunities where we can enhance the federal agenda. Last year, for example, we received some contract funding from the Privy Council Office to allow us to do stakeholder consultation across the country. The core funding we receive is from Canadian Heritage.

[Translation]

**Mr. Odina Desrochers:** Are you approaching each of the provinces?

[English]

**Mr. James Shea:** Canadian Parents for French is established in every province and territory. We have a structure that has, for example, Canadian Parents for French Halifax. The provincial office is autonomous and also receives funding from Canadian Heritage. In some provincial cases—for example, that of Manitoba—there is some provincial money that goes to support Canadian Parents for French. In Alberta, I think there is some issue of fundraising through the lottery corporation. But the primary source of funding for our organization is federal funding through Canadian Heritage.

[Translation]

**Mr. Odina Desrochers:** I read the preface of the president, Mr. Richmond, who seemed very encouraged by the creation of the Action Plan for Official Languages. Would he speak about it in the same way today? Are you satisfied with the amounts or the orientation under the Dion Plan?

[English]

**Mr. James Shea:** In our presentation we see a significant commitment from the federal government with respect to the Dion plan. I guess what we're saying is that there may be some significant activity that's taking place between the federal government and the provinces, there may be some arrangements or some contractual arrangements, but we're not privy to the decisions. We're not being included in the process. The reason for our presentation is that we'd like to have an element of transparency so that we would know that there were significant federal dollars going into Nova Scotia to support French second language funding.

We would like to be able to track that and through our members demand that those programs be maintained, in the sense that there are moneys, significant dollars, and we're not saying they're not doing anything with them, but we would like some transparency in being able to track the process of funding, not necessarily to Canadian Parents for French, but through the ministries of education to the school boards.

[Translation]

**Mr. Odina Desrochers:** You told me that the great majority of your funding came from Canadian Heritage. Furthermore, you didn't directly answer my question on the Action Plan for Official Languages. Do you feel a bit stuck when criticizing Canadian Heritage because it takes time to resolve that and you don't have enough money?

Do you feel comfortable when you talk about Canadian Heritage?

[English]

**Mr. James Shea:** From my perspective, we're very comfortable.

Canadian Parents for French has a membership base of 21,000 parents who on an annual basis take out a membership in an organization, so the strength of our commitment comes not necessarily from the funding, but from the energy and the dedication of parents who want to ensure this mission. We get our mandate, in a sense, from the parents.

• (1010)

[Translation]

**Mr. Odina Desrochers:** All right. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Desrochers.

[*English*]

We're back to Mr. Poilievre.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Thank you for being with us today. First, I'd like to say that, if you consider that this committee is working to create a truly bilingual Canada, you are the most important witnesses we have ever received.

Bilingualism is not simply a principle that there are Francophones and Anglophones who are totally separated. The ultimate goal is to have citizens who can speak both languages. I believe immersion schools are the most important tool in achieving that goal.

I'm fully aware of the importance of immersion schools because I was born in a totally Anglophone region. My father was Francophone, but it was very hard for him to teach me French because he was the only Francophone in my life. All my friends, my entire family were Anglophones. There was no immersion school near our home; it was too far away. That's why I'm not completely bilingual today. We want a completely bilingual country, and you and your immersion schools are going to make that dream come true for us. I'm passionately interested in this question, and I thank you for being with us today.

One thing troubles me. There's a problem with the number of teachers in the Anglophone regions. How can we increase the number of qualified teachers who want to teach our children French?

[*English*]

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** One of the areas of the action plan that's outlined is the promotion of our teachers, to promote to high school students the value of teacher training, to encourage young Canadians at the high school level to consider education as an option. We've been told there are education schools that are not filling their complement. There are more spots available than there are young people who opt to fill those spots to become teachers.

That, to us, speaks to the need for promotion of it as a viable career, a great career, and again, for working with our teacher organizations to have them also do some promotion. One of the areas in several of the branches where we have seen a need for promotion is with the element of individuals in the schools who are the guidance counsellors. In some branches, they're actually trying to meet with them as a collective group.

We find that often the majority of our schools that have French immersion in them are what we call dual track—they have French and English. We see a real problem when the guidance teachers are encouraging the students in various professions and they are not really promoting the education profession, particularly for French language teachers, to the extent they could. That is one piece of information we want to get out, that we are promoting this as a career option for high school students.

•(1015)

**Mr. James Shea:** We've just undertaken a promotional campaign. We've sent information out to all of the school boards in Canada. We're targeting the guidance counsellors. We're currently supporting

television ads. You may have seen them on CBC television, for example.

