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**Chair**

**Mr. Guy Lauzon**

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• (0905)

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP)):**  
Order.

I would like to welcome you all and thank you for being here this morning. We are the parliamentary committee on official languages, and it's a great pleasure for us to be here in Sherbrooke.

We started our tour this week in St. John's, Newfoundland. We were in Moncton yesterday, and we are here today.

Our parliamentary committee has existed for about 25 years. This is the first time the committee has made the decision to go across the country, meet people directly in the field, and look at their institutions, just to see what's happening out in the field. So far it's been very good.

Looking ahead, we have an action plan that was put together, and we want to know how the action plan is working in the communities. We want to know if you have any comments about it, if you have any proposals to give to us, and what works and doesn't work.

Our committee members this morning are Sylvie Boucher, Pierre Lemieux, and Daniel Petit, representing the government; Jean-Claude D'Amours, the official opposition; and Monsieur Guy André, representing the Bloc Québécois.

My name is Yvon Godin. I am from northeast New Brunswick, and I represent the New Democrat Party.

This morning we will start with the Community Health and Social Services Network, the Townshippers' Association, and Bishop's University.

To the three presenters, we would ask you to take ten minutes for your presentations. You might have heard three minutes, but you can take around ten. After that we'll go around the table for questions by members.

Mr. Carter.

[Translation]

**Mr. James Carter (Coordinator, Community Health and Social Services Network):** If we had only had three minutes, we would have been ready to limit our comments, but thank you for granting us a little extra time.

The Community Health and Social Services Network is a network made up of community organizations, public institutions and other components of the Quebec health and social services system. The

network promotes partnership projects to improve access to English-language health and social services.

I am making this presentation especially to comply with the directive that the results of the federal government's investment in the area of health in Quebec be made public. I will be talking about a number of challenges and perhaps also some courses of action, or future policies that the federal government could follow up on.

I wish to thank committee members for the invitation to report to you on the results of federal investments of \$26.7 million in Quebec to improve access to health services in English for Quebec's English-speaking communities. A total of \$4.7 million has supported the creation of formal networks bringing English-speaking communities and service providers together. Some \$10 million has led to improvement of the conditions of access to primary-level health care and social services in English. Another \$12 million is building the human resources capacity of Quebec's health and social services system so serve English speakers and extend services to remote English-speaking communities through technology.

What are the specific results of the \$4.7 million investment and the challenges for the future of community networks and partnerships? Ten local and regional networks have been created, as well as a provincial network of 65 organizations. I represent that network. These formal networks have brought together English-speaking communities and health and social services providers in the Gaspé, Magdalen Islands, Lower North Shore, Megantic Region, the Eastern Townships, the eastern part of Montreal and the Outaouais.

The networks have built a very sizable knowledge base leading to better identification of needs and priorities. When we talk about the networks, we also talk about the public institutions that are part of those networks. Partnerships always include the community, the public health and social services network, health and social services centres and the other public institutions that provide communities with services.

The principal challenge is sustaining these partnerships in the context of a major reorganization of the health and social services system. The health system is constantly being reorganized in Quebec, just like in other provinces, I imagine, and this poses a significant challenge for communities to fully participate in this multi-year reorganization. Quebec's new approach to service delivery has created 95 services networks to meet local needs. The current 10 local and regional partnership networks operate in about 25 per cent of the new territories.

• (0910)

Quebec's horizon for implementing reform extends well beyond the current Action Plan, which will end in a few months. We foresee that a federal commitment is required beyond 2007-2008 to support the current 11 networks in meeting reorganization objectives, as well as to create new networks in many vulnerable communities, which do not benefit from the current partnership investments.

The second measure deals with initiatives for improving access to primary level health care. This represents a \$10 million-investment. A total of 37 public institutions upgraded their capacity to serve English-speaking people in their own language. These projects were carried out over a 15-month period, ending in March 2006. Seven projects coordinated efforts to improve the rate of use of Info-Santé, a telephone health line for English speakers. A new centralized telephone system was created in four regions thanks to the investment. It will guarantee availability of such telephone services in English across Quebec, thanks to extensive language training and translation of nursing protocols and social intervention guides.

As for other projects in this area, 25 other institutions upgraded front-line health and social services and 5 long-term care centres adapted programs to better serve the public. For instance, the institution recruited new personnel to serve English speakers, as well as volunteers from English-speaking communities. Specialized language training was given to staff members and a significant number of documents were translated for health system users.

The principal challenge will be to sustain the results of investments when the next stages of reorganization unfold. The 37 projects were completed in March 2006. There are 26 of these projects awaiting an additional investment of \$3.4 million for activities to be completed by March 2007. We are about to reach agreements to ensure that Quebec receive the \$3.4 million budget envelope.

Now what about the service delivery commitments? We believe that a commitment is required beyond 2006-2007 and we want to ensure that our main partner, the Quebec Ministry of Health, continues to receive a financial contribution from the Government of Canada to support its measures to improve access to services in English.

This is recurrent funding that is consistent with its multi-year reorganization plan. We do not want a project that only allows us to engage in a reorganization over a few months, and we cannot continue to reorganize if we do not have the means to adapt the public network.

Some \$12 million were invested in the third measure, i.e., human resources development and distance service delivery. Last year, 1,400 French-speaking professionals working in 81 public institutions in 15 Quebec administrative regions received language training. The language training allows them to improve their capacity to serve English speakers. In 2006, another 2,000 professionals are expected to receive training courses.

• (0915)

Next year, some 4,000 francophone professionals in Quebec, in all administrative regions, will have received the training.

In addition, 22 innovative pilot partnerships have been struck in 14 regions to create internships to increase the number of English-language students in nursing, social work and other health-related disciplines that receive professional training in the regions.

The partnerships bring together—and this is the innovative part—English-speaking communities, French-language institutions in the regions and English-language professional degree programs. In fact, these are three-way partnerships. They are a first step to increase the number of English-speaking professionals that stay in the regions to serve communities.

Let us now look at the challenges.

I have two minutes left?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Your two minutes are already up, but go ahead.

**Mr. James Carter:** Thank you. I will speed up.

The reality of system reorganization, movement of personnel and retirement indicate, in my opinion, the necessity for a long-term commitment to training and human resource development. In the 10-year health accord concluded between the federal government and the provinces, the first ministers set an objective to increase the number of health professionals serving the minority language communities in Quebec and the rest of Canada. We feel that the federal government should respect this commitment and identify the resources to be dedicated on a recurring basis for this measure.

Evidence points to continuing demographic challenges and health status inequalities in English-speaking communities. The latest census shows high rates of aging, population decline in several regions, and high rates of low-income in English-speaking communities in a number of regions. We also know that our communities will continue having difficulties as they strive to ensure their vitality. Access to the health system is a challenge shared by both the communities and the public network. There is an additional demographic challenge in many of our communities.

Our brief therefore contains several suggestions as to future federal commitments to improve access to services in our communities.

Thank you.

• (0920)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank very much.

Mr. Michael Van Lierop will be the next witness.

[English]

Please give us your name and who you are representing, for the record.

**Mr. Michael Van Lierop (President, Townshippers' Association):** My name is Michael Van Lierop, and I'm the president of the Townshippers' Association.

[*Translation*]

Good morning, everyone. I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk to you today about our position regarding the 2003 action plan for official language minorities.

[*English*]

The Townshippers' Association is a volunteer-based, non-partisan, non-profit association. It works on behalf of some 41,000 English speakers scattered throughout a largely rural territory measuring approximately the size of Belgium. A map and background information are found in the booklet that we've given you, "Profile of the English-speaking Community in the Eastern Townships".

In the past three decades, the size and character of the English-speaking community in the Eastern Townships has changed dramatically. It has lost about 30% of its members and now constitutes about 6% of the total population. It has a high proportion of seniors and a low proportion of youth. English speakers aged 15 to 44 have generally lower levels of education, employment, and income than their French-speaking counterparts or their English-speaking seniors.

These characteristics are key health determinants. The English-speaking community in the townships has special needs for health and social services. Social service needs for youth, for example, are acute. The youth protection office in Cowansville, for example, reports that in March 2006, just this year, 52% of its case load was English-speaking, although English speakers represent about 23% of the population in that area.

The efficacy of social services relies largely on language, in a clear and nuanced understanding.

