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**Chair**

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez**

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## Standing Committee on Official Languages

Tuesday, October 4, 2005

•(0910)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.)):** Good morning everyone. I'd like to call this meeting to order. As mentioned last week, for the first half of this meeting, we will be hearing from the Quebec Community Groups Network.

The second half of the meeting will deal with future business. We need to discuss what is coming up in the very short term, and particularly Bill S-3.

[English]

Mr. Murphy, Madam Hook, thank you for being with us this morning.

[Translation]

We will begin with a brief presentation.

[English]

And then we'll follow up with maybe a few rounds of discussions and questions.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Murphy (President, Executive Director of the English-speaking Catholic Council, Quebec Community Groups Network):** Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for inviting us to make a presentation to the Committee this morning regarding Bill S-3.

[English]

The Quebec Community Groups Network, or QCGN, speaks on behalf of 24 English-speaking community associations and groups from across the province of Quebec. As an organization, we are greatly preoccupied by the challenges that face our communities. We are also committed to the responsibility, enshrined in section 41 of the Official Languages Act, of the federal government to work to enhance the vitality of English and French linguistic minority communities in all regions of the country.

Indeed, representatives from the English- and French-speaking minority communities were intimately involved in the establishment of that federal responsibility in law. Senator Gauthier, who is once again to be commended for his vision and tenacity, recognized a problem, in that federal responsibility in section 41 of the Official Languages Act for the vitality of our communities has been interpreted as a broad statement of principle and not as a clear legal obligation.

The Quebec Community Groups Network supports Bill S-3, which will strengthen the support and protection given to official language minority communities. We encourage the members of this committee and all members of Parliament to support this bill.

There have been suggestions in the public debate on Bill S-3 that the legislation will infringe on provincial jurisdiction and will upset the balance of powers at the heart of Canadian federalism. It is important to note the existence of chapter M-30 in Loi sur le ministère du Conseil exécutif, which exists in Quebec.

There's also resistance to support the English speakers of Quebec, which states that our communities do not require greater federal support. According to this incorrect analysis, our situation in Quebec is characterized by great vitality, and that federal and provincial authorities already provide adequate, even generous, support and services to our communities. However, any reasonable review of recent statistics and demographic trends about English-speaking Quebec will conclude that our communities are changing and their vitality is in serious difficulty.

We need the kinds of decisive actions by the federal government that the framers of the Official Languages Act intended and Bill S-3 requires. In the Montreal region, for example, the English-speaking community is composed of diverse, multicultural, and multiracial communities. These English speakers need the support of the federal government.

The results of Canada's 2001 census offered little good news for Quebec's English-speaking communities. On the basis of mother tongue, the English-speaking population experienced a decline of 30,500 persons between 1996 and 2001, an acceleration of historic negative demographic decline. The drop was largely attributable to net losses from interprovincial migration that took place between 1996 and 2001.

Many communities are facing serious decline. In some areas—for example, in the Chaudière-Appalaches near Quebec City and the Mauricie in Trois-Rivières—English-speaking communities declined by a fifth between 1996 and 2001. Our communities' members are aging, and those who remain are shouldering an increasingly heavy burden of responsibility for the health of their communities. Much energy is being invested in improving access to higher quality services in English, especially in health and social services institutions. But we have a long way to go, and the future of our educational and cultural institutions is also at risk.

There are some bright spots, of course. Young people in our communities are becoming much more bilingual, indeed bicultural, but these young, bilingual, English-speaking Quebecers are leaving our communities and our province at an alarming rate. A certain percentage of youth migration is a natural phenomenon, but the fact that so many young members of our communities do not feel they have a viable and productive future in Quebec is very disturbing to us.

The English-speaking communities of Quebec exist in a unique context as an official language minority within a predominantly French Quebec that is itself in a linguistic minority situation within Canada and North America. The minority experience can create a sense of vulnerability. As a community, we accept that the global influence of the English language is a legitimate source of concern for French-speaking Quebecers. But the global weight of English must not lead to the conclusion that the local use of English is in any way a threat to Quebec.