[*Translation*]

“J'apprends en français parce que...”, “J'enseigne en français parce que...”.

[*English*]

So we're looking for opportunities to encourage young people to take on the teaching of French.

Anecdotally, from when I was in Halifax recently, what we're seeing is that graduates of immersion programs are coming back as teachers. So in a sense, there is another generation of young people who are coming in to reinforce it.

And I guess we're trying to promote

[*Translation*]

French-language instruction in immersion programs.

[*English*]

as a career option for young people. It's not the only option for bilingual young people, but certainly we would encourage graduates of immersion programs to return as teachers. I think that's one of the ways of doing it. We could do more. I think it's a whole sensitization as to availability, and we could have more mobility of young teachers across the country, which is a point I made earlier. We seem to have some mobility of international teacher exchanges, yet we have some difficulty in doing interprovincial teacher exchanges.

Teachers—myself being one of them—in a sense begin to career track and try to maintain tenure within an organization and not jeopardize that from the point of view of the availability of jobs, and I think that's a factor. However, the ability to travel Canada as a French second language teacher would certainly be an innovative project that we would be happy to receive funding for.

**The Chair:** I'd like to remember the members who were in our third and last round, unless the committee decides otherwise. We have Mr. Clavet and Mr. Simard, and then it will be over, unless you want to keep on going.

Monsieur Clavet.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Clavet:** Thank you.

I'd like to make a brief observation. A few tools for promoting language learning were mentioned a little earlier. I believe that the association between Canadian Parents for French and the Jeux de la Francophonie is a good initiative. That's also the case for the Commission nationale des parents francophones.

I also read on page 6 of your report that theatre is another good method for learning French or a second language that is slightly more attractive for young people. Greater use of theatre should therefore be encouraged. That's important.

What concerns me most is that, according to the 2001 census, only 14 percent of Anglophones 15 to 19 years of age were bilingual, compared to 16 percent in 1996. That must be a concern for you.

Has Canadian Parents for French found a way to address declining bilingualism among Anglophones, particularly among young people? We know that young people 15 to 19 years of age are likely to become bilingual and to respect English and French. In that sense, do these statistics trouble you?

**Mr. James Shea:** In many cases, when you're between 15 and 19 years of age, saying you can communicate in English or in French isn't cool.

[English]

And I think that's one of the issues. The point of using drama as an example is interaction; young people have an ability to participate.

We have a concern at the secondary level. Parents have made a significant choice for young people to learn French in elementary schools and, by and large, kids have no say; it's the parent who makes the decision. However, when young people get to secondary school, there are so many other things on their table that maybe the desire to continue in a French immersion program is not cool or it's not one of the things they want to do. Unfortunately, they make decisions that see a drop in....

So we have a major concern about the reduction, or the attrition, if you want, at the high school level. We would certainly like to find ways for secondary programs to allow young people to maintain courses in French immersion while pursuing secondary school certificates that allow them to get to the university of their choice.

I think it's a combination of needs. The issue of wanting to....

[Translation]

At 16 or 19, I myself didn't want to speak French. But at 30, it became a means, and I really liked speaking in English or in French.

[English]

It's an attitudinal thing as well, that you don't want to speak a second language or you don't want to be seen to be speaking a second language and therefore you don't identify.

I personally don't think there is a decrease. However, when you do a census, it's by self-identification: do you speak two languages? I think that's a function of the individual. I may elect to say I'm bilingual or I'm not.

[Translation]

Although I'm bilingual, I'm not perfectly bilingual. What does being bilingual mean? Does it mean being perfectly bilingual? My English isn't perfect.

[English]

So you work at it. But sometimes it's an issue of a perception of where you are. A census of young people who studied a second

language showed that when they were 21 they had lost interest in it, and it concluded that they're not. There may be an opportunity when they're 30, from a career perspective, for it to come back. I guess what we're hearing anecdotally is that if you can provide a base, the potential will always be there.

In our newsletter a few years ago we wrote a letter about the basketball player from Vancouver who was great in basketball but wasn't so great in French. However, he got a scholarship to go study in France. He realized that he had the base. He ended up being the negotiator for the basketball team that was established in France, and by virtue of his experience, all of his French came back.

So it's experience. The reality in Canada is that we want to give people a variety of experiences so that they can make choices later on—myself included.

• (1020)

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Clavet:** Has there been a change in the deeper motivations leading Anglophones to learn French between your generation and the younger generation who is learning it now? A big reason used to be to acquire culture. Today isn't it more for job promotion chances? Do you sense a change in the deeper motivation to learn a second language?