Another area where language is a key factor in caregiving is in services for seniors, whose level of bilingualism is generally lower than that of youth.

In this context, we can give witness to the capacity of the action plan on official languages to achieve measurable and sustainable change. We have seen its effect in our community in the area of health and social services. Initiatives that the action plan brought to the area include, first of all, the health and social services networking and partnership initiative; secondly, the telehealth sessions; thirdly, primary health care initiatives; fourthly, language training for front-line health and social service providers; and finally, the development of human resources.

In the Eastern Townships, the health and social services networking and partnership initiative has permitted a development of two networks, an information and referral service, a volunteer bank, and a seniors information network. The two networks have carried out needs assessment and rallied the collaboration of service providers. They have done this by making the providers aware of the current realities of the English-speaking community and by bringing together service providers and community members to work together to improve access to services. More than eighty service providers

attended a recent youth seminar about the needs of the community and also about available services.

In one year, the Townshippers' information and referral service received 150 requests from community members about health and social services. Although the services they seek may be available in English already, they are not accessible because a senior, for example, may simply not be able to locate them in the phone book. Health care providers also call asking for help to refer a client to resources in English or for English-speaking volunteers.

Other initiatives enabled by the federal action plan include translation of local health and social service documents; information sessions for seniors; mental health awareness events; and workshops. These initiatives have led to improved relationships between front-line workers and the English-speaking community as a whole. As one worker recently said, "We knew the English-speaking community had needs we weren't meeting, but we did not know how to reach the community members. Your organizing these information sessions has made this possible."

Communication, understanding, and collaboration between service providers and members of the English-speaking community on these factors have led to improved access to services for our community. The networking and partnership initiative has also led to concrete measures to improve access. For example, two health centres have pioneered in making information available in English on their websites, and others have begun to put their English informational brochures on display.

Two elements are key to the success of these networks. First, we must receive funding for resources and coordinators who can work consistently with our partners in a way that volunteers cannot. Second, we must receive resources so that the networks are community-governed. We sincerely hope these key elements will continue to be available to us.

● (0925)

From our perspective, the 2003 action plan was slow in being implemented in such areas as education, economic development, and the public service. English speakers in our region have a real need for improved French language instruction in schools and for adults alike. Despite great financial constraints, the Eastern Townships School Board has increased the proportion of core courses offered in French in its schools. The action plan should be providing support for this initiative. Low-income adult English speakers do not currently have access to free or low-cost French language courses. This is desperately needed.

The townships' English-speaking community has seen an exodus of its brightest and best who seek better job prospects elsewhere. The Townshippers' Association is urgently working to improve access of English speakers to employment and entrepreneurial opportunity in our region. Until the current portrait of low education, low employment, and low income has changed, the English-speaking community cannot contribute its fair share to the economic prosperity of the Eastern Townships. Our vision is to be an economic asset to the community, rather than a burden.

The association collaborates with the Quebec Community Groups Network to encourage English speakers to apply for jobs in the federal public service of Quebec. Despite this, only 7.5% of the federal public servants in Quebec are English speaking, while it should be 12.9%. In the Eastern Townships, anecdotal reports tell us that the federal public service in our region still lacks the capacity to consistently deliver even the most basic of bilingual services. It is difficult to evaluate the federal action plan's effectiveness, however, when many of its recommendations have yet to be implemented. In the coming years, we hope to see an impact in the areas of education, economic development, and the public service.

In short, we recommend that, first of all, the 2003 action plan be renewed and be more actively supported by the Government of Canada; second, that the health and social service initiatives be continued and expanded, enabling continued community participation in these measures; and finally, that the education, economic development, and public service measures be fully implemented and the time span for this implementation be extended.

The federal action plan for official language minorities is extremely promising and has given our community very positive results where it has been implemented. However, it has been partly crippled by slowness in its implementation. We, your community partners, strive to be diligent and accountable in our use of public funds. This diligence, however, is thoroughly compromised when we are given two or three years to complete a five-year action plan. The problems the action plan addresses are very complex, as you can see, and long-term funding is necessary to resolve them.

Thank you.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Ms. Garber.

[English]

**Mrs. Rachel Garber (Executive Director, Townshippers' Association):** I'm with him.

• (0930)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Then it will be Mr. Jonathan Rittenhouse.

**Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse (Vice-Principal, Bishop's University):** Bonjour. I'm Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse, vice-principal of Bishop's University.

As a general preamble to what I'm going to say, I would say that Bishop's has felt no direct impact from the operations of the 2003 action plan. We've felt none whatsoever. Therefore, our brief could be brief.

[Translation]

But I am here to talk about the past and future activities of our university and the vitality of the minority language community in Quebec. As you know, Bishop University was founded prior to Canadian Confederation and it is still, today, the main anglophone institution outside of Montreal. It is a major component of the minority community vitality in Quebec. As you also know, we are a small university but we continue to attract students from around the world.

[English]

Ten percent of our students come from over 50 countries, 45% of them from all provinces and territories of Canada, and more than 20% are francophones from Quebec. They come for our well-respected reputation as a student-focused institution, and those from away come because we are a safe and human-scaled portal into Canada and into Quebec. They come to us from Quebec because we are a safe and human-scaled portal to the rest of Canada and the world.

[Translation]

In our undergraduate program—and we have won awards for this category—we give our students enriching, intense and non-artificial opportunities to make contacts with a broad range of individuals and cultures.

[English]

Our Eastern Townships Research Centre has for nearly 25 years promoted the study of the region, with particular emphasis on the minority community. But as our most recent conference, held this past weekend, most clearly demonstrates—it was a conference devoted to the changing faces of our cultural communities in the region—our sense of that community in the region is open and wide.

Further, the Eastern Townships Research Centre at the university is the official repository of the archival heritage of the anglophone community, and we have collected, preserved, and made available the personal and institutional records of our region, for example, the Townshippers' Association.

[Translation]

For more than two generations, our education science school has played an important role in the training of teachers who have worked, and who continue to work, in all of Quebec's school boards, particularly in the rural regions.

Our Dobson-Lagassé Entrepreneurship Centre, founded five years ago, has acquired a reputation as being an innovative centre that provides courses, advice and counselling to new entrepreneurs through a wide network of notaries. Hence, all of our cultural resources—our big theatre, our studio theatre, our art gallery, our concert hall, our library and our sports field—provide our community with resources and activities that are unmatched outside of Montreal. But we can and we must do more and do it better, perhaps with the assistance of the progressive 2003 plan for the future of the Champlain Lake area.

We are currently in the process of doing some comprehensive strategic planning for the institution. As our Director, Mr. Robert Poupart, said, the purpose of this planning is to provide for our vitality in the XXI<sup>st</sup> century. We are presuming that he will say that our future vitality is important today, not only for the vitality of the minority community outside of Montreal, but for the majority community.

• (0935)

[English]

Most specifically—again, I say with a fully implemented 2003 action plan—we are ready to play an even more integral role in local development. We wish to expand our activities to better encompass the sense of lifelong learning and to meet the provincial government's recent request for educational institutions to better serve their communities. The phrase is *envers la demande*, as the government's report puts it.

We believe we can expand our service to the professional needs of the majority community, particularly through our long experience in second-language training, a training we always combine with a cultural element. Such service can and has attracted international students to our campus and so makes Quebec known to a wider community.

Further, we can work more closely with local anglophone organizations and local employers to tailor what we can offer to their pressing social and commercial needs. You've just heard in great detail those needs enunciated.

We sincerely believe that the federal government, through its action plan and other initiatives, can play a positive role in helping this institution achieve those goals.

[Translation]

Finally, we have already spoken to some federal representatives about our great plans to establish the equivalent of the Grande Bibliothèque in Montreal. We are hoping to expand and revitalize our library and to make it a great intellectual, cultural and social resource, one that will be able to meet the needs of users, assure the ongoing vitality of our university and minority and cultural communities outside of Montreal and also be open to Quebecers living in the region; a resource that will enable the university to continue attracting people to our small institution.

As our slogan says: "A Small University, a Great Institution".

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Rittenhouse.  
[English]

Now we're going to go to the question period.

[Translation]

We will begin with the official opposition.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours, you have seven minutes.

[English]

It's going to be for seven minutes. It will be seven minutes for both the questions and answers.

[Translation]

Five minutes!

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Are we going back to seven minutes?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Do we agree on five minutes? Agreed.

**Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** We agreed on that at our last meeting.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I apologize, I thought this was for yesterday only.

**An Hon. member:** No.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** All right. Five minutes. Go ahead. We have just lost two minutes.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope that this will not be taken off my time.

[English]

I would like, first of all, to thank each and every one of you for being before us this morning.

Maybe you don't know, but I am a member of Parliament from northern New Brunswick, so you will understand that the question of minority in my area is really important. One part of my riding is 98% francophone, while the other part is probably around 40% anglophone, so it's always important for me to make sure that we balance the services we can offer to each and every community. It's not the same in New Brunswick, because we are the only official languages province in Canada. I realize it may not be the same case for you.

We don't hear really often about your challenges. I'm really pleased to be here, because this time we'll be able to know a bit more about your challenges, and I have just realized that you've always faced some challenges.

I'm pleased to see also that the Community Health and Social Services Network has prepared a document in both the official languages of Canada, even though it's for the minority anglophones in Quebec. I was a bit surprised, maybe, because of the question of financing.

Mr. Van Lierop, you talk about economic development, and, Dr. Rittenhouse, you talk a bit about the entrepreneur. What is the biggest challenge that the entrepreneur of the anglophone minority has to face on a daily basis? Is it the challenge of working with the clients, to try to have services, or to try to find financial assistance, or is it something else?

● (0940)

**Mr. Michael Van Lierop:** I would say it's probably a mixture of all of the above. In a minority situation, language is always part of the equation, but it's also a question of resources. A question of awareness is a big part of the problem as well, and to be perfectly honest with you, it's a question of attitude. A big part of what we try to do at the association is to foster a positive view of living in the townships in young anglophones in particular—people like me, who decide to stay here because we see a future here. Every region in Canada has this problem, but ours is a bit more acute—a lot more acute—because of the language equation.

When it comes to entrepreneurship, I can't say specifically what the one big issue is. There is no one big issue; there are just a lot of little ones, and they pile up fast. We try to address them at the very basic level at least. We encourage people. We develop programs. We have an entire committee dedicated to dealing with the issue of townshippers of tomorrow, who are our future. The committee deals with education, employment opportunities, career opportunities, entrepreneurship, and it encourages people to go out there and learn what's available for them.

It's really a lot about awareness and attitude.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Rittenhouse.

[*English*]

**Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse:** Primarily it would be to attract and retain good employees. Employers need to have confidence that the infrastructure in the community in which their business is set up has the capacity to attract potential employees to come to the region. They need to be confident that the region will be able to serve all their needs in all the areas that we all know about. And sometimes it can hinge on the issue of language. Certainly, support systems to possibly upgrade some non-francophone employees to levels of functional bilingualism are very useful to put in place for employers in the region, and sometimes we get into weird circumstances and situations with respect to that. Frankly, the employers just want opportunities to have that training available, and since it is sometimes expensive, they want some support system to ensure that can occur.

If you are more like an anglophone Quebecker, you're not necessarily eligible for such types of training and so on.

So it's to attract and retain high-quality employees who believe that the infrastructure is there to support their living and their developing in our region, and at certain levels to ensure that if there is a lack in French language skills, it can be better achieved.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** I can't understand the challenge on the question of bilingualism. In my part of the country we take it for granted that we will speak a little bit of English. So if an employer needs some employees, he already knows that the employees will be able to speak with anglophones in the area. But here, you are a little more concentrated, and the employers will also need bilingual employees to be able to give services to the anglophone population. At the same time, they don't have a choice. They also need somebody who is able to work with the francophone population. So probably it is a double challenge.

Is there any possibility in the area to offer a different course to the francophones to speak English and to the anglophones to speak French? I won't have a chance...but maybe in the second round.

● (0945)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** On the second round we can get the answer.

Mr. André.

**Mr. Guy André:** I'm glad to see everybody here. We had a long trip, and I'm glad to be back in Quebec. And I'm glad to be meeting you.

[*Translation*]

The issue of health concerns me. I worked in this sector for many years, before going into politics. I was a responder in a CLSC for 17 years. Because I was bilingual, I was the one who spoke to the members of the anglophone community. However, it must be said that very few people speak English in the riding of Berthier—Maskinongé. However, on occasion, in a crisis, I was asked to intervene because I was the person who could speak both languages.

Over the past few years, I have noted that health care organizations are tending to provide health and social services in both official languages and, in order to achieve this, they make one person responsible for dealing with the anglophone minority. As far as accessibility to health services is concerned, do you think that things are working out well for the anglophone minority? I would like to hear your comments on that issue.

Moreover, Mr. Van Lierop, you made mention of the responders' workload. You talked about 52 per cent and 27 per cent for the anglophone communities. Could you tell me how you would explain that? There is nevertheless an entire social services and community services network. How do you direct your clients to these services? Is it adequate? What problems are you facing under these circumstances?

[*English*]

**Mr. James Carter:** Do you want to start with the first one?

[*Translation*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** For your information, you don't have to touch anything what so ever, everything is automatic. It's modern.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Rachel Garber:** Okay. Maybe I'll answer that one.

My name is Rachel Garber. I'm the executive director of the Townshippers' Association.



Regarding the caseload of the youth protection centre in the western part of the Eastern Townships, this was discussed in some depth at a recent youth seminar. The intervenors around the table agreed that a big part of the very sharp increase in the caseload of English-speaking clients, which actually proportionally doubled in one year, could be attributed directly to the networking project that the Townshippers' Association is leading. The workers were more aware of the problems in the Eastern Townships' English-speaking community. They were more visible to them, so they signalled those problems more often to the youth protection workers. The problems were always there, but now they were more aware of them.

Part of that was because of the knowledge base that the Townshippers' Association has developed and has disseminated to our public partners. Another really important key element is the very strong willingness on the part of the health and social service providers to collaborate, to really look at the situation of the English-speaking community, and to provide the services to the best of their ability. Without that collaboration, and without the very strong support of the Community Health and Social Services Network, which provided a large part of that knowledge base about health determinants in our community, we would not have been able to achieve anything. Those were two very strong key factors.

So actually, the increased caseload of the youth protection board is good news.

• (0950)

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy André:** That is very good to hear, because essentially, you're saying that these networks are providing good screening. That is why more cases are being reported.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** We will now turn the floor over to Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Guy André:** I didn't get an answer, Mr. Godin.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** You only have five minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):** Thank you very much for being here. I appreciate your presentations. As the chair of the committee mentioned, we're from all parties. We work together on official languages because as a government we want to ensure that our initiatives are in fact taking root on the ground and that they're yielding positive results.

We also want to hear about the challenges you face. I want to thank you, in particular, for sharing both with us—for sharing your successes with us and for sharing your challenges with us. As a federal politician, it's always good to hear how federal money, which tends to be way up here, actually makes its way down to communities and helps in communities.

I also like the way you're working together. You had a very strong message on the health system, on the advances that have been made with respect to health. You spoke about it as well in your presentation on the townships. So what I see are different organizations actually working together on the same initiatives, and that's yielding even better results. So I congratulate you on that teamwork.

One of the questions I have is regarding the townships and local community associations. I imagine that you have them. I was just looking through the action plan. And in Quebec, the federal government spent \$4 million to help minority associations to, probably, deliver services in French. We have also announced an increase, another \$120 million over 20 years, specifically for that, as well as \$64 million for the delivery of minority language services.

Can you tell me what sorts of associations you have in the townships? Are they benefiting, once again, from our federal initiatives, or from the government's federal initiatives? And what sorts of challenges do you have with respect to the associations?

**Mr. Michael Van Lierop:** Well, there are a number of associations. I can't really speak on behalf of them. Obviously, for the Townshippers' Association, itself, the funding has been helpful. There's no question. When you speak of federal funding, that's a huge umbrella. There are a lot of different departments that we get funding from. Is it 75 groups?

We are interrelated and we collaborate, just like Jim, for example, with over 75 groups that are members of the association. We are also members, in most cases, of their organizations. So for a region like the Townships, that's a lot, for sure.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Right.

**Mr. Michael Van Lierop:** Maybe, Rachel, you can....

**Mrs. Rachel Garber:** Something on the federal side?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Is it helping with retention?

**Mrs. Rachel Garber:** Yes.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** You're speaking about people who are leaving the Townships—

**Mrs. Rachel Garber:** Yes.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** —but are your associations helping with retention by providing services?