Our relationship to the French language and to the Quebec and Canadian governments has gone through rapid transformation over the past 30 years. Unfortunately, many decision-makers at both the federal and provincial levels have not recognized the new reality of English-speaking Quebec. To this end, the Quebec Community Groups Network has worked diligently over the past three years to build a comprehensive knowledge base about our communities and to develop an action plan for our future. We have set out a community vision and a strategy that will assist the English-speaking community in defining its modern identity within Quebec and Canada and actively participating in future development.

The plan aims to reassure the francophone community that increased vitality of the English-speaking minority communities is not synonymous with decreased vitality of the French language and culture in Quebec. By providing the majority community with a clearer understanding of English-speaking communities, our legitimate needs can be accommodated in the process of developing policy and programs.

• (0915)

However, we can only do this in partnership with all levels of government and with the federal government providing the leadership. Without a clear, legal requirement to support the vitality of our communities, we are concerned that federal attention to this responsibility can easily falter.

Mr. Chairman, if the Government of Canada is committed to enhancing the vitality and assisting the development of the English-speaking community of Quebec, then the Government of Canada must provide English-speaking communities in Quebec with the means to transform the negative factors affecting our communities. Bill S-3 will not take the place of strong leadership of the Government of Canada, but it will clarify the responsibilities of Ottawa with respect to official language minority communities and will enable communities to ensure that they are able to develop the tools to act on their development priorities and to meet the challenges they face.

Merci, Monsieur.

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

Since we have until 10 o'clock, I suggest we go with rounds of five minutes each. Is that okay with everybody?

We'll start with you, Mr. Lauzon.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Welcome, Mr. Murphy and Ms. Hook. It's a pleasure to have you here this morning.

Mr. Murphy, I'm very encouraged to hear that your organization supports S-3. That's a source of encouragement for the Conservative Party and for my position as the official languages critic for the Conservative Party. You see S-3 as having a positive impact on the anglophones, or the English speakers, in Quebec. Can you tell me, if we could look ahead five years and if in fact S-3 becomes law, how you think your organization will benefit, or how will the English speakers in Quebec as a minority group benefit? How are they going to gain some positive impact from S-3?

**Mr. Martin Murphy:** The fact that the Government of Canada has the legislation in place to actively promote the application of the law will I think encourage and motivate people who perhaps otherwise would be quite casual about their obligations. We are optimistic that this legal influence will be supportive of any time there are, as I said, casual applications of the law.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** You feel that it's not going to be necessary to actually go to litigation to resolve the problems? You feel that the fact that the law is there will be enough to encourage the government to do what the Official Languages Act is meant to do?

**Mr. Martin Murphy:** We are optimistic that this new measure will be implemented with respect, consideration, and with a mutual agreement as to how best to effect the legislation. We have demonstrated our goodwill. We have demonstrated our intention to cooperate with all parties to see that the English-speaking minority of Quebec will have its rightful place and be able to live with a hope for its future there. In the same spirit, we wish to support this for the benefit of our French-speaking friends in other provinces in the rest of Canada.

• (0920)

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** In fact, you don't think it's absolutely necessary for your organization, as much as it is for francophones outside of Quebec?

**Mrs. Deborah Hook (Executive Director, Quebec Community Groups Network):** I don't believe that's what Mr. Murphy said. I think what we said is that it's important for both minority communities, each in their own particular context, to have the strength of Bill S-3. Certainly, the Official Languages Act has been in place since 1988. There's been the law; there's been imbroglia. There's been political will; there hasn't been political will. It's been a rather up and down, I would say, hill or terrain since the beginning. Senator Gauthier felt that this was a tool that would enable the communities to point out to the federal government that there were obligations to take the appropriate measures. Whether or not that will lead to more litigation, frankly, we read the transcripts, and

[Translation]

and an obligation in terms of results or means...

