



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Official Languages

LANG • NUMBER 042 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, September 29, 2005

—
Chair

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez

All parliamentary publications are available on the
"Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire" at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Standing Committee on Official Languages

Thursday, September 29, 2005

• (0905)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.)): Good morning everyone. We are going to begin immediately. This morning, we are very pressed for time. We will be hearing from two witnesses; therefore, the meeting will be split in two.

As you know, two motions have also been referred to us and they were duly tabled the day before yesterday. The 48-hour notice was complied with, which means that we will debate these motions today. Therefore, I would suggest that we hear immediately from Ms. Cardinal until 9:55 a.m., followed immediately by Mr. Lachapelle from Statistics Canada until 9:45 a.m. We will have to cut back a little on the time previously set aside. The last 15 minutes will be reserved for debate on the motions tabled. Is this agreeable?

It has been some time since we last saw one another, at least 15 or 16 hours. Welcome Ms. Cardinal and Mr. Normand. It is a pleasure to have you here. Ms. Cardinal, you now have the floor for a few minutes. Afterwards, we will move to a round of questions.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal (Professor, School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa): Thank you.

Mr. Chair, members, distinguished guests, thank you for inviting me here to share my thoughts with you on Bill S-3. I'm delighted, even more so because the stakes raised in this bill are of the utmost importance for the future of francophone communities. I would also like to introduce you to Mr. Martin Normand, my research assistant. He's a student at the University of Ottawa School of Political Studies and has worked under my direction.

I wish to share with you my analysis of Bill S-3. However, in contrast to what some of my legal colleagues, who have appeared before you ever since your hearings started, I wish to put the bill into context. I have prepared a document that I have sent to Mr. D'Amore. It will be translated into English very soon and distributed to you in a few days. I would also be pleased to elaborate on my views outside of this forum if you wish.

My point is that part VII was developed with a view to national reconciliation which has failed. In fact, I would argue that making part VII justiciable would only partially resolve the difficulties stemming from its application. I would also argue that the government must demonstrate a stronger commitment to official languages. My presentation is based on the results of a research based on the various testimonies made before the special legislative committee studied study Bill C-72 in 1987-1988, as well as the testimony heard by the Joint Standing Committee on Official

Languages when the bill was being considered in 1987, as well as results of significant studies made on part VII. The study that we conducted for our testimony today has essentially archival value.

I will quickly go over my three-part presentation. In fact, my document is much longer and contains many more details. I will simply call to your attention the highlights of the political context in which part VII was adopted. Following that, I will mention the reasons that led to the tabling of Bill S-3, and lastly, I will talk about the need to adopt a political and administrative approach with respect to enhancing the vitality and development of official language minorities.

In order to put things in context, allow me to remind you of the following. On June 25, 1987, the Minister of Justice, Ray Hnatyshyn, tabled Bill C-72 on official languages, which contains part VII. The minister believed that the bill was a reflection of the government's commitment to linguistic duality, a characteristic he considered unique and vital to Canadian identity. He indicated that the bill was developed in the spirit of national unity and reconciliation in order to realize the mutual commitment of both orders of government towards official language communities, as required in the Meech Lake Accord. At the time, the ministers responsible for official languages, Mr. David Crombie and Mr. Robert de Cotret, worked together in a true atmosphere of national reconciliation and even wanted to establish a Canadian council on official languages. For his part, the Prime Minister of the country, Mr. Brian Mulroney, wrote the following in a letter addressed to his cabinet colleagues:

[...] the government is committed to fostering the enhancement and assisting the development of francophone and anglophone minorities in Canada. Therefore, it is essential that all departments and federal organizations contribute to developing and enhancing the vitality of minority communities and that they take into account communities' needs and interests when developing policies and implementing government programs.

In fact, very early on, the Government of Quebec had concerns over the outcomes of part VII. According to Mr. Pierre Martel, who was president of the Conseil de la langue française, the French-language council at the time, the bill had failed to mention a fundamental fact, that is "in Canada, French is the language of the minority" and "throughout the country, French is the language that should be protected."

In the month of July that same year, Mr. Gil Rémillard and Mr. Jacques Parizeau expressed their fear in the following terms: "that Bill C-72 would open the door to federal government intrusion in Quebec's linguistic area of jurisdiction."

But Lucien Bouchard — who was Secretary of State at the time — answered by declaring that there was no question of allowing the bill to be applied in an asymmetrical fashion.

The legislation was enacted on September 15. On September 28, 1988, before the Standing Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on Official Languages, Mr. Bouchard explained that the new legislation was an essential, though not unique, tool in the government's initiative to promote official languages. He explained that the legislation was needed partly as a result of the Meach Lake Accord, in which the Prime Minister and premiers recognized the dualistic nature of Canadian society. He also stated that negotiations with other orders of government were underway, with a view to fulfilling the commitments set out in part VII.

In brief, part VII and the Meach Lake Accord were designed to work together. Each seems difficult to understand without the other. The Meach Lake Accord was never passed, however, and we are still waiting for some genuine reconciliation between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

In 2003, the Action Plan on Official Languages attested to the Canadian government's desire to once again make official languages a priority of the Canadian national project. However, since the failure of the Meach Lake Accord, we have seen an imbalance in the area of official languages. The Supreme Court has recognized Quebec's special role in promoting French. However, if the Prime Minister of Canada does not make a specific commitment to put official languages at the core of a genuine attempt at national reconciliation, part VII will never be unanimously accepted and will never properly serve the minorities which it was designed to help.

Without such action, how can Bill S-3 contribute to closing the gap? That is what I asked myself?

According to the records — and you may find this surprising — when committees studied the bill before it was passed, no questions were ever put on part VII. At the time, only Jean-Robert Gauthier asked Minister Hnatyshyn about the non-justiciable nature of part VII. The minister responded that it was important for members to understand that part VII was designed to provide encouragement, not orders, and that the language in which it was drafted reflected this. The then Official Languages Commissioner, D'Iberville Fortier, also commented on part VII, though no one on the committee asked him to explain his statements.

Yvon Fontaine, then President of the Fédération des francophones hors Québec, believed that part VII contained hugely innovative language which went beyond what there had been to date. Nonetheless, he pointed out the weaknesses of part VII, indicating that they lay primarily in the mechanisms provided to implement the federal government's commitment to protect official language minorities and help them develop. He said that those mechanisms were inadequate, particularly since government departments were not required to explicitly affirm their obligation to participate in the effort. He added that departments should be more involved. In other words, at the time no one really said anything about making part VII justiciable.

The House of Commons passed the five sections in part VII without discussing them in depth. Thus, the articles in the final

version of the Act are identical to those in the original bill, C-72. Once they were passed, when Mr. Bouchard's attention was drawn to the fact that part VII was declaratory rather than mandatory, he explained that there was no need of regulations to ensure that part VII be applied.

He said that he counted on the committee — your committee — to ensure that part VII would be complied with. In a sense, he delegated some of his responsibilities to the committee. Rather than having to manage a non-binding part of the act, all he had to do was wait for the reports and read them with care.

Senator Gauthier, however, does want section 41 to be binding in order to avoid any ambiguity. In his view, this was the original intent of Parliament.

• (0910)

However, in *Canada (Commissioner of Official Languages) v. Canada (Department of Justice)*, the Attorney General of Canada stated, and I quote:

The respondent contends that nowhere in part VII of the Official Languages Act is there any duty imposed on the federal government to always take those measures that most enhance the vitality and support the development of minority communities or best advance both official languages, or any duty to systematically hold public consultations. That commitment is essentially political in nature.

We agree with that statement. We believe that the official languages file must be shepherded at the highest levels, since the vitality and development of official language minorities are an essential condition to achieving national reconciliation.

Since the stakes are so high, the Prime Minister and the Privy Council must show unrelenting leadership in this area. They must ensure that those responsible for the implementation of part VII receive the necessary resources to carry out their work, and that the committees which will be created be given enough power to bring about real improvement.

I'm almost done.

As it now stands, there are about 40 advisory committees or bodies which are seeking input from official language minorities and which are attempting to involve them in the process of official languages governance.

In the area of federal-provincial relations, more and more important initiatives are being taken in keeping with the spirit of part VII.