**Mrs. Rachel Garber:** Yes, we are. Some of those groups are quite small, and not all of them receive federal funding. But what the Townshippers' Association has been doing, in collaboration with Bishop's, the Dobson-Lagassé Entrepreneurship Centre, and a number of other organizations, is mounting an initiative to encourage the participation of English speakers in entrepreneurship and the job market.

We have a website called [www.topportunity.ca](http://www.topportunity.ca) that lists the top 40 job prospects in the Eastern Townships—

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Oh, that's good.

**Mrs. Rachel Garber:** —how to qualify for those jobs, and where to get the training for those jobs. We're in the process of evaluating the training programs available in the Eastern Townships to see if there is a good match between the job market and the available educational programs.

We have the collaboration of Job Links, which I think is the only employment centre for English speakers in Quebec, or at least outside of Montreal. We regularly publicize federal job openings in the Eastern Townships, and we have a good response from people.

But I think what Michael mentioned earlier was the problem of attitude. There is a sense of demoralization. The out-migration portrait for the English-speaking community is slightly different from that for French speakers in rural Quebec, in that it is not just all kinds of people who have left, but it is the brightest and the best, the people with the most education—

**A voice:** The young.

**Ms. Rachel Garber:** Sometimes, yes, the young and the most mobile, and even the most bilingual. Now the level of bilingualism among young townshippers is proportionally twice that of young French speakers. At least that's what was reported in the last census.

That portrait is changing. The level of bilingualism might not be high enough or as recognized by employers, for example, as it could be. That's something we're working on: to create awareness in both the francophone and anglophone communities about the asset of fluency in English. Someone who has perfect French and a bit of English might be prioritized in hiring over someone who has more fluency in English, but maybe their French needs a little work.

So we want to work with everyone on that—and I think we have been—and there are other groups collaborating with us.

• (0955)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Merci.

We have to continue; your five minutes is over.

We're going to go to another round.

When we look at the plan of action and the money received, I heard from Bishop's University, for example—if I got it right—that they didn't receive any money.

**Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse:** Since education is a provincial jurisdiction, one has to be quite creative to get access to these funds. One has to create the mechanisms of partnership with other organizations with which we are providing a needed service and that can access the support money. So to some degree, I don't see direct funding for us.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Yes, you don't see it.

Regarding the money in the action plan that came into Quebec, for example, if you look at it by percentage, do you feel you have received what you're supposed to receive?

**Mr. James Carter:** What we've identified to you is the health envelope, the \$26.7 million. And the answer is yes, we feel there was a proportional and equitable allocation of the federal action plan moneys, the \$119 million, to our communities. We have worked not only with Health Canada but also with our francophone colleagues, and we have two consultative committees to the federal minister. The action plan delivered an equitable allocation to Quebec. This was accepted and understood by our communities, as well as our francophone colleagues outside Quebec.

I'm talking about the health envelope, because some of the other issues raised today.... You see a different message here. There seems to be, with health, more evidence of the investment. You see frustration with the other elements of the action plan. It's very hard to see the tangible benefits. I think there's generally a consensus that we did well with the health envelope, but we're very frustrated with other aspects of the action plan that have either not arrived or have come extremely late.

• (1000)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** There was talk about Bishop's University. It seems you're saying that you're getting clients from outside of the country. Do you get clients from inside the country, for example, New Brunswick or Ontario? Could you give us a little bit on that?

**Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse:** As I said, 45% of our student body are Canadians from outside of Quebec. It's a significant proportion. We get them from everywhere.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** The challenge we have, for example, if we look at a francophone outside of Quebec.... I would say that almost every doctor who comes along, even if they're francophone, is going to finish by being able to speak and perform in English. I think where you have the problem is when you get to the nurses and the people who help them.

**Mrs. Rachel Garber:** Language training for francophone service providers in the health care system is one aspect of the action plan we're beginning to see results on. I must say that those service providers have been very eager to avail themselves of English as a second language classes, which they can take through the health and social service funding.

We're also working, at the other end, to have bilingual persons whose first language is English come to the Eastern Townships to do internships and eventually become integrated into the health care system here.

You're right. In the health care professions, language is extremely crucial. I think that in working from both angles, we're beginning to attack that problem.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I see that Jean-Claude is not here.

I'm going to go to Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Good morning, everyone. I'm very pleased to be here today. The committee has travelled here and there to try to understand the challenges facing francophone and anglophone minorities, an issue that is very important to us. This is the first time that we are meeting the anglophone minority in Quebec.

You talked at great length about the challenges and you are very engaged in your respective sectors. What are your biggest achievements? How did you go about obtaining some success? Could we ensure this success in future initiatives?

**Mr. James Carter:** I would like to answer that question.

It is partnership. Indeed, our successes on the ground are the result of a partnership between public institutions and communities, whether this be about identifying community needs, planning services, complementarity agreements between institutions and community resources.

It is all about partnership. Indeed, \$22 million of our investment, or rather your investment in us, are put into the health and social services system. That enables human resources— especially the francophones — in the various agencies to improve their front line services, such as services to allow people to stay at home, Info-Santé, or to help reorganize the Health and Social Services Centres, for example, to reformulate their programming in order to reach the anglophone clients in their jurisdiction.

Indeed, the partnership that resulted from this \$4 million investment encouraged greater capacity in the public system. The networks and partnerships are now formally linked together as a common service point and we are hoping that the communities and the public system agencies will eventually be part of this.

We have another priority. This priority is a partnership with the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. Consequently, any investment made here, in Quebec, in the health care sector, must be part and parcel of the programs, plans, reorganizations, reforms and legislation of Quebec. The formula for our success lies in the great cooperation with our colleagues, here in Quebec.

• (1005)

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** You have one minute remaining.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I still have one minute left? I can share it with somebody else, with Mr. Petit.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Good morning. I will put my one-minute question to Mr. Rittenhouse.

You represent Bishop University. If I am not mistaken, a college is also associated with your university.

**Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse:** No, this used to be the case back in the 1930s, but the two split. Bishop's College School is now a private high school.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** That was it?

**Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse:** That was it.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** All right. There was a football team.

**Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse:** Bishop's University has the football team.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** I would like to ask you a question. It is along the same line as the question put to you by Mr. Godin. In fact, he asked you a question which I would like you to answer in greater detail.

You mentioned a plan that was adopted in 2003. How does the university receive its share? I did not understand. Could you explain further, please?

**Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse:** After being invited to attend this committee meeting, I asked people sitting around the table at the university what they knew about the 2003 Official Languages Action

Plan. Absolutely nothing! No one even knew about it. That was not exactly the best...

[*English*]

Is he talking about Champlain College? Is that what he's talking about?

[*Translation*]

**An honourable member:** Non, I do not think so.

**Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse:** That is not necessary. We have many people who spend a great deal of time trying to secure grants, bursaries and financial assistance at various levels. In my opinion, it is always good to know that it is possible to obtain money to subsidize certain initiatives, although we have not analyzed the likelihood of receiving money nor have we taken any action in that regard. However, no one really knew about the Official Languages Action Plan.

We are not like the Townshippers' Association, which testified here today and which is totally involved in looking for financial support. As I said, it is somewhat difficult for a teaching establishment to get access to federal money for its projects. Because of that, as I said at the outset of my presentation, I can tell you next to nothing about the 2003 Official Languages Action Plan. Nevertheless, with the assistance of numerous partners in the region, the university may do something to improve the situation of the community and we are prepared to do our work.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** We will continue with Mr. D'Amours.

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

[*English*]

For my turn, you will understand that I will not talk about football. But I would like to continue on my first-round question about the bilingualism of the employees. The biggest challenge for francophones is to speak in English and not be too shy. I understand that for an anglophone, the biggest challenge is to speak French and not be too shy. It's not a question of understanding the other language. It's a little bit easier, I would say.

What is the challenge you face? Is it a question of you not having the infrastructure to make sure that the anglophones can have the resources to have a conversation course in French and vice versa, because of the question of the entrepreneur or the business? What is available right now and what is not available to make sure that your community can look to the future?