[English]

We'll leave that to the specialists, but the point is there are laws and there is litigation. So to say that making this law stronger would just provoke litigation I think has a certain slant at looking at the minority communities. There is no question that litigation has opened the doors—for instance, Montfort. There are many places where court cases have moved things forward.

But I believe, as Ronald Caza said, if the law is well done, then normally we shouldn't need litigation.

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

[Translation]

You have the floor, Ms. Brunelle.

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières):** Good morning, Mr. Murphy. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to meet with you.

You say that anglophone communities in Quebec are experiencing serious challenges and that their numbers are declining. But I think it's important to look back at the history of this decline and consider that the most significant interprovincial migration took place in 1976, after René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois came to power. There is no doubt that migration to other provinces will always be significant among anglophones. As I see it, it's more a question of taking advantage of jobs and opportunities that are not open to us, as unilingual francophones, given that we do not speak the language of the majority.

It is clear that your community is experiencing problems associated with an aging population. Like any other group, you have fewer children. As I see it, saying that your communities are having serious problems is not sufficient justification, because they are no different from the others in my view.

As regards Bill S-3, I was wondering how you intend to use it. You say that it will be binding and that as a result, people will take their obligations more seriously. But I personally believe we will also see litigation. The past being a good indication of what to expect in the future, we are concerned that the litigation will end up killing Bill 101.

Please reassure me in that regard.

[English]

**Mr. Martin Murphy:** *Oui.* I'll deal with part of the question.

First of all, we talked about a net decline of 30,500 of English mother tongue alone between 1996 and 2001. But the previous five years, from 1991 to 1996, the net loss was around 4,200 to 4,500. So what we're pointing out here is that even though our youth are now more and more bilingual and should have comfort and hope for their future, the exodus not only continues but has accelerated in a most dramatic fashion.

That will have a very serious impact on the future of so many minority communities. We know that once the youth leave a community, let's say particularly off island, to go to school and so

forth, it is seldom that they come back to set up a business or to work in a local business, except to come back for a vacation. So gradually, once the school goes, so goes the community.

For the future of our society in Canada and for us in the province of Quebec, it is critical that this issue be addressed.

Please understand there is little source of replenishment now for us, because immigration, as you point out, is a provincial jurisdiction, and people coming to the province, unless they have their education in elementary school in another part of Canada, are channeled into the French stream. So that also has an influence in terms of the growth of our school system. I wanted to put that on the table as a consideration of the concern we have, for our survival is at risk.

Do you wish to comment further on the second part of that?

• (0925)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** Yes. As you say, Bill 101 was challenged in court a long time ago; the case went all the way to the Supreme Court. Not once, not twice, not three times, but on many occasions, the Supreme Court clearly ruled that the principles that underlie Bill 101—to protect the French language in Quebec from English with which it is completely surrounded in North America—are important. These principles are clearly recognized by everyone and are accepted by the anglophone community, because that is the way people live in Quebec.

So—and only time will tell—based on the Supreme Court's rulings, the Official Languages Act will not, in my view, affect the Charter of the French Language or pose a threat to Bill 101.

It's important to remember that Chapter M-30, which is the Act respecting the Ministère du Conseil exécutif—passed unanimously by members of both the Liberal Party and the Parti Québécois when it was in power—clearly states that any federal activity in an area falling within Quebec's jurisdiction must first and foremost be approved by the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs. What that means is that for the federal government to spend even one penny on a public institution in Quebec, the government of Quebec must first agree on the amount and the way in which the money is to be spent.

Given those two factors, I believe that strengthening the Official Languages Act will not affect Bill 101 in Quebec in any way.

**The Chair:** Your time is up. It goes quickly.

Mr. Godin.

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

Welcome to the Committee.