In short, the government is beginning to give itself the means to see that official languages minorities flourish and grow. But it must adopt more rigorous linguistic planning mechanisms. It must evaluate more systematically the effectiveness of its interventions in the area of community development. Since French is the minority language in Canada, the government must do more to try to bring together francophone minorities and Quebec, and give Quebec a greater role in the development of strategies to help those communities grow.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that this is the first time we are witnessing such a serious debate about part VII in 17 years. Thanks to Bill S-3, this debate is finally happening. However, unfortunately, this debate is happening at a time when the main ingredient to truly implement part VII is not on the table anymore. The Meach Lake Accord was not adopted, and we are still waiting for a true reconciliation between Quebec and the rest of Canada. It is partly for this reason that the Prime Minister has a particular responsibility for official languages, and in particular too for the growth and development of official language minorities.

The reason a sustained approach, supported by the Prime Minister, is a good idea is because it forces everyone to take on their responsibility and contribute to the growth and development of official languages minorities. We feel that it is important to strengthen this approach from a political and administrative point of view by insisting that the Prime Minister and the Privy Council be more committed to part VII, rather than making it legally binding.

Bill S-3 is the outcome of a great deal of work on the part of senator Gauthier, for whom I have the greatest respect. However, I think it would be more useful for the government to strive for more efficient coordination of part VII, while respecting federalism, but also in the true spirit of national reconciliation, which would include Quebec. This type of commitment is political. No court will be able to do what government should do in the area of official languages.

Thank you for your attention.

• (0915)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Cardinal.

As mentioned previously, we will go until 9:55, which will give us about 35 minutes. We will go around the table. You each have five minutes.

Mr. Lauzon, please proceed.

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

Ms. Cardinal and Mr. Normand, welcome.

You have given us many facts, but I would like to know your opinion. If we were to pass Bill S-3, could you tell us what the situation of official languages would be in five years? What impact would Bill S-3 have on the official languages situation?

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: You asked two questions. You would like to know what the official languages situation would be in five years if Bill S-3 were passed. Is that correct?

Mr. Guy Lauzon: That is correct.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: I thought I had heard you ask another question as well.

My opinion is based on the facts, since in my view an opinion should always be well founded. We can see what the government is doing to help official language minorities develop. We can also read the reports written by the official languages commissioner, particularly the first one, in which he said that there was resistance within the federal government to making these provisions justifiable.

So, when we look at the work done on the one hand and at the sort of statement on the other hand, my view is that making part VII

binding would hinder the advancement of official languages within the federal government. In my view, people don't like knowing that there is a sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. In all the documents we see, it is quite clear that the underlying concept for part VII was a political commitment.

In my view, making part VII legally binding would contribute to a shedding of political responsibility, as it were. Part VII is not like the rest of the Act; it applies to all of Canada. Thus, the political dimension must be taken into account.

In 1991, Michel Bastarache conducted a study on the judicial scope of part VII. The study identified a number of difficulties. For example, Mr. Bastarache said that part VII could give rise to a number of problems with overlapping responsibilities among the various levels of government. At the time, he considered this a very significant problem. Thus, by making part VII justiciable, we open the door to this kind of problem.

Mr. Bastarache also saw difficulties with the wording of section 41, between the French version and the English version. In fact, the phrase "is committed" is not as strong as the term "engagement". Thus, he said that the bill as such did contain an obligation to execute, an obligation to take positive action. In other words, there is a political commitment to take action.

In my view, this should be a top priority issue. It should be an issue dealt with by the Prime Minister in many cases, because there is this merger between the binding aspect and the political commitment.

• (0920)

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

Ms. Brunelle.

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Good morning, Ms. Cardinal. In your view, should part VII be a lever to move the official language issue in Canada forward, particularly when it comes to French, which must be protected? Should the lever rest on strong political will? In my view, the political will might have been somewhat lacking. None of this is easy, obviously.

When you say that the government should be coordinating part VII more and more broadly, how would this be done in practice? Have you thought about it?

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: Thank you for your question, Ms. Brunelle. In fact, the term "lever" is an essential one. I am thinking about the thought process now underway on part VII.

When we consult the records for the period, we see that part VII is a means to an end. Mr. Bouchard said at the time that it was one instrument, and that there could be others. There was some talk of establishing a Canadian council of official language minorities. At the time, there was also some talk of organizing a special constitutional conference on the application of part VII once the Meach Lake Accord was passed. Thus, part VII was a means to an end. It is a lever, and it is not limiting. The government can use it to do more.

With regard to coordination, I should say that there is coordination now. However, the departments involved in that coordination—Canadian Heritage, Treasury Board and Justice—all have portfolios. The Privy Council has played a more significant role in coordinating Official languages. In fact, the Privy Council spends its time coordinating a great number of things. It has no specific portfolio, except coordination.

In view of the current situation, I believe that the Privy Council should play a stronger coordinating role. Its role is not set out in the Official Languages Act. Other departments are mentioned as having specific responsibilities, but the Act does not need to specify the Privy Council's role because the Privy Council inherently has that role. The action plan is very clear on this. In my view, the Privy Council should be responsible for taking a stronger leadership role and promoting coordination.

The Official Languages infrastructure is incredible. There are 40 committees, and my research team is checking on them. There are advisory bodies on everything, or almost everything, in many areas. This means we have to ensure that the machine is properly oiled so that all its parts work well.

I believe that it is up to you to ensure that everything works well. It is up to you to ask the Privy Council questions, and to tell the Privy Council that it must fulfill its role as coordinator in the best possible interest of official language minorities.

● (0925)

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Thank you.

The Chair: Are you done, Ms. Brunelle? Thank you.

Mr. Godin.

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

Good morning, Ms. Cardinal.

First of all, I do not agree with you at all. It's up to the government to have the political will it does not have. What do we do when the government does not have the political will.

Now, it is 2005. According to Michel Doucet, a professor at the University of Moncton, the Act is binding but not with the government's amendments. Francophone communities in Canada say that it is mandatory. They want it to be mandatory, because having it declaratory brought us to where we are today. I am not going to spend too long on this, because we do not have much time.

Let's take those who look for jobs using the Canada Job Bank. If you are a welder and are looking for a job on this federal web site, you will see that two positions are available in Ontario. The company in question is seeking—and I will read this in French because the French translation is so bad—

[...] de candidats avec coeur de flox plat ou mig préférence donnée. Les personnes intéressées doivent être le quart de travail flexible pour que la compagnie n'a pas de poste alternant. Plus important encore, les candidats doivent démontrer la bonne connaissance de soude, de symboles, la grande gratitude, la volonté d'apprendre.

This is an insult to Francophones. that is where we're at in 2005! So where is this political will?

But take New Brunswick as an example. The boundary dispute was won before the courts so that a francophone community would not be part of an anglophone community. This case was not won because of the government's political will, or because of any commissions. Not at all.

In the case of the food inspectors, the Association des municipalités francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick went to court and won. The case then was thrown out by the Appeal Court and is now before the Supreme Court. Francophone communities in Canada say that the legislation needs more teeth so that the issue can finally be settled.

That said, I would like to hear your comments because unfortunately I don't believe in this political will. The majority of Canada's population is anglophone. There are over 22 million anglophones in Canada, and only ten million or so francophones. The political will is not there.

You say that monitoring the situation is our responsibility. It's all very well to monitor and complain, but now after Stéphane Dion has been given over \$700 million to promote the French language or minority languages in Canada, we are still seeing cases like the one I just mentioned.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Many of the aspects that you mentioned do not come under part VII. I would like to clarify one thing: I did not say that I was opposed to using the courts to promote official languages. I said that I was against the use of court action under part VII. I think that is very different. There have been a number of cases where francophones in English Canadian provinces have launched proceedings. That dates back to the XIX century, and far be it from me to prevent this action or to say that it is not justified. There are times in life where court action is justified.

What I am saying is that in my opinion, the objective will not be met using court action under part VII. You say that \$700 million have been invested. That is nothing. I would much rather hear you say that more needs to be invested in official languages. Seven hundred million dollars divided by five, then divided by 12, does not represent very much money per month for official languages.

Mr. Yvon Godin: So you agree that there is no political will.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: That is not what I am saying. I am saying that political will must exist, and that more must be done. I am telling you that it is your responsibility to demand that the government, the Prime Minister, make the official languages file his personal file and that it be on his agenda every day. That is my answer to your question.