[English]

**Mr. James Shea:** I think it varies.

[Translation]

You concluded that I'm an Anglophone who learned French. Perhaps I'm a Francophone who lost his French and became an Anglophone. They exist.

[English]

So it's a function of experience, and I think everybody around the table would all have a different experience. The reality is that

[Translation]

Anglophones should be encouraged to communicate in French, even if our French isn't perfect. Mine isn't, but I decided to set an example by doing television in French.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Clavet. One final speaker, Mr. Simard.

**Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to welcome our guests.

I'd like to ask you about 15 questions, but I'm going to try to sum them up in three.

First, I'd like to make a comment. In Manitoba, there are about 50,000 native Francophones. However, as a result of immersion classes, there are 110,000 persons who speak French. This situation has thus created a critical mass for Francophonie in our province, which helps us, for example, with regard to government financial support. That's very important for Francophonie in general.

One of our concerns is the retention rate. We invest in training young people who study in immersion for about 12 years, but unfortunately drop out later on. The Jeux de la Francophonie will be held in Saint-Boniface this year. So we've invited young francophiles to take part, which will create opportunities to speak French and forge friendships that may last for some time. That's outside the education framework, but I think it's important for society as a whole.

In Alberta last year, parents waited outside schools an entire night to register their children in immersion programs. That's a bit like a Rolling Stones concert; it makes no sense. It's encouraging on the one hand, but it's discouraging to see that parents have to spend an entire night outside schools in order to register their children. Will the Canadian Heritage funds that will be invested, or that have already been invested, in the program solve this problem?

• (1025)

[English]

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** We're hoping it will solve the problem. What we want to see is that there will no longer be people lining up overnight—and it doesn't just happen in Alberta. We no longer want to see names drawn out of a lottery to see who will be the group of students.

We have a situation in British Columbia where, if you already have one child in, then the sibling doesn't have to put his name in the lottery system. So if it's your first child....

There are all these issues, which we should be moving past. Will the funding help? We're hoping. That's exactly what we're hoping to see: that the funding will enable more resources to be put in, so that we have the teacher capacity to admit every student who wants to be in these programs.

At the same time, we're not absolutely sure it is simply a funding issue, because there is no clear transparency about what the funds are used for now.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** That goes right to my point, in fact. If we don't know that the provinces are investing those funds directly for immersion programs, how do we know it will improve the situation? Do the provinces match, for instance, or is there a ratio we can count on? For instance, if the federal government invests a certain amount in immersion, does the government match three to one? Do we know? Is there a ratio there that we would know about?

**Mr. James Shea:** That's the point we're making: we don't know.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** We don't know?

**Mr. James Shea:** We don't know.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** As governments do we know it?

**Mr. James Shea:** We believe you do.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** But it seems to me that in the education sector we wouldn't know that provinces invest so much in immersion.

That is not known by you people?

**Mr. James Shea:** No. From a general perspective what we're saying is that if funds are directed toward immersion programs, we

want to ensure they're going toward immersion programs and not into the—

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** —the black hole of education.

**Mr. James Shea:** —the black hole of school boards. Exactly.

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** There is also another issue. If you have a class of 27 students and the teacher speaks French, it means they cost more than the teacher who speaks English. I don't think so. So there is that issue.

[Translation]

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** As regards the new agreements we're going to sign, there absolutely have to be accountability criteria. We should also determine the funds we want to invest, as well as measurable results.

[English]

**Mr. James Shea:** The action plan called for annual reports.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Yes.

**Mr. James Shea:** We haven't seen any.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Okay. That's a problem.

[Translation]

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Simard.

We have time to do another round, so those who want to do so may ask a brief final question.

Mr. Vellacott, you have the floor.

[English]

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** I guess you wouldn't see this here, but in our briefing notes I have a chart, or a graph, on page 4, called "Table 2: Department of Canadian Heritage support for FSL, core French and French immersion programs, 1985 to 2003 (Canada, excluding Quebec)". On the funding issue there, I find it's very interesting, as I look over the dates going back to 1985-86, right up to the present, in terms of the funding amounts. I accept the fact that we need to know, and there needs to be accountability as to where that money is going.

For your information here, starting back.... Probably the low point, in terms of funding, has been in 1996-97. You'll probably guess my party affiliation by the comments I make now. During all the years of the Conservative regime, starting in 1987-88 on, it increased from \$5 million all the way up to \$70 million in 1991-92. Then, under the Liberal government, starting in 1992-93 on, it's been a straight slide down, to the low point of \$40 million in 1996-97. So we're going from a high point, \$70 million, during the Conservative government in 1991-92, down to a low point of \$40 million in 1996-97.