I would like someone to confirm my interpretation of Bill 101, because I believe this is an important issue for Quebec and I am not an expert in the field. This law is intended to protect the French language in Quebec, in North America. There is also the Quebec Charter.

Bill S-3, which deals with Part VII, Section 41, of the Official Languages Act, is aimed at federal institutions and is intended to ensure that minorities in Canada can receive services from federal institutions and continue to develop.

For example, in my area, food inspectors in Shippagan were transferred to Shediac at one point. The community went to court because some of the services provided to our minority francophone communities were being transferred elsewhere. The court came down to their side. The government appealed the ruling and won its case before the Court of Appeal. The case is now before the Supreme Court.

In the case of Quebec, how would Section 41, as amended by Bill S-3, help the anglophone minority?

The spectre of litigation is not a concern for me; that's why we have legal experts and why we pay them; they are there to interpret the law. What I'm interested in finding out is how Bill S-3—if Section 41 becomes binding—will help the anglophone community in Quebec. For example, will it ensure that anglophones are able to learn both languages and therefore keep their jobs in federal institutions? It could have that kind of effect and, in so doing, help the communities, given that it would be binding.

I would be interested in hearing your views in that regard.

• (0930)

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** A strengthened Official Languages Act will make it easier for the federal government to support the two official language minority communities. I am not talking about becoming a bilingual country. If you read the legislation, you will see that it talks about supporting the communities and only later does it refer to linguistic duality. It's really a question of support.

If the federal government has the sense that there is more political will, we would hope that what we are experiencing in terms of health and social services might extend to other levels, such as the municipal level.

After the action plan was tabled, the area where it worked best in Quebec was health and social services. We are managing \$4.7 million with a view to helping the communities work in partnership with public institutions to provide access to certain services.

The government of Quebec has received some \$23 million under the action plan to help francophone institutions provide the services that anglophones require. What that means is that by strengthening the Official Languages Act, the federal government may be able to take all its responsibilities, and that the success we have had in the area of health and social services may well be repeated in other areas.

In all provinces with the exception of Quebec, there is a multi-service agreement. In Quebec, the money only goes to the health and social services sectors.

In Quebec, the federal government doesn't just walk in carrying a big stick. Is that because it happens to be Quebec, or because of what it says in Chapter M-30, the Act respecting the Ministère du Conseil exécutif?

If the legislation is strengthened as a result of this bill, it will be easier for the federal government to conclude intergovernmental agreements for the purposes of supporting the anglophone community in Quebec.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** But what effect will this have on Bill 101? That's what I want to know.

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** It will have no effect on Bill 101. We are working around that legislation. That legislation is in place, the rest of Quebec laws are in place, and we live with them. The Official Languages Act provides an opportunity—with Quebec's agreement, in a way—to consult the community and have a look at what's happening on the ground—just as we did for health and social services; in other words what we need and how the federal government can provide assistance, just as the federal government does for francophone communities outside Quebec.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Simard, please.

• (0935)

[English]

**Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.):** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Mr. Murphy and Mrs. Hook.

I'd like to try to slide in three quick questions here. One of the government's main concerns, obviously, is that Bill S-3 does not make it so that we end up in the courts on a daily basis. Madame Cardinal, our last witness here—whose testimony was contrary to almost every expert who appeared before she did—was indicating that French and English communities in Quebec, and mostly in the regions of Quebec, have been working in collaboration right now, and that in fact if we implement this law it will probably lead to less collaboration and more appearances in the courts by the English communities. That's what she mentioned.

The second thing she mentioned is that it would probably lead to our public service feeling less responsibility towards the minority communities, and I'd like you to comment on that. And I'd like to know if you have an idea of how many times your community has gone to the courts in the past in order to have the government respect its obligations towards minority communities.

**Mr. Martin Murphy:** To answer part of your question, first of all, on less collaboration, that's foreign to our philosophy. It is foreign to our behaviour. It is foreign to our experience.