●(0930)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chairman, if after all of this time, be it under the Conservatives or the Liberals, official languages has not become the main issue, the fact remains that it is because of the courts that francophone minorities have, in some cases, been successful. The government has subsequently taken steps. It is when the government has been pushed into action that it has really taken action. The same thing has happened with Aboriginals. The government did not take action until the Aboriginal people took the Marshall case to court and won. They obtained timber cutting and fishing rights. Sometimes, the courts must decide.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: But I do not disagree!

Mr. Yvon Godin: In this case, the provision is only declaratory, and that gets us no where.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin. I must interrupt you.

We will complete the first round with Mr. D'Amours.

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

Thank you, Ms. Cardinal.

You are the first witness to tell us that what we want to do is virtually useless. I am from New Brunswick. To understand the reality of francophones outside Quebec, you must live among them. For my colleague from Manitoba, I think it is even worse. Whereas, despite everything, we make up one third of the population. They only represent 4 p. 100. You must be there to understand our situation and the difficulties that we face every day in New Brunswick, despite the fact that many of our fellow citizens are French speaking.

I think that the bill, if it is well drafted, should limit court action. It is when a bill is not well drafted that we end up before the courts and proceedings are launched every day. Our objective may be to ensure that the way that the bill is drafted enables minorities to develop. I am referring both to francophones outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec. So we understand each other. The anglophone minority in Quebec is not just in Montreal. There are anglophones in rural regions in Quebec. I am convinced that it is not always easy for them to receive services in their language.

There is a willingness to make progress today, but imagine a situation 10 years down the road with a government that does not see things the way you are presenting them. If this government were not interested in promoting official languages, in what kind of a situation would a committee like ours, that can bring pressure to bear, put official language minorities? We want to make progress on an issue to improve — and I am going to use the word “guarantee” — the future of minorities in this country. We are attempting to take action to prevent future problems, but in your presentation you give me the impression that according to you, instead of doing that, we should bring pressure to bear and hope to gain something.

I would like to hear your comments on that.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: You would like me to comment on your comment. I'm not saying that you should hope to get something, I'm just proposing a political and administrative approach to the official languages question.

You stated that a good bill does not give rise to litigation. I completely agree, but it is up to you to pass the bill. You asked me an opinion in my capacity as an expert in political science, and I have told you that from the point of view of a political scientist and an expert in public administration, the bill does not meet the needs nor the expectations contained in part VII, which requires rigorous linguistic planning.

Ask the people around you where they see rigorous linguistic planning on the part of the federal government. There hasn't been any in 30 years. Making part VII justiciable won't change anything. There has to be pressure to bring about rigorous linguistic planning.

You said that nothing has been done, and Mr. Godin said so as well. I believe that in 1987-1988, the Conservatives included part VII in the act when they amended the Official Languages Act. That was progress. Then, when the Liberals took power in 1993, there was pressure to go ahead with part VII.

It wasn't the courts which brought about Part VII. I was part of a working group under the direction of Yvon Fontaine, who worked for Treasury Board at the time, and who evaluated the situation and the impact of government change on official languages.

There are instruments to apply pressure. I'm telling you to play your role to an even greater degree. It's not only a question of hope. You know as well as I do that politics are a determining factor and lie at the heart of this situation.

Furthermore, I feel you take it for granted that the courts will automatically agree with your position. But the courts can choose not to hear your cases or those brought forth by minorities. When the Charter was adopted, its provisions were interpreted in a wide and generous manner. But that does not mean that courts will always interpret the provisions of the Charter that way.

So, what I'm saying...

●(0935)

The Chair: I apologize for interrupting, but we are running out of time. We will begin our second and last round of questions.

Mr. Poilievre.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): Thank you for being here. I would like to come back to the question I put to the Minister of Justice yesterday. In our party, we generally believe that the best way to promote bilingualism is through education and by reaching out to young people. There are many indications which show that if people learn a second language when they are young, it's easier for them to become truly bilingual.

What worries me about Bill S-3 is the fact that we will spend a lot of money on litigation and lawyers fees, which is not really necessary. The government will become more vulnerable to litigation, which will cost a lot of money.

I think that the money would be better invested in education, in immersion schools and in francophone schools. It's also clear that the former Conservative government spent twice as much on education, immersion and francophone schools. If it was up to me, I would spend money on education, and not on lawyers fees.

Could you comment on that point?

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: Thank you, Mr. Poilievre.

First of all, the official languages file is not expensive for the government. Investing in official languages in Canada is worthwhile.

Secondly, I remind you, as I did senator Gauthier, that there are two official languages in Canada: English and French. The Constitution does not state that Canada is a bilingual country. However, there is a willingness to promote bilingualism among young people, especially young anglophones. That is what we see in the Official Languages Action Plan.

However, the aim of Part VII is primarily to enhance the vitality and the development of official language minorities. So its purpose is not to "bilingualize" Canadian society, although one could say that Section 43 contains an objective like that.

My concern is seeing how we can better promote the development and enhance the vitality of official language minority communities, especially francophone communities outside Quebec, since French is the minority language in Canada.

We must focus our attention on the community development objective, which is fundamental, because if there are no francophone communities, there will be no more bilingualism. A bilingualism policy must be built on communities.

In fact, the action plan has two objectives: increasing bilingualism among young anglophones, and encouraging young francophones to learn their mother tongue.

When the Official Languages Action Plan was designed, did anyone ask the people working on these objectives in education if they had studied school curriculums to see who was learning French in English schools and who was enrolled in immersion programs? That is an example of a linguistic policy that could require rigorous planning on the part of the federal government in its cooperation with the provinces. Perhaps that took place.

Lastly, that kind of data must be made public so that we can fully understand the impact of a policy. To my mind, that is not done often enough at the federal government level. You could go to greater lengths to understand the procedure involved in setting objectives like that, what research and what work must be done. I think that would be absolutely essential.

• (0940)

The Chair: Thank, Mr. Poilievre.

Ms. Boivin.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to tell my friend, Mr. Poilievre, that it is unfortunate that party no longer exists, but at any rate....

Having said that, I understand the point you are raising. In fact, it is somewhat consistent with parts of what I have been saying.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: This is incredible! She mentions that now, when it is impossible for me to reply.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: I understand your remarks, that there must be political will as the highest level. Perhaps it is precisely because some have the feeling that political will does not exist that senator Jean-Robert Gauthier made this bill a life-long mission. He tried to

amend the Official Languages Act, to add something solid and concrete, to give the bill some teeth. That led to his Bill S-3.

However, I have some reservations about your recommendation to not have court action. In an ideal world and with magical thinking, this high level political will would probably enable us to avoid court action. We would simply do what had to be done. In short, that is sort of what you are saying. However, without conditions like that, would court action not be fully warranted? This is perhaps the lawyer in me coming out, but I think that in cases where people do not do what they are supposed to do, we must unfortunately use the courts. That may be what has to be done so that the Privy Council, the Prime Minister and the ministers responsible for enforcing the Official Languages Act understand that promoting and developing both official languages in the country are important and that they must take responsibility for that.

I am not saying that this would not come at certain costs, but if we believe in bilingualism, we must put our money where our mouths are. In an ideal world and if we make this bill into a good piece of legislation, as my colleague Mr. D'amours said earlier, there will not perhaps be any problems, and court action under Part VII maybe non-existent. I am talking here about my own utopia, that will probably not exist in my lifetime. But we can be hopeful.

I am also trying to understand a contradictory aspect of your remarks. I have the impression that you expect a lot of politicians. But from what I have seen in my first year as a member of Parliament, things do not move as quickly as we would them to. I must say that the courts are much quicker in this regard. So I could return to my former profession. I know that is what you are all hoping for, but do not think that I will go back to my practice that quickly!

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: There is a glimmer of hope....

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Ms. Cardinal, I would also like to know if, in your opinion, Bill S-3 will weaken the Quebec Charter of the French Language.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: You have commented on politicians, and you are a politician, I am not. I study them. If you are disillusioned about your political circle, that illustrates, to my mind, what many political scientists say: There is a loss of quality at the political level. It is up to you to ensure that quality in politics be on the agenda.

Francophones do not want to go before the courts. They have spent several years there recently ensuring that Section 23 apply to the provinces. The Montfort case mobilized extraordinary energy, and I think that minority communities are running out of steam when it comes to legal issues. If you adopt your bill and you accept the notion of court action, I do not know if minorities will take advantage of that opportunity to go to court. The current context is not favourable. A framework court of political opportunity is always required in cases like that, and I do not think that the current situation lends itself to that. As for the minorities, I wonder if they will accept the idea of court action. Moreover, there is the link that joins them to senator Gauthier, whom no one wants to displease. To date, you have only heard legal experts. I think that I am the only witness to appear so far who has not been a legal expert. It would perhaps be your interest to meet with people who are not legal experts, so that you hear other points of view.