•(1010)

**Mr. Michael Van Lierop:** Concerning the services that are available for FSL, French second language training, there are some. Admittedly, many of these are at private colleges and so on, courses, night courses and so on. There has been some effort by the provincial government, through Emploi-Québec, to provide services as well. But by and large, it's pretty mixed, very hodgepodge. So there is a definite need, not just among low-income anglophones, but that runs the whole gamut. Basically, the infrastructure is not there, at least not in my opinion, and it's desperately needed. I think maybe 20 years ago the community wasn't aware of it, but today we're very aware that the need is there and that we should make sure that our young English speakers are very bilingual, so that at the very least they have no linguistic reason to leave. If they're leaving anyway, that's their choice, but at least they have no concrete reason to.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** But at the same time, do you have a problem with literacy inside your community?

**Mr. Michael Van Lierop:** Literacy is definitely a problem. There's a community group that specializes in that, Literacy in Action, in Lennoxville as well. But certainly that is a problem. It's probably not unique to our community, but it's definitely a problem, and it does not help.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Thank you. Do you want to add something?

**Mrs. Rachel Garber:** I just wanted to add that in the last census, two-thirds of English speakers in the Eastern Townships said they were bilingual and only one-third of the francophones said they were bilingual. So there is a certain functional bilingualism there. I think that needs to be improved a lot in order to take hold in entrepreneurship and employment, and to result in better jobs, not just sweeping floors.

But there's also the attitude that Michael mentioned before and there's a problem of demoralization. As someone has said, the brightest and best have left and here we are. So it's sort of the leftovers. If someone is bilingual, or even speaks a little French, and goes to another province, they will be recognized as fully bilingual much sooner than they will be recognized and given that job opportunity on the basis of their bilingualism in their own community. So this is a problem that's pulling some of the better-educated young people away, and for those young people who are left here, they're feeling like the leftovers. There's a problem with motivation that we are trying to address.

I don't know if Jim had something to add.

**Mr. James Carter:** Our surveys of our own community in terms of access to the health system, for example, are quite indicative. We probed to find out why anglophones may not use the system even if an institution might have a service available, or why they won't use English in an emergency room in a hospital when they could. It's very interesting what we learned. There is a shyness, even if you're bilingual. There may be a shyness in a circumstance, when you stand out, to request a service in English, for reasons that you don't want to create some kind of supplementary demand on a very overstretched system, or you might be concerned that if you ask for a service in English, there may be a delay in getting that service.

But there is a shyness, and often our francophone colleagues say, well, anglophones don't use our services. Often it may be that anglophones are less likely to go to a public institution to get a service to solve the problem. They stay in their communities, and often when they do hit the public system, they're in crisis at that point. But there is definitely an aspect, even for bilingual anglophones. There is a shyness about the environment of a public institution that they may not feel either linguistically or culturally affiliated with.

•(1015)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** The minutes have gone past, but, Michael, if you would like to comment, I propose that you do it on my time.

**Mr. Michael Van Lierop:** Okay.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** We'll go to André.

**Mr. Guy André:** Mr. Godin, you owe me three minutes that I gave you in New Brunswick. So you'll give me seven minutes on this one?

I gave him three minutes in New Brunswick.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** You don't know how much it cost for those minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy André:** Mr. Carter, I will ask you my question once again, because you have not yet answered it.

As regards the organization of services in the health network at present, what could we do to improve accessibility to health services?

**Mr. James Carter:** In Quebec, people are entitled to service in English, because this is guaranteed under the Quebec Health Act. So, the legislation has very clear guidelines for our partners in the health care system. From time to time, public institutions officially identify services that are available in English. For example, an executive director and his or her staff may announce that a home care program is available—in other words that there is a multidisciplinary team and enough resources to provide services in English on an on-going basis. The executive director will make it clear that the institution is ready to be part of this home care program. We have an obligation to ensure that there is a genuine offer of service in English.

There are initiatives in place in all parts of Quebec to identify services. Next spring, the government must approve all of these plans. This is a very important instrument for guiding what goes on in the network.

The other important factor is a desire on the part of professionals to improve their ability to provide better service to their English-speaking clients. All our efforts and successes are based on the desire of health care professionals to provide better service to these clients. This was very encouraging and helpful for example in the case of an institution that will be working closely with a group of volunteers to improve a program for seniors. We mentioned a few specific examples earlier of how this works in practice.

**Mr. Guy André:** That's fine.

My question is to Mr. Rittenhouse.

[English]

You talked about a project you want to develop at Bishop's. I want to hear a little more about your project and the service you want to offer to the

[Translation]

group of people

[English]

or the population the project will serve.

**Dr. Jonathan Rittenhouse:** Merci.

You're going to visit Bishop's this afternoon, and Madam Teasdale will be with you. So she could provide

• (1020)

[Translation]

other ideas about this major project to ensure that you get a good understanding of what we are trying to do.

[English]

This project is an initiative by the university, with the support of the Townshippers', to try to be a learning commons. And to some degree this is the area in which potentially we could access federal funds, possibly through the 2003 action plan, possibly through other federal initiatives or funding opportunities. The idea behind it is to replicate the success stories of francophone communities outside Quebec by having a place where people can have resources and feel a community involvement. The idea is to create a larger library, as I said in my little discourse

[Translation]

which would be the equivalent, in the Eastern Townships, of the Grande Bibliothèque nationale in Montreal.

[English]

And we would provide an open-door policy to the community, as opposed to being the university library. It is more a *resource totale* that will provide as much as possible all kinds of services to the community, our students, the anglophone community in the region, and the francophone community that wants to access English language material or information that isn't quite as available elsewhere.

However, libraries these days aren't just buildings with books; they are *branchée* everywhere. They are completely connected. We hope as much as possible, in the plan we are presenting to various levels of government and organizations, to provide a service to what

we would call the off-island anglophone community to access information, to provide services, to be a community resource similar to the way certain very positive occurrences have happened in the French-speaking communities outside Quebec.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you.

I wish to raise a question, but I know Mr. Van Lierop wants to make comments to Mr. D'Amours and I'd like him to be able to.

**Mr. Michael Van Lierop:** It was a general comment, because I have to leave very quickly. One of the things I wanted to say that I thought was very relevant and Madame Boucher alluded to is that it's fabulous, in my opinion, and certainly in the opinion of the association, I'm sure, that you decided to come to Sherbrooke. The official languages minority support program...obviously the francophone minority in the rest of Canada tends to get a lot of the attention and the English minority in Quebec often gets tarred with the brush of rich Westmounters, and it's not the case.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** No, no.

**Mr. Michael Van Lierop:** It's not the case. That's what I'm trying to plead with you today, to be aware that the English minority in Quebec is more than just Montreal. Sure, there are problems in Montreal. There's no question. I'm not trying to deny that. But it's especially acute here in the Townships and in the regions. So thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** That's why we are here and not in Montreal.

**Mr. Michael Van Lierop:** Exactly.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I'll leave it to Mr. Petit for about four minutes. That's what we've got left.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My question is to Ms. Garber.

You tabled your paper in both official languages. I thank you for that, that was a very good thing to do. It shows that you act on what you say. In this document, there is something I find interesting as a lawyer. You say and I quote:

For example, the Youth Protection Office in Cowansville reports that in March 2006, 52 per cent of its caseload involved English speakers, although English speakers represent only about 23 per cent of the population in the surrounding area.

That figure is high, particularly for youth protection services. If the figure applied to ordinary courts, I would understand somewhat, but here we are talking about young people.

Why has there been this increase? Is that something you discovered, or was that a well-known fact? What can be done about this? If you make the point to the committee, it is because you want to draw our attention to the problem.

[English]

**Mrs. Rachel Garber:** An excellent question.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Thank you.

•(1025)

[English]

**Mrs. Rachel Garber:** The child and youth protection centre in Cowansville has given us this figure.

The proportion has always been high, but it's especially higher this past year because of the greater awareness of teachers, nurses, and helping professionals of the socio-economic problems in the English-speaking community. So that attitude of demoralization that Michael mentioned earlier comes into play here.

We did a series of focus groups throughout the Eastern Townships with high school students about two years ago. One of them said that if you want to live in the Townships, you have two choices: one is to join the Hells Angels and the other is to live on welfare. This is a rather stark choice.

But with that kind of attitude, and with families who have low incomes or generally unfavourable situations turning to—I was going to say criminal activities, but social problems—drug addictions or whatever, those persons would be more at risk.

I think that comes into play, but I think the good news is that through the networking program, we are now meeting those needs. That is exactly why the percentage is so high now, because those needs are being signalled and the population is feeling trust that the system will respond to those needs. Perhaps a few years ago that level of trust wasn't there. So the portrait is changing.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Maybe we could get your comments, but one minute.