Even aside from knowing where all this money goes—and I certainly commend that, as my colleague Raymond pointed out, and I think we all agree on that—now we're just hovering slightly above \$40 million. When you have a drop from \$70 million during the Conservative regime down to \$40 million, or just over \$40 million now, I would ask you how big a factor that is. How big a factor is that drop in funding, in terms of support for French second language?

•(1030)

**Mr. James Shea:** I can't comment on the statistics you're providing, because we would have to look at them.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** It's from the Department of Canadian Heritage. It's a program they do—their annual report.

**Mr. James Shea:** The reality is there has been, over the course of time, a significant federal contribution to go across the country to establish French first language school boards and to provide support for French second language. We're not saying dollars aren't going out there. We're saying that within the context of the action plan, which calls for parents to be involved in the process, we would like to have a place where, as decisions are being made, we could know and we could be in a position to ask how many dollars are going, what provinces they are going to, and what are they going for, so that we could then provide that information to the school boards—whether Halifax or Labrador—and tell them they should hold their school board accountable for these federal dollars coming in to support French as a second language.

That's the tracking ability we, as a parent advocacy group, would like to have—and to be able to get into some of the detail of some of the services.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** If you had that accountability, that tracking and so on, would you be in favour of an increase taking it back up to the Conservative Party levels of 1990-91? If you had that accountability mechanism or regime, would you be supportive of an increase by 80%, back up to those levels of 1991-92, and think it a good thing?

**Mr. James Shea:** We believe significant innovative changes could take place. We believe that as there are action plans, there could be other strategies. There could be significant training given to core basic French teachers. There could be significant moneys go out to provide retraining for teachers, because in some cases what we're doing isn't working, so we have to find other innovative ways. We would like to see some money go towards some pilot projects—from the point of view of an intensive French option—supporting other opportunities to find other ways of looking at it, because in some cases, 45 minutes a day just isn't working, so you have to look at a variety of other ways of doing it. To allow school boards to have innovation, you're going to need an input of financial resources.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** It's a both and, obviously.

**Mr. James Shea:** Sure. The reality, the bottom line, is if there were going to be an increase in funding, we would applaud it.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** If there were accountability for it, of course.

**Mr. James Shea:** Absolutely, yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Any other quick last comments?

Monsieur Godbout.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Godbout:** I'll be brief, Mr. Chairman. I didn't have enough time earlier. So I'm going to finish.

Teaching and educational resources are a big problem outside Quebec. Since this is a big problem for the French-language school boards, it must also be a problem for immersion programs. The biggest production and distribution centre is here in Ottawa, and it's called the Centre franco-ontarien des ressources pédagogiques. Do you have any ties with that centre, which would broaden its mandate and give you access to the teaching resources your teachers no doubt need and, like the French-language schools, have a great deal of trouble getting? Do you have any plans for teaching resources? That's my question.

[*English*]

**Mr. James Shea:** You know there is a very specific teacher domain here, and we work in partnership with the ACPI, the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers, and the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers. We have signed partnerships with them and we meet monthly on a regular basis. Whatever resource issues that are within the teacher domain, we put ourselves in a position of supporting their requests. We encourage innovative teaching, but we are not the innovative teachers. So we work with the significant teacher organizations to ensure they have the availability of resources.

The reality is that there could be significantly more resources made available to French second language teachers across the country, ideally, and it would be great if we had other resource centres.

•(1035)

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** As I've mentioned before, when you go across Canada there are resource centres in various provinces that are accessible to both French first language and French second language people, but I don't believe there's a lot of dialogue. One of the roles we can play at CPF is to say that in Manitoba they have this great resource centre.... Especially now that things are on line, it's much easier to access information. But there's very little that seems to be able to flow across the country.

**Mr. Marc Godbout:** They would be in favour of such partnerships.

**Ms. Trudy Comeau:** Absolutely, yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Godbout.

Thanks to all of you, merci beaucoup, for coming today and taking the time to answer all our questions.

[*Translation*]

This testimony is very important and will assist us greatly in preparing our report. We congratulate you on everything you're doing.

We were supposed to meet again on Tuesday. We thought we'd be hearing from Mr. Bélanger, but that's not possible. We've reached two other organizations, but haven't yet received confirmation. The Tuesday meeting may be postponed and we may be hearing from the Commissioner of Official Languages, Ms. Adam, on Thursday. It's possible, however, that we will receive confirmation from Health

Canada for Tuesday. You'll know by the weekend, so between now and tomorrow.

[*English*]

Once again, thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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