My experience and my work on Official Language minorities are such that I see communities that are willing to move forward and to ensure that minority's points of view are heard. They want to move projects forward, with rigorous linguistic planning, and see the Privy Council display some leadership. Of course, if we were to ask these people if they want an opportunity for court action, they will say yes, because for them it represents an additional tool. As for me, as a political scientist, I do not know if the objective will be met.

• (0945)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: I do not know if I have any time left.

The Chair: You have 10 seconds left.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Will Bill S-3 weaken the Charter of the French Language, yes or no?

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: I think that it will open up a Pandora's box.

The Chair: Moving on to Mr. Côté.

Mr. Guy Côté (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First, Ms. Cardinal, I would like to thank you for the background information you have given us on the *Official Languages Act*, and especially on Bill S-3. It refreshed my memory.

If I can just sum up what you said, without political will or effective government planning, this bill would open the door to all manner of interpretations of this legislation, and as a result, to much litigation. Am I beating up the wrong path?

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: Should Part VII become justiciable, that may indeed be the case; but if it does not, political will and a rigorous planning will be necessary. In other countries currently enjoying a major revitalization of a particular language, the underpinnings of solid language planning are clearly present.

In Canada, since the 2003 action plan, the resources are starting to be made available to ensure that that happens. And that is what is needed: encouragement, careful consideration and great interest in detail, and all this needs to be carried out systematically. In my opinion, the current approach is not rigorous enough.

Mr. Guy Côté: You clearly explained that French is the minority language in Canada.

Let me come back to Quebec's Charter of the French Language. In its current form, it is quite clear that paragraph 43(1) on enforcement includes measures to ensure equality of status between both official languages. You spoke earlier of a Pandora's box. Is this paragraph itself not an example of a Pandora's box? Francophone communities' desire to take legal action may indeed be flagging, while Quebec's anglophone minority unfortunately seems to be adopting this method more or less as the status quo.

Will this not simply give them another tool to challenge both Bill 101 and the Charter of the French Language?

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: Well first, that is not the case for the entire anglophone minority in Quebec. We are talking mainly about a number of individuals historically associated with Alliance Québec. In fact, other groups in Quebec just so happen to be in favour of language planning. These minorities, whether they are on the North Shore, in the Gaspé, or in Estrie are already working with the government on a number of committees. I think this is a good approach. If you want to encourage this approach, then do not open up yet another door to legal action.

Need I remind you that the strain currently being felt by minority communities is probably the result of inadequate funding. Seven hundred million dollars over five years for official languages just is not enough.

If you really want to have an impact, you also need to make sure that the various committees responsible for the development and vitality of minority official language communities have the authority they need to promote official languages and further develop these communities. The next step is to ensure that the right people with the right amount of authority are sitting on these committees. They should be comprised of deputy ministers, there are already committees made up of deputy ministers in some areas. There should also be deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers, people that have the Prime Minister's ear. The committee also needs a clerk who is capable of talking to the Prime Minister about the importance of official languages issue. The whole political apparatus needs to be more aware.

• (0950)

Mr. Guy Côté: At the end of the day, there would be no need to amend the legislation if it were adequately applied.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: Yes, that is what I think.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Côté.

We will conclude with Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: By the way, it is true that the Progressive Conservative Party no longer exists. It is now the Conservative Party of Canada. It is not the same party.

Earlier, you talked about making politicians and government more aware. But as it happens, politicians want to pass legislation. Are you simply telling us the Senate was acting only out of sympathy for Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier? Or that the Senate does not know what it is doing? That the senators sitting on the committee decided that they felt sorry for Senator Gauthier and that they would pass Bill S-3 before he retired? He has sat with us in the past on the joint official languages committee. He has fought hard since day one.

It is our duty as politicians to pass legislation. It is not all about putting pressure on the government. If that were all we were here to do, I would be better off at home. But I am here to get bills passed and to represent communities and their people. Otherwise, it is just like saying that you would like the government to establish a hundred-kilometre speed limit on highway 20, without there being a law. People would drive at 130 kilometres an hour, and come back saying that the government does not have the political power to force them to drive 100 kilometres an hour. Legislation is what is needed. We are in a Parliament here.

We are studying Bill S-3 today because things have not been working the way they should for years. Earlier, you gave an example. You put aside Bill S-3 and said that there were other considerations. And yet, the points we have scored in Acadia, including the Beaulac ruling, were achieved in court, and have advanced the cause of the francophonie.

You said that we only invited legal experts. However, Mr. Jean-Guy Rioux, the president of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, was here. We are talking about a big organization. And he agreed, he said "yes, we want it." He represents francophones Canada-wide.

I would like to hear your comments on this. I respect your opinion, but we need to hear different opinions. It is as if you were saying that Quebec's Charter of the French Language may be affected. That would mean that Bill S-3 is going to be tougher. Legal experts have advised us that the bill will not encroach on provincial areas of jurisdiction. Quebec will be protected under the bill. The fact remains that francophones, and anglophones in some places, need this bill. The bill will have an impact on federal institutions and spending power.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: You are putting words in my mouth, Mr. Godin. You said that I said that senators adopted the bill out of pity for Senator Gauthier. I would submit that senators have stood in solidarity with Senator Gauthier as far as his demands are concerned, especially as this was his fourth kick at the can before the bill was passed.

You are trying to teach me about politics by saying that politicians are only there to pass laws. I believe that when you are in politics or studying politics, one thing that always comes up is precisely that there are no laws without political will. Political will is one of the main ingredients, especially under a Westminster system like ours.

The Prime Minister enacts legislation. By saying, for example...

• (0955)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Parliament enacts legislation.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: It is the Prime Minister who says that if he supports official languages, it will have an effect on the whole government apparatus. What we are asking you to do is to ask the Prime Minister...

Mr. Yvon Godin: We've been asking him to do that for 400 years.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: ... to say that he is committed to official languages...

Mr. Yvon Godin: We've been asking him that for 400 years.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: ... and I'm waiting for the Prime Minister to tell me that he is committed to official languages. I think that that's an essential part of the mix. Without such an undertaking, increased litigiousness will not, in my opinion, solve the problem.

In 1999, when I took part in the Fontaine group's work on the impact of government changes in the area of official languages, we had a chance to see the Prime Minister's commitment, after the fact. Minority official language communities were referred to in the Speech from the Throne, which moved things forward. That's the way the political process works in our system. There needs to be political will at the outset.

So, if you really want to strengthen part VII, go and get a commitment from the Prime Minister.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Ms. Cardinal, I'd like to thank you very much for coming today and sharing your opinion with us.

Mrs. Linda Cardinal: It was my pleasure, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: This meeting is adjourned for two minutes to allow our guests to get seated. We will continue with committee business straight after that.

• (0956)

_____ (Pause) _____

• (1000)

The Chair: The 120 seconds are over. I'd ask everyone to take a seat.

We will now hear from Mr. Réjean Lachapelle, Director, Demolinguistics Studies Division, Statistics Canada. We'll have to conclude at 10:45 a.m.. We will need 15 minutes to debate the motions tabled the day before yesterday.

I will quickly hand the floor over to you, and we will follow up with a round of questions.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle (Director, Demolinguistics Studies, Statistics Canada): Thank you for inviting me to appear before you. In my opening remarks, I will give a brief overview. I represent Statistics Canada; we are not in the business of politics, but rather of figures and percentages. You'll see, I'll do my employer proud.

I will give a brief overview of the evolving demolinguistic situation in Canada. I will base my observations on census statistics and the write-ups on them on Statistics Canada's website and above all on the analyses contained in a publication produced jointly in 2004 by Canadian Heritage and Statistics Canada. The publication is entitled *Languages in Canada: 2001 Census*, and is part of the "New Canadian Perspectives" series disseminated by Canadian Heritage. You should have received a copy of it, and another copy has been given to you today.

We published, in collaboration with the Department of Canadian Heritage, a similar publication after the 1996 census; Statistics Canada came out with another publication following the 1991 census. Users asked us, on each occasion, to produce another publication. We have a lot of historical data, which gives people solid figures to work from.