The Quebec Community Groups Network was established in 1995, so we're ten years old. Now with the government action plan, funds are being provided to support measures that will be very positive for our communities throughout the province.

We have our community development plan. We have our strategic plan, and now we are right at the launch of an exciting new program that's going to.... Please understand that this community development plan is the product of consultation throughout the province. Included in the consultation was input from our French-speaking friends, through the network, in their local communities. So our purpose, our objective, is to work together to better the society.

When we talk about health and social services, we are not advocating for health and social services exclusively for the English-speaking people. For health and social services, we can work with our French-speaking friends. We'll work together to try to influence government to legislate or to have regulations that are going to improve the conditions and circumstances. As I said, we have a very eminent record of collaboration, and we want to continue to build on that. We are neighbours, we are friends. That's number one.

Number two—on the federal public service, it is no surprise that we have not enjoyed the degree of support for our access to a reasonable percentage of jobs in the federal public service. Within this past year there has been some movement on that, and it's on our agenda to continue to work closely with this.

When you look at the multicultural and multiracial dimension of our society in Quebec, the percentage would add up to 12% or 13%, yet only about 7% of the English-speaking people are working in the federal public service in Quebec. So there's room for attention, room for redress there. We're positive about prospects to correct this.

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** Certainly, for the federal public service, we'll be less responsible with this thing. My question to Madame Cardinal would be, well, who are the political masters? I mean, let's face it, if the political people say this is the law in our country, the public service follows what the politicians set on the table.

I think that certainly in Quebec we have a government that is extremely protective of the Quebec jurisdiction, but the public servants at the federal level and the provincial level, when their political masters suggest this is the way they should do it, work together and life goes on. Frankly, we felt the winds change when the government changed. The public service follows the politicians.

As far as the court challenges go, I would say to a certain extent that the court challenges about access to English schooling have probably captured the headlines more than many others. To give you an example, in the Court Challenges Program of Canada, the QCGN is one of two English-language members. The rest are all francophone minorities from outside Quebec. I'm sort of this old person who goes and sits and tries to make...I feel like a voice in the wilderness every now and then.

I'd also like to remind you that in the case of Casimir Solski, if you took a look at who was around the table when it came time to present the case before the Supreme Court, Brent Tyler was certainly there, but there were many other people from other parts of the country who felt their voices were just as important.

English-speaking Quebecers traditionally, up until now, other than for access to English schooling, don't use the courts, even as much as they should perhaps.

• (0940)

**The Chair:** Merci.

We have time for a full second round of five minutes each.

Mr. Vellacott.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC):** This is addressing, I guess, either Martin or Deborah; you can respond as you feel appropriate. I want to follow up on what my colleague Raymond asked about here.

I think one needs to be realistic and look at the history. I think there has been a history, at least in the cases that hit the headlines, or those where English rights groups—especially when Mr. William Johnson was leading the English rights activities in the province of Quebec....

I notice, Mr. Murphy, you are very much a conciliatory kind of guy, very positive, optimistic—certainly not a pessimist. I'm wondering at points if you're realistic in saying there is not going to be.... No one person controls these things—you, or anybody else for that matter.

This can be a kind of scenario where, too, the English rights groups, with some new levers or new mechanisms, if you will, possibly may choose to use it in respect of the province of Quebec. It's not just an issue of the feds; it's also the province of Quebec, as we know. That's been implied. How can you guarantee that it will not activate, not your coalition maybe, but different ones within Quebec that have concerns about English services? How can you absolutely guarantee it? I don't suspect you can. There was a history of this up until 1995, and then of course you said, the winds changed there. We recognize that, historically—the reporting of it, and so on. But how do you know this will not be used against the Quebec government by English rights groups, or even just factions, if you will, that now have this legal mechanism they want to push? How can we know it's not a possibility that it will be used against the Quebec government by English rights groups?

As I look at the history, in the past that was done. I don't see how we can say, optimistically and with rose-coloured glasses, that it would not necessarily happen in the future.