[Translation]

**Mr. James Carter:** This is similar to the question asked by Mr. André. At the moment, the Centre Jeunesse is trying to work very actively with the disadvantaged members of the community, in partnership with the English-speaking community. These measures have had an impact on the services provided by the Centre Jeunesse that works closely with the community to target a vulnerable segment of the population.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I would like to thank you very much for appearing before us today.

[English]

I would like to thank you a million times for being here with us today. As I said a few minutes ago, we are pleased we are here in Sherbrooke and not in west Montreal—here with you in the field. That's what it is all about, to go across the country and get to areas to talk to people.

I'm sure the things you have told us will be helpful to us as we prepare our report for the House of Commons.

I will adjourn for five minutes. We'll start the next session in five minutes.

•(1028)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

•(1044)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I would like to welcome you all to the second part of this morning's meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

This committee was established about 25 years ago, and this is the first time we are going across the country to meet people directly in the field, talk to people, and give them the opportunity to present us with a brief and explain their challenges. At the same time, we'll be looking at how the 2003 action plan is working. If you have comments on whether you feel it's working or not, we want to hear from you.

We started in Newfoundland and were in New Brunswick yesterday. We're here in Sherbrooke today. We'll be in Toronto tomorrow and in Sudbury on Friday. The trip will continue in January, when we will go to the west part of the country. After that we will write a report to the House of Commons.

I won't take any more of your time on this. I will open it for your comments. I'll give you ten minutes each for your comments, and then we'll go around the table with a five-minute question and answer session.

Mr. Robert Donnelly.

•(1045)

**Mr. Robert Donnelly (President, Voice of English-Speaking Québec):** Good morning.

[Translation]

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Robert Donnelly.

[English]

I'm president of the Voice of English-Speaking Québec, which is based in Quebec City.

This morning you had some organizations presenting some ideas. In the second half this morning you're going to get a presentation from me, representing one of the 25 organizations within the QCGN, the Quebec Community Groups Network.

I'm also a member of the executive of the QCGN, and when I'm done you'll be hearing from Mr. Riordon. He's the treasurer and will be speaking on behalf of the QCGN. So you're going to hear from one of the organizations, and following that you'll hear from the umbrella group, which is the QCGN. Mr. Riordon will have some interesting things to say about budgets and support for the communities.

[Translation]

I think I should come to Sherbrooke more often. I didn't know that highway 55 was finished and that it had four, sometimes five, lanes. It is very impressive.

The Voice from English-Speaking Quebec, the VEQ, is an association with 1,100 members from the Quebec community. This morning, the representative from Bishop's University said that he was part of the main English-language institution outside Montreal. The VEQ may not be as large an organization, we are one of the most dynamic. I will try to explain why.

In a regional community of some 700,000 inhabitants, 1,100 members is not a very significant percentage.

I didn't know what type of consultation process that's happening today. Perhaps I should have brought more documents with me, rather than just two photocopied pages, but the ideas will come nevertheless.

I will start by explaining what the VEQ is and talk about the Vitality Logic Model concept. I will conclude by making a few comments about the VEQ as a regional association, our objectives and our projects over the next three years.

I will read the first three paragraphs of our paper in English to tell you a little about what we do. The French version of the paper is very similar to the one in English.

[English]

VEQ is an autonomous, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of a dynamic English-speaking community in the greater Quebec City and Chaudière–Appalaches regions. Anybody who is interested in having that healthy community is obviously welcome in VEQ. VEQ believes in an all-inclusive form of community building that includes individuals, citizen groups, and structured institutions, which are all considered to play an important part in the building of a strong, dynamic local social fabric

As a result of its policy of inclusiveness, VEQ has seen its network of contacts grow steadily since 1982. We will have our 25th anniversary celebrations of the year the organization was founded next spring. Currently, VEQ maintains active partnerships with approximately 60 community groups and has a membership that is now around 1,100. VEQ's internal administration structure represents a cross-section of local anglophone and even francophone community members.

The organization is overseen by a board of directors that is made up of 21 volunteers. The board is comprised of individuals who are active in the local English-speaking community. Currently representatives from the English school board, the business community, churches, and health and social services serve on the VEQ board.

Day-to-day operations are managed by VEQ's executive director, with the help of a contingent of subcommittees and project coordinators. The VEQ central office in Quebec is staffed by two full-time people and sometimes a third person on individual projects.

VEQ's employees and executive director refer all significant issues to the appropriate subcommittees for guidance and direction. Subsequently, the chair of the subcommittee reports all progress back to the board of directors.

We're proud to say that we have an active board of 21 members, with 19 in position now. We have our six meetings a year. The vast majority show up, and they are involved in what we're doing and in giving us feedback.

VEQ's participation in the local English community can be summarized in several ways. First, VEQ provides information referrals to individuals requiring services in English. You've heard a lot this morning from Jim Carter about health and social services. Before that whole area was in place, in the last five years, VEQ has been the starting point for people to ask where they could get English services and how they could be helped.

The referral service attracts a wide clientele, from community groups looking to advertise their services, to anglophone residents looking for specific services in English, to newcomers in the community who require a complete overview of what is offered and where such services are located. One of VEQ's widely used services is our job bank, which lists available jobs in the region that require English language skills.

VEQ is also actively participating in the English-speaking community by organizing social and community events and by serving as a key stakeholder in advocacy concerns. In this regard, VEQ's primary interest is to support the various English institutions that make up the local anglophone community.

The vitality of small communities is directly influenced by the degree to which institutions cater to local needs. Cultural organizations, schools, hospitals, seniors' residences, media outlets, and other social services are all important when considering the role of institutions toward the well-being of a community and, I might add, in helping to create a sense of belonging.

This sense of belonging is what leads me to a second document, what we're calling a conceptual vitality logic model. You will see that it's listed as a QCGN conceptual model. In fact, as a member of the executive, I'm also chair of the community development committee, an initiative within the QCGN. We've been active, and we are working toward answers for the communities in guidance and in help in community development.

The important thing to note is that community development is not an end in itself. Community development is a means to an end. It's one of the pieces of the puzzle. People sometimes think community development is everything. Well, it's part of it, but it's not all in terms of that. So this little grid, of which you should have a copy in English or in French, apart from all the different colours, is just to show you that there are different things.

● (1050)

The situation box on the left shows the decline in vitality in the minority English-speaking communities in the province of Quebec. That is the situation. I think you heard of it this morning. If you look at the two-page handout, you'll see a couple of grids that look at the decrease in the anglophone population in the census from 1991 to 2001. We're pretty sure that the 2005 census is not going to change. On the last page you have some straightforward numbers, anglos leaving the Quebec region, for example. We've been working on that problem, as have most of the organizations within the QCGN.

As you go across the page you'll see the way different aspects will work on the problem. The first blue box is the indication of vitality in all the various areas. You will see that health and social services, in the middle, is only one of the five listed there. Although you've heard a lot about that this morning, there are other areas that are also of great importance.

The big blue box shows QCGN levels of influence—societal, sectoral, community, family, and individual—as you work your way down.

What are the vitality investments? We work through policy development, research, community development, representation, and networking. That's what I meant before about community development being part of the picture; it's not the whole answer.

Who are the beneficiaries? Canadian society, all the way down to individuals in the communities.

The last two boxes show what we are working towards in the short term and long term. In the short term, there's strengthening community participation, developing regional and government participation, increasing sectoral participation, increasing the sense of improvement and sense of belonging, and support for the needs identified by the English-speaking community.

In the long term, some of them continue, of course, this increased sense of community and belonging—this whole concept of vitality, which is in the title of this logic model; increased security, health, and well-being; increased services in English; increased education services; increased employment; and increased levels of cultural activity. I'm sure everybody can agree these are all wonderful things, but they're always spoken of in the sense of making them better, making progress, and that's where we think the vitality can be acted on.

The QCGN works primarily through funding by PCH/Heritage Canada, and that is one of those 25 organizations. We get approximately \$150,000 of core funding through that organization. We sometimes get grants of \$30,000 or \$40,000 for individual projects. We are not limited, as an organization, to only federal funding. We apply for provincial grants from Fonds Jeunesse Québec and other areas as well, because that's just as important for the dossiers we're working on. The key is community vitality, and community development is an important aspect of that in terms of where we're heading.