[English]

Before I present the main demolinguistic trends, I will describe the demolinguistic questions asked in censuses. I will focus on the situation of official language minorities, namely anglophones in Quebec and francophone minorities in the other provinces and territories.

[Translation]

Let's start with demolinguistic questions in censuses. In the 1971 census, following a suggestion of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Statistics Canada added a third question to the two traditional questions on mother tongue and knowledge of English or French; this was a question on the language spoken most often at home. The question was repeated from one census to another.

A fourth question on knowledge of languages other than English or French was incorporated into the 1991 census. Some users of linguistic statistics felt that these statistics focused too exclusively on the private sphere or more specifically on the family—especially the question on the language spoken most often at home. Also, it was felt that the question on the language spoken most often at home gave an incomplete picture of linguistic behaviour in the home environment.

Therefore, three new demolinguistic questions were added to the 2001 census. Partly at the request of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, we added a second part to the question on the language spoken most often at home; it concerns the other languages spoken regularly at home. This information is intended to shed more light on linguistic practices in the home.

Also, we ask two new questions on a subject belonging to the public sphere: The language used most often at work and other languages used regularly at work. All these questions will be asked again in the 2006 census that will be on May 16. This will give us enough data to establish comparisons on a wider variety of topics.

Despite the variety of demolinguistic questions to be included, many subjects cannot be covered, including the situation regarding the language of instruction, because the census is a multipurpose survey. For this reason, after the census, Statistics Canada plans in 2006 to conduct a major postcensal survey on the vitality of official language minorities. This survey, which will address several topics, relies on the cooperation and financial support of the Privy Council Office, Canadian Heritage, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and interested departments and agencies.

• (1005)

[English]

Now for the situation in Quebec. The size and proportion of the population with English as the mother tongue declined rapidly in Quebec over the past 25 years. The number of anglophones went from 790,000 in 1971 to 590,000 in 2001, a drop of 200,000, or 25 per cent, in 30 years. The proportion of anglophones in the Quebec population fell from 13 per cent in 1971 to 8 per cent in 2001.

The population with English as the predominant language at home was not immune to this fundamental trend. This is reflected in a drop in the proportion reporting English as the language spoken most

often at home from 15 per cent in 1971 to 10 per cent in 2001. This downward trend is attributable to substantial migratory losses to the rest of Canada.

From 1971 to 2001 Quebec's cumulative net loss in its migratory exchange with other provinces amounted to 387,000, of which 71 per cent was attributable to the anglophone population.

On the other hand, English still comes out ahead in a comparison between the language spoken most often at home and the mother tongue, which is also known as the net language transfer. Thus, in 2001 the number of persons most often speaking English at home exceeded the number with English as their mother tongue by 156,000. For French, the same comparison yielded a figure of 116,000. English, then, obtained 57 per cent of the net transfer while French obtained 43 per cent in Quebec. Thirty years ago almost all net linguistic transfers were towards English.

While both the proportion with English as a mother tongue and the proportion with English as the language spoken most often at home fell from 1971 to 2001, this was not the case with the proportion of English speakers, which went from 36 per cent in 1971 to 45 per cent in 2001. There was also an increase in the proportion of French speakers during the same period, from 88 per cent in 1971 to 95 per cent in 2001. Both of these changes are the result of the rise of English-French bilingualism in all linguistic groups.

[Translation]

Now, let's look at the demolinguistic situation in the other provinces and in the territories.

Even though the percentage of people whose mother tongue is French has been dropping continuously across Canada—except in Quebec—for the past 50 years, declining from 7 per cent in 1951 to 6 per cent in 1971 and 4.4 per cent in 2001, the actual number of francophones increased between 1951 and 1971, then fluctuated both upwards and downwards, reaching 980,000 in 2001.

Over the past 10 years, between 1991 and 2001 the number of francophones has increased in three provinces: Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. These increases are due primarily to population exchanges with the rest of the country through migration. In other provinces and territories, the number of francophones has dropped or remained about the same.

In the past 10 years, however, we have seen a significant drop in the figures for French as the language spoken most often at home. The drop is fairly generalized, except in Alberta and British Columbia, which are seeing a flow of incoming francophone migrants.

Except in New Brunswick in 2001, people whose mother tongue is French account for under 5 per cent of the population in the provinces and territories. Francophones whose speak primarily French at home account for less than 3 per cent of those populations. In New Brunswick, however, 33 per cent of the population stated that French was their mother tongue, while 30 per cent indicated that French was the language spoken most often at home.

Over the past 10 years, the percentage of francophones who speak primarily English at home has increased across Canada, or almost. In all provinces and territories except Quebec, the anglicization rate of francophones increased from 35 per cent in 1991 to 38 per cent in 2001. These figures parallel the percentage of francophones living with an anglophone spouse, which has increased from 34 per cent in 1991 to 37 per cent in 2001.

In 2001, the anglicization rate topped 50 per cent in six provinces: Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. In all those six provinces except Manitoba, over 50 per cent of francophones lived with an anglophone spouse. In Ontario and Nova Scotia, the anglicization rate has reached 40 per cent and 46 per cent, respectively. New Brunswick still sets itself apart with a rate of only 10 per cent. Moreover, in New Brunswick only 15 per cent of francophones have an anglophone spouse, the lowest percentage in Canada.

Francophones who speak primarily English at home have not necessarily abandoned the use of French in the family. Through a new question put for the first time in the 2001 census, we were able to determine that 40 per cent of them—outside Quebec—spoke French regularly at home. And even though the percentage of francophones and others speaking primarily French at home dropped between 1971 and 2001 in all regions of Canada except Quebec, the number of French-speakers did not. In fact, French-speakers as a percentage of the total population increased from 9 per cent in 1971 to 11 per cent in 2001. This is a clear increase. Moreover, the percentage of French-speakers among non-francophones is also increasing, rising from 4 per cent in 1971 to 7 per cent in 2001. Thus, the situation of various official language minorities exhibits both similarities and differences.

Thank you for your attention. I would be pleased to answer your questions.

• (1010)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lachapelle. Your presentation was very interesting.

Mr. Lauzon.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Thank you and welcome, Mr. Lachapelle.

I think that the situation of anglophones and francophones outside Quebec is quite odd. Francophones outside Quebec are losing their French and ceasing to speak their mother tongue at home, while anglophones are improving their skills in the second language.

You said that the percentage of anglophones who can speak French had increased from 4 per cent to 7 per cent. Is that correct?

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: Outside Quebec.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Right. However, the percentage among francophones has dropped by 100 per cent. Now, only 40 per cent speak their mother tongue at home.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: Among francophones who speak English most often at home, 40 per cent speak French regularly, but not most often.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: I come from a community in which French is the minority language. The problem is that francophones are losing

their French, while anglophones are learning French. That is odd. Francophones cannot earn a living while speaking their mother tongue, but anglophones can learn the other official language.

• (1015)

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: Yes, it's...

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Do you have any figures on the reason for this? Do the statistics show that this is actually happening outside Quebec?

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: Yes, that is what we have observed.

On the one hand, we are seeing a change among francophones, which has some positive aspects, as I said, for example, in minority school attendance. We have seen that the percentage of children whose mother tongue is French and whose mother's mother tongue is French attending French-language schools is much higher.

However—and this is somewhat surprising and should be studied more carefully—we also see that school-aged children tend to use French at home less than before. They speak French when they go to French school, but don't use it much at home. That is an observation we have made.

There has also been an increase on the anglophone side. We know that, during a certain period, there were a great many immersion classes across Canada. However, this phenomenon seems to have plateaued. We observed this for the first time with the 2001 census, both among anglophones and non-francophones aged 15 to 19—after secondary school—outside Quebec. When the statistics were released several years ago, this was talked about because it was a new and significant phenomenon.

For many census periods, we have noted that knowledge of French among young anglophones aged 15 to 19 at the end of secondary school increased from one census to the next, up to the 1996 census. Between 1996 and 2001, there was a drop which has not been clearly explained, except that at the same time there were certain problems. For example, Canadian Parents for French indicated difficulty in recruiting teachers, and so on.