**Mr. Martin Murphy:** First of all, we have not claimed to guarantee. You asked us, how can we guarantee? We cannot guarantee how people are going to behave in the future.

But you talk about my attitude as being positive. Yes: a man's hope should exceed his dream—"else what's a heaven for?" As per my executive director's comments earlier, we believe this is going to give the power that is required in order to influence positive change. I don't predict it would be used very often, but who knows the future? For us it is a lever; it is something that will promote and will prompt people to take their obligations with respect to the Official Languages Act perhaps more seriously.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** Which is to say, then, if at points they don't, then their recourse would be the court.

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** Certainly it could go to court. It could go to court in Quebec; it could go to court in Manitoba; it could go to court in New Brunswick; it could go to court anywhere. I think that's just the nature of the law.

As a community, we want it to be strengthened, because we've been living with it since 1988. It's getting better, but our communities are in a much more complex situation. We need the strong support of our federal politicians to help us do the things we know we should do.

I think that's probably the way it is across Canada. To say it's worse in Quebec or better in Quebec.... It could be, but I would bet it could happen somewhere else just as easily as it could happen in Quebec. Montfort, le Forum des maires—those are all cases that are going to affect official language minority life in Canada, but they certainly don't count Quebec....

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott:** We know that law brings on litigation; that's the nature of the business sometimes. I appreciate your optimism, and you're honest enough to admit you cannot speak for all, but you can speak as an umbrella group. I appreciate your comments with regard to that.

• (0945)

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** I think, just as we said, the anglophones are frankly not any more "angry-phones"; that's one thing.

Two, many of us are married to francophones. We're totally integrated into the French society. To always be angry about the law and the way it's applied is perhaps a passageway. For the English-speaking communities of Quebec, it's not so much any more a policy of grievance and injustice; it's a policy of working with our francophone families—in-laws, husbands, wives, children. How best can we continue to keep an English-speaking culture and community that's been a historical and I think important part of Quebec since Confederation?

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. D'Amours.

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

[English]

I would like to thank you very much, Mr. Murphy and Ms. Hook, for taking the time to give us your point of view on this issue.

Mr. Murphy, you said at the beginning of your presentation that there are 24 groups across Quebec. Can you tell me what is the percentage in what I will say are the more rural areas compared to the more urban areas? And can you give me some examples of a rural area, such as in Gaspé?

**Mr. Martin Murphy:** In global figures, the 2001 census said there were 919,000 people who identified themselves as being English speaking in the province. About 85% of them are in the greater Montreal area. The rest are scattered. The Outaouais has a larger proportion and the townshippers likewise. Quebec City has only about 1.5% to 2% of the English-speaking population in the Chaudière-Appalaches-Quebec City region. And of course as you go down to the Magdalen Islands and coasters in the Gaspé there are many fewer. I don't have, with precision, the percentage or numbers before me.

Deb, do we have perhaps more precision?

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** I'm sorry, sir, I didn't quite understand. Did you want to know about the groups or the actual size of the communities in the regions?

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** The thing is that when you're in an urban area it is easier for a bigger group to have, I will say, better services. Again, I want to know how Bill S-3 can help the anglophones in the rural areas.

**Mr. Martin Murphy:** The townships are one of the most vibrant communities off island that we have. We have 24 members in the Quebec Community Groups Network. So how many are we? We are 24 members, but all of these people represent their respective constituency. So when we talk about the townshippers, they have a membership plan. So there are more than 4,000 who subscribed as members. But in the townships itself, as English-speaking people... maybe, Deb, you can help me here. How many people are there? I would expect there may be around 10,000 or so.

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** Yes.

I think too when you talk about the regions...there are 17 administrative regions in Quebec and there's an English-speaking population in every one. But certainly when you get to the Gaspé and the lower north shore, the critical mass that those people need to get the services is not there. So they lose their voice in the bigger system.