As one of the typical organizations of the maybe 25 within the QCGN, we're not different from many of the others. We have to give our action plan, strategic plan, a year ahead of time to PCH before it's approved. We're now working on a two-year strategic plan just for our organization. We had meetings with our board. We communicated with our members. We've spent the last two months going out and meeting 200 members of our community in groups of one, two, five, and ten—church groups, social groups, etc.—to get their feedback on their perceptions of VEQ, what they think VEQ should be doing, whether we're on the right track. We bring the results of that to our board and we say this is what we'll be working on next year and the year after—and it's still vitality. The three things in VEQ, as you'll see, are directly tied to stopping the downsizing.

How do we work on that in Quebec? In two ways. We work with newcomers coming into Quebec, especially anglophone newcomers, with Laval University, and a lot of business bringing in people. It's very important to make sure that after two, three, or four years, when they decide if they're going to stay here or go back to Toronto, Calgary, Detroit, Los Angeles.... We need them to want to stay.

The second thing is our youth initiative, working with youth to encourage them in terms of job possibilities. If they go to university, there has to be a desire to want to come back to Quebec because there is something to offer.

•(1055)

The second key element is going to be maintaining and controlling our institutions. I just heard on the radio coming here today that in the Châteauguay area they are talking about closing three English schools. This is the reality all the time in Quebec. Last year in Quebec City, on Base Valcartier, there was a move to close the school and send the kids to the two English schools in the centre of the city. Vets got involved and lobbied because they thought this was important as an institution.

The last thing is simply creating a sense of belonging. Why? Because if you feel that there is a community, and you're part of it, then you think it's important.

Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Donnelly.

Now we're going to go to Mr. Riordon from the Quebec Community Groups Network.

**Mr. Peter Riordon (Treasurer, Quebec Community Groups Network):** Thank you. On behalf of the 25 member groups of the Quebec Community Groups Network, I wish to express our appreciation for the opportunity to put our reality on the record and to thank you specifically for coming to somewhere outside Montreal, although that is an important area too.

The federal action plan and the ongoing support delivered by the Department of Canadian Heritage and some of the other federal ministries provide desperately needed seed funds for important efforts being undertaken by the volunteers of the English community to attempt to rebuild or at least sustain the anglophone community in Quebec.

What are the results? Well, there are some good results. There are some great results that we should all celebrate, and I think we do celebrate them, and we'd like to share them with you.

You heard Jim Carter this morning talking about the field of access to public health care in English, in which Health Canada continues to support a significant program. That preliminary result suggests it's making worthwhile progress. The program is in the middle of a five-year term, and it's to be hoped that support will be continued beyond the first five years. Community development carried out by our member groups is funded by Canadian Heritage primarily, and it is a basic truth that these groups could not generally survive without that assistance. Most groups are making valiant efforts to do their best but with very limited resources and in difficult circumstances. The efforts are appreciated, but the results are not sufficient to conclude that the community enjoys a great deal of vitality, except for a few notable outstanding exceptions.



The recent injection of Canadian Heritage funding through Quebec's education ministry, which was actually quite an achievement given the history of that relationship, will allow for the creation of 15 community learning centres in the English sector. These learning centres are expected to strengthen both communities and their English schools by helping them to more effectively work together. Hopes are high that this model will be productive and that it may lead to replication in the future.

Sectoral groups, apart from the regional groups, are present in the areas of arts, drama, media, rural and agricultural heritage, adult and distance education, and other areas. They all benefit from essential support and buttress the community in useful ways.

I am very proud of the accomplishments of many of these groups who are working with actually very limited resources but are making a difference in their communities. All of this is much appreciated and provides much welcome support for the English community, but if we stand back and take a broader perspective, how is the English community in Quebec doing? I think we've already heard this morning a number of comments about how the English community is doing.

Let's just take a look back. Over the past three and a half decades, more than a quarter of a million English Canadians have left Quebec. The exodus continues. The remaining English population is older than its French cohort because many of those leaving have been the younger and the better educated and the more mobile. The remaining youth are less well-educated and consequently suffer a higher rate of unemployment and lower socio-economic success.

Infrastructure, such as schools, within the English community is aging. We have schools that are a hundred years old. There is no real source of replenishment for the community. Immigration is largely blocked by legislation. The birth rate for this demographic, of course, is very low due to the high mean age of the population.

● (1100)

It is a fact that a thriving English community in Quebec is a valuable asset to both the province and our great country. But realistically, if we stand back and look at what is happening and what the trends are, these trends do not bode well for the survival of this national asset if the present levels of support persist into the future.

The minority French and English populations in Canada are very similar in size, just short of a million each. The reports I get of the francophone minority outside of Quebec give me some encouragement that the support they are receiving is achieving positive results. I celebrate that. We all celebrate it. However, it is time to examine whether Canada wants to maintain a population of anglophones in Quebec or whether it might be more politically expedient to allow us all to emigrate or die out.

I ask you, what does Canada want?

The QCGN, and I and my colleagues, want to keep our great country bilingual and to ensure an ongoing and vital anglophone community in Quebec. Please ensure that we have the tools and the support for success.

Thank you.

● (1105)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you.

We'll now go to the member from the official opposition, Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours.

You have five minutes, sir, and that includes the answer.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. Riordon, for being with us this morning to discuss your situation.

What you said about the exodus of the young population is really not a good thing to hear this morning. A quarter of a million anglophones have left the province of Quebec to go elsewhere. Can you tell me if that exodus is because of the situation with employment, where there's opportunity elsewhere; the lack of infrastructure; or the difficulties involved in staying together in the same area?

**Mr. Peter Riordon:** I think we are all familiar with the history of the past few decades. Certainly, there was a climate in this province that members of the anglophone community were not comfortable with some time ago. I think that is no longer the case. The anglophone community in Quebec now, I know, is not so much worried about the political uncertainty of the future and that sort of thing. But I think you've already heard this morning the reality that the best and the brightest have left.

The youth who are not leaving, those who remain, tend to be less well educated, have lower employability, and low socio-economic success. It's not a bright picture. You've heard from Rachel Garber of Townshippers' some of the interventions in the youth area. The interventions are very positive, but the needs are very large.

I think the demographic that describes the anglophone community in Quebec now is a skewed demographic. It's skewed because of the fact that some of the better educated, more mobile leaders of the community, if you will, are not here. This leaves a deficit, and it creates a greater challenge for those of us who are still here to try to put things together and make them work better.

The other aspect of that, which I think is very evident, is that neither Bob nor I are youngsters. There's a serious shortage of youth leadership in the English sector. We're very delighted to have people like Michael Van Lierop, who was here earlier, as a youth member of the community stepping forward to accept a leadership role. That is tremendously encouraging, but when you look around the table of the Quebec Community Groups Network, you see a lot of gray hair—in fact, sometimes you don't see any hair. In a sense, that's part of society, but it is a more pronounced problem in the anglophone community in Quebec because of the fact that so many....

If you look at the demographic analysis from recent census figures, you will see in the Quebec anglophone community that there is a stressed youth sector here. There is an older population segment, which I probably represent along with Bob, who may have a reasonable education, have careers behind them, and have perhaps retired or are about to retire, and Quebec is home and that's fine; it's a great place to be. But in the middle there's a hole. If you look at the census figures, there's a hole there. Where are the 30- to 50-year-olds in the anglophone community? Well, they live in Calgary or Vancouver or Toronto; they don't live in Quebec. That is a major deficit in our community.

It means that the leaders who should be taking Bob's and my place aren't there. It means that the stronger economic cohort is not there. It creates a serious question mark over the future of our community, and I would hope that the whole question of replenishment of the anglophone community in Quebec can be addressed more constructively in the years to come than has been the case in the years gone by.

• (1110)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you.

Now, Mr. André.

**Mr. Guy André:** Hello, Mr. Donnelly and Mr. Riordon. I'm glad to be here today to talk to you a little bit about what you have been saying about the youth. I am thinking about what you're saying and wondering if...

[*Translation*]

I often speak with people in industries, manufacturers and employers. Increasingly, the context is the globalization of international trade. If these people want to do business with the United States under the Free Trade Agreement, francophones often have to learn English and anglophones French. We cannot put our head in the sand. We know that English is often the language of international relations.