This issue has not been studied in greater depth, however. We have stated that this is happening, to bring the phenomenon to people's attention. This is something we will be monitoring extremely closely with the 2006 census.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

Ms. Brunelle.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Good morning, Mr. Lachapelle. Your presentation is very interesting. Regarding the fact that francophones outside of Quebec are losing ground, what strikes me—and perhaps I am taking a short cut here—is that the fact that anglicization often goes hand in hand with the presence of an anglophone spouse. There is a close correlation between the level of assimilation of francophones and the fact of having an anglophone spouse.

What happens to the children? Do we have statistics on that? These couples have children. Will they speak English more readily? If so, that is when you have lost part of the fight.

The other thing which concerns me has to do with work. We know that in Quebec, once people could start working in French, there was an improvement for francophones. But for francophones outside Quebec, it may be a challenge. Indeed, we are now compiling statistics to determine when people speak French at home and whether they stopped speaking their mother tongue at work. That is when we can no longer maintain vibrant communities.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: You have really asked me a lot of questions.

Mr. Guy Côté: So there will therefore be a lot of answers.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: The first question was whether, in exogamous couples, the language is handed down to the children. This is obviously a question which has already been addressed. It was addressed at length in the Action Plan for Official Languages, in order to define some measures, it would seem. I personally have also looked into the subject.

First, we noticed that when the non-francophone spouse—in almost all cases anglophone—did not speak French, it was rare for the language to be handed down to the children, as a main language or as a mother tongue, or even as a second language. However, as is always the case in statistics, there is no perfect phenomenon. There will always be a variety of situations, some people may for instance have a stronger will than others. In order to identify this type of phenomenon, you do not use census data but rather surveys which delve into motivations and reasons for change, the type of surveys we intend to carry out.

First, therefore, when the spouse does not know French, it is much more difficult to teach the language, especially if the spouse is a woman. Indeed, women have played an important role in teaching their children their mother tongue, and they will continue to do so. We have noticed this when we have looked at couples where there is one anglophone and one francophone spouse. When the mother is francophone, there is a greater chance of French being taught. Obviously, this tends to be far less often the case if the spouse is unilingual francophone, and much more often the case if the spouse is bilingual.

Moreover, we do not know if people became bilingual before entering into the relationship. This is the kind of information we will be seeking out in the context of more in-depth investigations. It remains a significant phenomenon, especially given the fact that in a number of communities, there is a growth in exogamy. In a large number of francophone communities outside of Quebec, for instance, most couples are exogamous.

Moreover, you referred to language of work. On this point, we have noticed certain things which have come as a surprise to some, namely the fact that a non-negligible proportion of francophones outside of Quebec used French in the workplace. Indeed, for 40 per cent of them, it is the language most often used at work. They are not speaking French exclusively. In many cases, people may respond both in English and in French equally. But if you combine all of these cases, you have 40 per cent.

The questionnaire had a sub-question on frequently used language of work. If you combine those who speak more English than French at work, you are looking at 25 per cent or a little more. This leads us to believe that close to two thirds of francophone workers speak

French in the workplace, either most often, or regularly. Obviously, it does vary according to the density of the francophone population. This density is higher in New Brunswick than in Saskatchewan.

• (1020)

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Brunelle. That is all the time you had.

Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Lachapelle.

Statistics are numbers, and calculators come up with undeniable results. You only need to obtain data in order to show it to us.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: You will have noticed that according to the researchers, there are nuances, slight variations. Canadians will sometimes respond by saying that they have two mother tongues, for instance.

Mr. Yvon Godin: They say “French and Acadian”!

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: We therefore have to find a way to clarify that. Indeed, they may state that they have two mother tongues, that both languages are spoken equally in the home. It makes the analysis more complex.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Earlier on, you mentioned migration. Take for instance people who have left New Brunswick to go and work in Alberta. According to the statistics, are there figures stating how many New Brunswick francophones have gone to settle in Alberta? In fact, according to the statistics there was an increase in Alberta and a decrease in New Brunswick. If these people had stayed in New Brunswick would there have been a slight increase? What is the difference? I think it is important to know this, because of the economic issue.

Let me give you an example. Three weeks ago, 70 people left the small village of Le Goulet to go and work in Alberta. Over the course of one week, 70 francophones left. Even fishermen abandoned their boats and left. There are hundreds and thousands of people who are leaving like this.

I would like to know whether Statistics Canada can provide us with figures so that we can know which province these new francophones in Alberta are from. It would allow us to know where people have gone.

Moreover, the study was done for 2001, is that correct?

• (1025)

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: Yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I just came back from Vancouver. We hear that at this point, an incredible number of people of Chinese origin have started learning French. Do you have up-to-date information on the francophonie in British Columbia? That is what I noticed over there. I was there with Mr. Godbout and Ms. Brunelle. We were told that there are an incredible number of people of Chinese origin who believe that two languages are not enough; they want to know three or four. I do not know if Statistics Canada has data on that.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: Regarding the first part of your question, yes, we do have census results on migratory patterns. In 2001, we asked people where they were the previous year and we will be asking the same question in 2006. If a person residing in Alberta answers that he or she was in New Brunswick previously, it allows us to know the figures, and therefore, what the net change is.

We also asked where people were five years ago. It allows us to get a better indication of this issue from one census to the next and properly assess the role this factor plays in the evolution of linguistic composition. So we are therefore asking the right questions in order to measure internal migration and other related issues. Our questions are fairly well detailed and do not strictly relate to the province. We ask people their exact address one and five years ago. If they were outside of the country, we ask them to say where. If they have changed municipalities within Canada, we ask them for their exact address.

We ask many questions. We therefore have information on various linguistic matters. In theory, this phenomenon could be studied. Let's say that it is a rather specific issue, but I am taking note of it. In the future, we will certainly look into it.

Now with regard to the other part of the question, I have been struck by that as well. Several years ago, I believe, when I was returning from Montreal to Ottawa, I heard a news story about young people of Chinese origin who were in immersion in Vancouver. They said a great number of things which were very interesting and funny, but I will not repeat them here. For the time being, our census does not include a question on language of instruction because this question is very complex. The census is for everyone, and we cannot for instance ask Canadians the language in which most of their courses are taught. This question will not allow us to distinguish between children in immersion and children studying in a linguistic minority school. Several questions must be asked. We have carried out a number of tests, because we know that this is a significant occurrence. After the 1999 census, we carried out tests in anticipation of the 1996 census. After the 1996 census, we did tests to prepare for the 2001 census, but it did not lead to much. Confusion remained in people's minds. In Quebec, some people do not understand some questions which are better understood outside of Quebec. What have we decided to do to improve the situation? I mentioned it...

The Chair: Could you quickly conclude, please.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: All right.

Thanks to the support of a variety of federal departments involved in the action plan, we plan on carrying out a post-census survey; we're going to take rather large samples from the 2006 census in each province and ask many questions which will allow us to identify this type of situation. Children are an important component in this field; our questions will have to do with childhood, early childhood, school, friendships and all sorts of characteristics, including characteristics related to racial minorities. If the phenomenon is relatively widespread, it will give us some indications.

The Chair: Thank you, I must interrupt you.

We will conclude with Mr. Godbout.

• (1030)

Mr. Marc Godbout (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.): Good morning, Mr. Lachapelle.

It is always a pleasure to hear you and I wouldn't dare doubt your figures, because I know from experience you always win in the end. You and I have known each other for a long time.

I would like you to clarify the concept of assimilation statistics. I remember having had lively discussions with Mr. Charles Castonguay, who may be one of your colleagues. For approximately 20 years, he's been saying that francophones outside of Quebec should have disappeared, because of the figures you have been presenting to us. We hear that the rate of assimilation is 55 per cent in Windsor and that things are deteriorating; I've been hearing this for at least 25 years; however, there are still francophones in Windsor.

What does this percentage of assimilation and loss mean, in absolute numbers? It's not easy to understand, because according to assimilation statistics published over the last 25 years, there should be no more francophones outside of Quebec.

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Indeed.

Mr. Marc Godbout: How do you interpret this? You mentioned 40 per cent in Ontario. However, in absolute numbers, the decrease is not significant. I must say—and this is not a trick question—that you explained this to me 15 years ago and that I'm still having some difficulty understanding. How is it that, despite these rates of assimilation, francophones still exist and that there are still more than one million francophones outside of Quebec? Is it 40 per cent over one year? Explain this to us, because it is not easy to understand.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: Let us first discuss the term assimilation, which is used in everyday language. It cannot, however, be considered a precise measurement. Why? Because there are a range of measurements which allow us to identify... Assimilation is a process, not a measurement. Some people choose to use assimilation as a yardstick. We prefer to use more neutral terminology, such as language transfer and linguistic mobility, although our preference does not, of course, prevent others from calling that "assimilation". We choose not to employ the term "assimilation", because people may confuse it with other associated data. Assimilation is a handy word, but there is so much information available in Canada that we prefer to leave the choice to the end users.