The French institutions have difficulty serving or giving access to service because they can't necessarily find the voices. We're less effective in actually making our presence felt, and certainly the community institutions, leaders, churches, and community groups feel a great stress in trying to fill the gap between their citizens, the services they need, and the public institutions that are there to help them.



Bill S-3, by suggesting, pushing, nudging the federal government in taking on its responsibility to support the minority language communities across Canada, in our case, will give us the means and the tools to fill that gap between the shrinking population that leaves not enough of the critical mass to ask for, or to request, or to get the services they want.

The other thing that I think is important to remember, a little bit of a different thing, is in

• (0950)

[Translation]

the Official Languages Act,

[English]

when it was passed, there was a

[Translation]

Committee of Deputy Ministers of Official Languages.

[English]

When Quebec opted out of working with the federal government when the Parti Québécois was in power, Quebec no longer sat at that table. That table is now called

[Translation]

the table pour les ministres responsables de la francophonie.

[English]

By the fact that Quebec wasn't there, the federal government couldn't, to a certain extent, take care of its responsibilities. So the English-speaking community is no longer at the intergovernmental table. The federal government and all of the provincial partners are there to look at what the minority communities need. So we have it on a micro level and on a macro level how this law will give the teeth that we think the federal government needs to work with the Quebec government in partnership, in respect, but to work with us to support the community, no matter whether it is in Montreal

[Translation]

on the Lower North Shore.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. D'Amours.

Do you have statistics on the community across Quebec, per region, or something?

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** Yes, we do.

**The Chair:** Could we have them?

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** With pleasure, yes.

**The Chair:** If you could send them to Mr. D'Amore...thank you very much.

**Mr. Martin Murphy:** Mr. Chair, could I just comment a little further on—

**The Chair:** That's all the time we have. I have to be fair with everybody.

Monsieur Côté.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Côté (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Who knows, you may even have an opportunity to make some comments. Mine will be somewhat along the same lines.

I represent the riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. About 3 p. 100 of the population identifies with the anglophone community. Indeed, much of the anglophone community in the Quebec City area lives in my riding, in Saint-Gabriel-de-Valcartier, Shannon and Tewkesbury. As you may know, the oldest newspaper in North America, the *Quebec Chronicle*, is still being published.

To begin with, I would like to just backtrack a bit. Earlier we were talking about interprovincial migration trends in the anglophone community. I'm sure you will agree that many anglophones have left Quebec over the last 30 years. However, those anglophones are not in a situation where they will lose their language by moving, which is certainly not the case for a member of the francophone minority, for example. They may leave Quebec, but they are not losing either their language or their culture, which they will always have. That's the way it is.

I have questions in two main areas. First of all, we often have the sense—at least in my case, in the Quebec City area—that the anglophone minority in Quebec is way ahead of francophone minorities in other provinces in terms of both its institutions and public funding. Is that perception inaccurate? It may be. I don't have precise figures. I would like you to address that.

Secondly, it seems to me we haven't talked enough about one aspect of Bill S-3, which is its implementation. And yet it seems quite clear to me. The bill talks about taking appropriate measures to advance the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society. Since you are in favour of Bill S-3, I would like to ask you what taking appropriate measures to advance the equality of status and use of English and French means for your organization?

[English]

**Mr. Martin Murphy:** To answer just one part of your question, as we've said many times, we have never said that we are worried about losing the English language. It is the future of our English communities that is at risk. So if the exodus continues, obviously there won't be many current English-speaking communities any longer, compounded by the fact of the immigration I alluded to earlier.

As for the second part of your question, Deborah, please....

[Translation]

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** We may be neighbours. I live in Quebec City, in Charlesbourg. We aren't very far from one another. But you are not my MP; my MP is Mr. Clavet.