Next, I would like to speak about how various populations... For example, when it is said that 40 per cent of French-speakers in Ontario speak English more often than French at home, it should be pointed out that the figure of 40 per cent was provided by the census. This is not something that has happened over the past five years, but, rather, a situation that, to a certain degree, has existed for a long time. We are talking about a slow, cumulative phenomenon which carries consequences.

The primary determinant of this phenomenon is the way in which language is passed on to children. Two factors come into play: the fertility rate and whether the mother tongue is passed on to the children. It goes without saying that in a community where many parents no longer speak French at home, there will be fewer children speaking French, as fewer children will have French as a mother tongue. Children will be born of French-mother-tongue mothers, but of these children, perhaps only 70 per cent will speak French as their mother tongue. The number of French-mother-tongue children is in decline; these children are growing up and there are fewer of them.

Furthermore, a significant number of children whose mother tongue is not French are nevertheless sent to French school. As a result, the proportion of school-age children in Ontario who go to French school—the minority language school—is significantly higher than the proportion of children who have French as their mother tongue. This means that parents who have not passed on French as a mother tongue to their children are still opting to send their children to French-language schools. This is a phenomenon that has appeared over the past 30 years.

We have what we could refer to as a fringe. The French-speaking community is less hermetic than in the past when there was a core of mother-tongue French-speakers who spoke French in the home, etc. There are more and more people who, while they might not have French as a mother tongue, speak French as a second language. They speak it fairly well, indeed very well, because they have spent several years in French-language schools. However, we have experienced a little difficulty in identifying this group through the census.

• (1035)

The Chair: I am sorry, but I am going to have to cut you off to allow one last two-minute round for all of the committee members.

Mr. Scheer.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Sure. I'll just be very quick.

The Chair: One hundred and twenty seconds.

Mr. Andrew Scheer: Now down to 110, right?

I appreciate your presentation. I think there are a lot of interesting characteristics and trends that can be seen with the numbers that are being presented.

What I wanted to ask you in relation to Bill S-3 is this. Do you think the implementation of Bill S-3 might have any sort of an impact on these numbers? Do you think some of these declining trends could be turned around if Bill S-3 was implemented? I don't know if you're in a position where you can make that sort of qualitative assertion or not, but maybe you'd like to speak about how you think these numbers might be changed by that sort of legislation.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: My answer would be very simple. I'm a civil servant, a member of Statistics Canada. In our act we never command. *On n'a pas osé*.

Maybe after my retirement, if you invited me, I might have some comments, but not in the short term.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Simard, you have two minutes.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think that you have already provided part of the answer to my first question. We are told that, within four years, 80 per cent of families in Manitoba will be exogamous. On the other hand, the number of children being enrolled in French language schools and daycare centres is growing exponentially. We have waiting lists. I would first like you to explain the roots of this trend.

I am also wondering whether phrasing a question in different ways in different surveys has an impact. If you ask a young Manitoban whether he speaks French at home, it is highly possible, given that one of his parents is an English-speaker, that he will answer no. How then do you identify French-speakers?

Lastly, have you noticed similarities linking the situation of French-speakers outside of Quebec and French-speakers in Quebec? Do they face similar challenges, or different one?

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: If memory serves me well, exogamy is a widespread phenomenon in Manitoba; however, I think that it is a little bit of an exaggeration to say that it will reach 80 per cent. At the moment, around 50 per cent of Manitoban families are exogamous; it is, therefore, a growing trend. However, you must bear in mind that statistics for the next five-year period will also include already established couples, whereas it is amongst new couples that there is a higher proportion of exogamous relationships. I therefore doubt that all couples will be exogamous within the next five years.

As for your last question, my answer would be that the situation of French-speaking communities varies widely depending on where they are situated. For example, their situation varies depending on whether they are located near to or far from the border. It goes without saying that, as a general rule, the higher the number of French-speakers, be it in Quebec or not, the stronger the preservation of the French language. That is the primary factor. If you go to Edmunston, in New Brunswick...

Hon. Raymond Simard: Communities there are also influenced by American media.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: Indeed. If you go to Edmunston, you will see trends in situations that are very similar to what is happening in Rimouski or Rivière-du-Loup. Although Edmunston is in New Brunswick, it is close to the Quebec border and 95 per cent of its population is French speaking.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Thank you.

• (1040)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lachapelle.

Mr. Côté.

Mr. Guy Côté: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You have clearly illustrated that in Quebec, the decline in the number of English-speakers is due to interprovincial migration and not language transfer. It would seem reasonable to assume that these people who migrate do not lose their mother tongue.

How does migration impact upon the French-language community?

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: During certain periods in the past, many people have chosen to leave Quebec, but I can already assure you that the figure will be low for the period 2001 to 2006. We do not, however, have data available as to the language spoken by these migrants. National statistics provided by Statistics Canada's Demographics Branch reveal that the number of Quebecers leaving Quebec has fallen to negligible levels over the past few years. This is a turnaround, and constitutes a situation which, in some cases, has not been seen for 40 or 50 years.

Nevertheless, since the mid-1960s, we have noted significant numbers of Quebecers leaving Quebec; while this trend has always primarily affected the English-speaking community, the French-language community has also sustained losses. However, it must also be pointed out that, over the same period, Quebec's loss has been Ontario's gain with, for example, some 5,000 to 8,000 people moving from Quebec to Ontario. Our analysis has indicated this to be an important factor.

Mr. Guy Côté: I apologize for interrupting you, but we only have two minutes left.

I would like to know whether language transfer has been observed in French-speakers who have left Quebec. Do you have any data on that question?

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: I do recall some older data, but recent data is a different story. A higher level of linguistic mobility was recorded amongst French-speakers leaving Quebec than amongst French-speakers residing in Quebec; however, this higher level was lower than the level of linguistic mobility noted in the French-speaking community in the area to where they moved. In other words, it is between the two.

It is somewhat difficult to clearly define these trends. We do not know whether the decision of these Quebecers to leave Quebec was driven by the fact that they already spoke good English. In other words, we do not know whether they started speaking English before or after leaving Quebec.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lachapelle. We will finish by briefly handing the floor to Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let us turn our attention back to what Mr. Côté was saying. Do we ask Albertans where they were born? That should also apply to Quebec. We have to know whether the people in question are from Quebec originally. I have grounds to believe that people move to Alberta because of plentiful job opportunities. This is what lies at the heart of the matter. In Quebec, is it a matter of French-speakers marrying English-speakers and becoming English-speakers themselves, or is it more a case of immigration influencing the situation?

There's another question that I would like to raise right away. I know that you are too young to retire, but we are open to accepting yellow envelopes...

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: It is important to understand the primary factors underpinning changes in linguistic demography in Quebec. It

is important to understand changes in French-speaking communities, English-speaking communities, etc. For most of the past 30 years, interprovincial migration has been the primary factor at play. I have already spoken of the high number of English-speakers leaving Quebec. We have also witnessed changes in language transfer trends, even though the ramifications have been less significant and less intense.

Another important factor at play amongst French-speaking communities outside of Quebec has been their rapid modernization, which has resulted in a sharp drop in their fertility rates. During the 1950s, the French-speaking population outside of Quebec had an extremely high fertility rate, far higher than that of French-speakers in Quebec. However, the fertility rate for French-speakers outside of Quebec now stands at the same level, or lower, than that of other Canadians in their community. This has been an important factor to which certain losses can obviously be attributed.

• (1045)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Lachapelle. Please forgive us for having pushed you to answer our questions quickly. We are greatly appreciative of your contribution to our work. Thank you.

Mr. Réjean Lachapelle: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak.

The Chair: We have just under 15 minutes remaining to discuss other matters. I would ask you to show some restraint please. We have two motions on the table. Let us get started straightaway with Mr. Godbout's motion entitled "CBC/Radio-Canada lock-out".

[English]

It's the one that reads, "CBC Radio-Canada Lockout". I don't know if you guys want me to read it or dispense.