You referred to financial resources, but I'm not clear on what you want to know. For example, recently the implementation of the federal government's action plan resulted in an investment of \$700 million. Of that \$700 million distributed by Canadian Heritage to assist the communities, anglophones received \$3 million under the agreement. There are approximately 917 000 anglophones in Quebec. We received an increase of 10 per cent, because Canadian Heritage was providing 10 per cent. So, that means that of that \$3 million, anglophones in Quebec received \$300,000. Just compare that with what francophones outside Quebec received. English-speaking Quebecers received \$300,000, while French-Canadians, members of a linguistic minority outside Quebec, received \$24 million. We received \$3 million compared to \$24 million for them, probably for about the same number of people. That may answer your first question.

As for your second question with respect to linguistic duality, the statistics clearly show—and I believe you heard this when Mr. Lachapelle made his presentation—that young English-speaking Quebecers are increasingly bilingual. Back home, we know full well that if our children want to stay in Quebec, they have to speak French—in fact, not just speak it, but be able to work in French. Anglo-Quebeckers are now even discussing the possibility of French being taught as a mother tongue, rather than as a second language. We know full well that French as a second language is not enough for young people to be in a position to stay in Quebec. I think Anglo-Quebeckers are very much in favour of linguistic duality. We have a very clear understanding of why it is important to speak English and French, being a minority within a minority.

• (0955)

**The Chair:** Thank you. Time flies when you're having fun.

We will conclude with you, Mr. Godin.

[*English*]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** There was a question not too long ago that if Bill S-3 passed, people would go to court. I wouldn't say I'd be upset enough to go jump from the top of the Peace Tower, because that's what law is all about. If we pass a bill, that's what it's all about. If the government doesn't respect the law, then citizens have the right to go to court. We should not be ashamed of that. That's why we're paying judges; that's why people are there.

Then we're saying that section 41, to be there as an expectation of what they will do, will be a deterrent, but they will do it. Imagine how you feel as a minority in a majority in a province that is in the minority in North America—if you were us, a minority in the whole of North America, in the world. That's what Bill S-3 is all about.

People go to court today; they never stop going to court. The association of the francophone municipality of New Brunswick has gone to court many times, and the courts have started giving decisions toward them.

[*Translation*]

Having said that, as you mentioned earlier, that doesn't mean that more people will learn English.

You are moving in the opposite direction—you're learning French to give an opportunity... But we need to know how much money

governments can spend to help francophone communities outside Quebec, such as our own, to survive.

In our communities, we need government leadership, rather than insults in the form of notices such as the ones we've been seeing. I won't repeat it today, but we have seen job vacancy notices... I have an example here. Listen to this:

[...] Queen Elizabeth garage entrance, Fifth Avenue to curb Lansdowne Park and to the pigs supporting the road [...]

That is a national insult!

I think that will make people respect our two official languages in this country, and the two peoples who came here and founded the country. And there is also a third people: the Aboriginal people. We should hear from them one day.

Don't you see this as a step in the right direction in terms of forcing the government, not to go to court, but to show some respect for Canada's two languages and two peoples, and for people in general?

**Mrs. Deborah Hook:** What you're saying is true. It's not easy to go to court; it takes money, time and incredible energy.

But I am not convinced that anybody and everyone will want to go to court just because the legislation has changed. The minority communities are tired. As you say, you get up in the morning and wonder whether you're part of the minority or part of the majority. What side are you on?

[*English*]

We're always swimming upstream. In fact, we're going to swim upstream and then go all the way to the Supreme Court.

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

This puts a lot of pressure on the minorities.

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

You should have seen the look on the faces of the interpreters in the back of the room when you were reading that.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** That's why I say we should post these notices in French first, and then translate them into English using an automated system. You'd see how long that would last.

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

[*English*]

Mr. Murphy, Madam Hook, thank you very much for being with us today.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank both of you for taking the time to meet with us today and give us your input.

We will now take a two-minute break, to give us time to move into camera. We will then have a discussion about the Committee's future business.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned.

**Mr. Martin Murphy:** Thank you for inviting us. I appreciate it very much.

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