[Translation]

Does anybody wish to debate the motion, or are you satisfied that it appears straightforward enough? It is simply urging the relevant ministers to take appropriate action to encourage a prompt resolution of the CBC/Radio-Canada conflict.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chairman, I have no objection to supporting the motion. However, unless I am missing something, I do not think that it goes far enough. It is not just a matter of information services in French, there is also the question of culture. Everything has ground to a halt. Radio-Canada has a national mandate to provide cultural and information services, a mandate which is no longer being met in the regions. I would like to move an amendment to include culture.

The Chair: Could you please specify your amendment?

Mr. Yvon Godin: The motion states the following:

In light of the CBC/Radio-Canada lock-out of its employees and considering
(a) that minority francophone communities do not have or have only limited access to regional information in French,

Perhaps our researcher could suggest some wording. It is a matter of information services and...

The Chair: ..."cultural content".

Mr. Yvon Godin: ..."and cultural programs".

The Chair: Okay, so we are not going to finish drafting it today. We will adopt this motion on Tuesday.

Mr. Yvon Godin: No, we will do it now.

Mr. Marc Godbout: It is only a matter of a couple of words.

The Chair: Very well.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Scheer: Friendly amendments.

The Chair: Friendly amendments, thank you.

[Translation]

I thought I saw somebody on this side raise their hand.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: We were wondering who moved the motion.

The Chair: Mr. Godbout.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Are we going to debate it?

The Chair: Yes, of course.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: I believe this to be an extremely important motion. We know that television plays a considerable role in assimilation, in terms both of language and culture. To my mind, this is a truly urgent matter, things cannot be left to drag on unchecked. I support the motion.

The Chair: I think we have consensus on this matter.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Yes.

The Chair: This motion is moved by Mr. Godbout and seconded by Mr. D'Amours. I assume that everyone is in favour.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Perfect, it has been adopted unanimously. We will add the cultural aspects through a friendly amendment. Do you want to debate it before it is tabled in the House of Commons?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Scheer: Interesting.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Lauzon: No.

The Chair: Then we will simply add the words "cultural content". That should be tabled in the House. Of course, we will give you a copy of it when I table it.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Scheer: No.

[Translation]

The Chair: Good, thank you very much.

[English]

The second motion is brought by Mr. Godin. I can read this one. It's easy:

That the Standing Committee on Official Languages invite the Canadian Heritage Minister to appear and answer the members' questions on the Radio-Canada/CBC conflict.

[Translation]

Mr. Godin, it is officially tabled. You respected the 48-hour notice, so we are debating it.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I do not want to take much time, because I think that the motion speaks for itself.

CBC has a national mandate. In the past six years, there have been three lock-outs and two strikes. This has become unacceptable. I think that it is the duty of the Standing Committee on Official Languages to deal with this matter and to ask some questions. By doing so, it will put pressure on the government and show that we are concerned with this corporation that belongs to us, as taxpayers. That will perhaps give it a chance.

Some people will undoubtedly say that negotiations are underway and that we should wait until later. I heard Mr. Simard say that yesterday. The fact remains that since Mr. Rabinovitch has been in charge, for the past six years, there have been three lock-outs and two strikes. This situation is no longer acceptable, because we are talking about our culture and our information service.

Let's think about everything that has been said today and everything that has occurred. CBC and Radio-Canada are not here. That is unacceptable. Nor are they present in the communities.

As I was explaining, the CTV and Global networks are everywhere. However, they are pulling out of regions like Northern Ontario. The Global network no longer has a presence in that region. The CTV network is no longer in Bathurst.

We are talking about our television network, and we must be in a position to ask questions.

• (1050)

The Chair: Ms. Boivin, you have the floor.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: I do not know if you would be prepared to accept it, Yvon, but I would like to move a small amendment. I fully agree that the Minister of Canadian Heritage should appear before the committee. However, let's look at how the motion is drafted.

It says here: "[...] and answer the members' questions on the Radio-Canada/CBC conflict." I am afraid that in response to the first question, she will simply say that it is the responsibility of the Minister of Labour and Housing, Mr. Fontana.

I am wondering if we shouldn't talk instead about the impact of the conflict on communities.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I agree.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: That way, it will fully correspond to her mandate...

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: ...which is to know what the impact on the linguistic communities is...

Mr. Yvon Godin: That is fine.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Moreover, that is part of our committee's mandate.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: That way, she will not be able to simply give us a quick answer that could promptly put an end to the debate.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Fine.

The Chair: Mr. Vellacott, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): I'm not sure why we wouldn't want to maybe parallel, as in Mr. Godbout's earlier motion—it was a slightly different matter there—and maybe have the Minister of Labour and Housing, Mr. Fontana, as Françoise cited there, and also maybe the minister for official languages too. Would there be open consideration for that, so we'd have the three of them here to get the answers with respect to the present dispute or status of things? She can't really answer that.

The Chair: The only thing is it's going to be very difficult to have the three of them here at the same time. That would take a few sessions. We all agree, unless we change our minds, that we want to finish Bill S-3, at least the hearings, next Friday, and people are booked until the end of next week.

What we discussed yesterday was that if we're going ahead with this, we're going to have a special meeting or a longer meeting in a regular period. If we start inviting other people—

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: I agree with Françoise that she will not be able to answer questions with respect to a labour issue—

The Chair: You're probably right.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: —so maybe it's not relevant, from that point of view, and I don't know what we would attempt to accomplish, because she's not the one responsible for the portfolio.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you. I will give the floor to Ms. Brunelle. She will be followed by Mr. Godin and Mr. Côté.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: I would like to respond to something Ms. Boivin said. I agree with her completely. We know that this case is primarily about job security. We might ask ourselves whether they are trying to reduce the number of positions in French-language television in the long term. This conflict could have a very significant impact. The question is extremely relevant, and it would be very appropriate for the committee to look into it.

The Chair: Mr. Godin?

Mr. Yvon Godin: No, no...

The Chair: Mr. Côté?

Mr. Yvon Godin: ...she put her finger on it.

The Chair: Mr. Côté did too.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That is the impact it will have.

The Chair: Mr. Godbout.

Mr. Marc Godbout: I don't wish to make this less significant, but with respect to hearing the Minister of Canadian Heritage on the conflict, since she will be here for an hour, I would also like us to discuss the mandate of Radio-Canada, the French-language network of the CBC. This is a significant issue for francophone communities. This could be a good amendment.

The Chair: She would come here to discuss the impact of the conflict, as well as Radio-Canada's responsibilities in the area of official languages.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That's right.

The Chair: Very well.

Mr. Simard.

Hon. Raymond Simard: I have a similar comment. First of all, I don't want to interrupt our discussions on Bill S-3, because Bill S-3 is a priority. We know that we have less than one month to get where we want to go.

I think we should look at the Radio-Canada situation as a whole. In the communities, people have seen that they were being directly affected. In my area, there is absolutely no French-language service at the moment. This is not acceptable.

In my view, the conflict is only part of the problem. If we invite the Minister of Canadian Heritage, it is to review Radio-Canada's responsibilities, the people they hire, and so on.

We are not inviting her here to put an end to the conflict, but to talk about Radio-Canada's responsibilities. We can't do this overnight.

The Chair: Fine. Before we go any further, do you approve the two amendments to the effect that we would first discuss the impact the Radio-Canada conflict has on the committee, and not the conflict itself, then that we discuss Radio-Canada's responsibilities.

Do I have unanimous consent for these two amendments?

(Amendments agreed to.)

● (1055)

The Chair: Do we agree that we would also invite...

Mr. Yvon Godin: Not in two weeks!

The Chair: No, Mr. Godin. Next week.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Agreed.

The Chair: Sunday morning, if you like.

Mr. Marc Godbout: A brunch? Why not?

The Chair: I would remind you that on Tuesday morning we will be hearing the QCGN, the Quebec Community Groups Network. However, the second hour is free.

Mr. Mark D'Amore (The Clerk of the Committee): Yes.

The Chair: We need to know whether an hour is enough. We do have the second hour free on Tuesday morning. On Thursday, we will complete our hearings with the Commissioner, Dyane Adam. She will be here for two hours, and we will need those two hours. We will be contacting you later, then. However, this would be outside those two hours.

So, the motion moved by Mr. Godin, and seconded...

The Clerk: We do not need a seconder.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you for your patience, and for being so disciplined. We will reconvene on Tuesday.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

**Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique « Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire » à l'adresse suivante :
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.