You're talking about the fact that young people between 30 and 50 were leaving. What I am hearing is these business people have an increasing need for bilingual employees to work in their companies, to do business with foreign countries. English is the second language in China. The same is true of Taiwan and some European countries, but not all.

In my opinion, the Montreal community is organized. The anglophone and francophone communities in Quebec are well organized for social services, health care services and universities. McGill University is a great university. We'll be visiting Bishop's University a little later. There are major infrastructures in place to provide services. And yet we know that these individuals I was speaking about have certain needs with respect to international trade.

Do these young anglophones feel a greater sense of belonging to Canada? It may be easier and more natural for them to go to Ontario than it is for young francophones, who feel a greater sense of belonging to Quebec and the francophonie, because francophones are in the majority in Quebec.

I would like to hear your views on this.

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** I teach in a public, English-language Cegep in Quebec City that has 1,000 students. It is St. Lawrence Campus of Champlain College, which is located in Lennoxville as well.

The vast majority of our students are francophones who come to do their Cegep in French; that is the choice they make. As you say, people have to be bilingual now when they graduate.

I have been teaching there for 30 years. Clearly, from year-to-year, there are more students who want to go to university outside Quebec City. That means not just Ontario and New Brunswick, but also Montreal. When students leave for three, four or five years, it is difficult to get them back.

Two years ago, in 2004, a study was done of 1,080 secondary IV, secondary V and Cegep students. They were asked how they saw their future. The answers of the 400 English-speaking students were then separated out, but the answers were the same for all respondents: the priority was employment. For anglophones, even in Quebec City, bilingualism was not an asset for finding a job. At least they are not convinced it is. However, the Quebec City Chamber of Commerce always says the opposite, but young people do not seem convinced of this. For their part, francophones associate their university education with the vitality of the community they go to study, as you just said. They wonder whether there will be a future for them in the place they go to study. However, they do have some reasons to come back to their community: friends, a job, family and so on. When a group of friends leave to go to university, they all stick together in their new community. So that is a problem. We do a lot of work with young people to try to organize certain activities to offset the situation, but of course it is a huge job.

Even newcomers help us out a great deal. They could actually replace those that have left. They want to become bilingual, but they also want to remain in Quebec City. We can succeed in keeping and integrating them into our community.

• (1115)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Mr. Lemieux.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Thank you once again for your presentations. I thank you as well, sincerely, for sharing both the successes and the challenges that you're facing. As I mentioned, as MPs we all have the common interest of wanting to know that the federal dollars are actually making a difference in communities in helping you overcome challenges.

I'd like to congratulate you as well on your model. That's an excellent model. I'd like to congratulate you on the work you put into it.

What it tells me is that in measuring vitality, we have to understand what we mean by vitality. We need to know how to tell whether our vitality is increasing or decreasing in order to understand whether we're moving in the right direction or not. So I really appreciate the work you put into that. It's very simple to follow, which is a great challenge, as you know, with any kind of model—making it detailed enough but simple enough.

One of the things I noted was networking. You're saying community associations are a piece of the solution, but not the sole piece. I was looking at networking. I think networking is essential because it's a way for you to understand your priorities among all the different anglophone associations that exist in Quebec and align yourselves among each other to make sure you're working together in the same direction. As well, it's a way for you to share your successes, understand the challenges each of you is facing, and share information. That's probably a key thing; we were talking before this meeting about how there's often a lack of communication, in that we might have a program, but it's not known down at the community level or at the association level.

You mentioned one success that I was very pleased about, the 15 community learning centres. As we've been moving across Canada I've been mentioning this arrangement we've put in place—\$1 billion over four years—and you're the first one who has said it's actually showing up here in the community learning centres. Rachel is one who said they know about that and they're working on that. Again, I think that probably happens through networking, through keeping in communication with each other. What can we as a government do in the networking area to help improve networks among yourselves?

Second, you were talking about anglophones leaving Quebec for a variety of different factors, some political and some economic. What can we do as a government to help you retain an anglophone presence in Quebec?

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** I have a quick comment and then I'll let Peter answer.

The grid, as you'll see at the very bottom in small letters, was actually done by Russ Kueber, who is a member of CHSSN, the Jim Carter group. That's how much we depend on him, and he is an expert in community development. I just want to give him credit for that.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** There's that networking.

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** Second, you're absolutely right about networking with an organization like the QCGN. People come from Gaspé, from the Maggies, from the lower north shore. We have three meetings a year for two or three days; they're serious meetings.

It's expensive to bring all those people together, but for me the value of networking—although there's a lot more to the meetings than that—is very important.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Riordon:** You've touched on some very interesting questions. First of all, the Quebec Community Groups Network is an umbrella group. As Bob has just indicated, we ensure that our members get together several times a year. We don't think we get together often enough. If you want to know why we don't, it's very simple economics. When you bring in somebody from the St. Lawrence north shore and the Magdalen Islands to meet with somebody from the Outaouais and Montreal, it costs about \$50,000 a meeting. We don't have the resources to do that very often.

We've just talked about the community learning centres. Part of that program, as you are probably aware, involves equipping those 15 centres with videoconferencing facilities, which are pretty scarce in most of our regions. We are hoping that as that network grows we

may be able to have a higher level of face-to-face videoconferencing opportunities in the future.

The fact of the matter is that a great many of our communities are connected by fibre optic broadband facilities—not everywhere. Our school system has had significant encouragement and some support from the province to implement that program, so where we have English schools we have broadband access, for the most part. That means it is feasible to set up videoconferencing centres.

Fifteen centres across the province won't cut it to get our members together, but it's a start. If that program can grow, we may look at a future in which we can talk on a regular basis and share successes, information, programs, and all the good things that happen when we network.

When we ask people what is the greatest value of having a meeting and getting together, my experience over the last 30 years in the community tells me that it's very consistently the opportunity to network with colleagues who are interested in the same thing. That's where we really learn how a problem we're facing was solved and what approach to try. We wouldn't have known about it if we hadn't met one of our colleagues at a meeting who told us what they did and how well it worked. So networking is tremendously important.

• (1120)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I want to go in the direction of people leaving the area and not coming back. I just want to know your comments.

I think it's a mixture of everything, really. Sometimes we don't know why they leave, but in the world of today, especially here in Canada, they leave to go to university somewhere in a metro area and don't come back. After they've been gone for four or seven years, they don't like to come back. That happens not only here. If you talk to farmers in the prairies where it's all anglophone, people are not coming back to the farms. If you look at home in the peninsula where we have small villages, in one week 70 people left because of the oil rigs in Alberta. They're not coming back—or we hope they're coming back. A lot of that is happening right now.

With the action plan, do you feel that since 2003 you've been getting better tools to equip you to serve anglophones in the community and help them stay or bring them back? Is the action plan better? Are you getting some benefits from it?

• (1125)

**Mr. Peter Riordon:** I would certainly like to speak to the question of the action plan. I applaud loudly the fact that the action plan was brought in. I think it is an imaginative and very positive indication of federal support for minority language communities.

The reality, however, is that with the exception of the health sector, which Jim Carter spoke about this morning, where significant funding from the action plan has come through Health Canada into our community and has I think had a significant impact, elsewhere in other ministries we have not, in effect, had any significant access to the action plan. We have requested assistance to access it.

I have to confess at the same time that the Quebec Community Groups Network is going through a major renaissance right now. We have just hired a new director general, who is filling a gap we've had over the past few months where we've been rather shorthanded. We are engaging some additional staff, who will be addressing community development, research, policy, and so on. This is going to improve our capacity to do some of the things we want to do. But the fact of the matter is that in the first three or four years of the action plan, we've had a very small share of it.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you.

Now we'll go to Mr. D'Amours.

[Translation]

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

[English]

I would like to go back to the question of the action plan.

You have talked a little bit about the good things about the action plan, but if we want to look to the future and make sure your communities are served well, we have to know exactly, or based on your experience, what was not included in the action plan that can help you to build the environment to make sure that each and every anglophone community in Quebec is able to grow. You probably have some idea of things that were not covered in the action plan, or that can be better covered in the action plan.

I want to hear from both of you about that.

**Mr. Peter Riordon:** The action plan is a huge bureaucratic structure with lots of resources, and it's a little bit like the mouse taking on the elephant. We in the Quebec Community Groups Network simply did not have the resources to successfully derive much benefit from the action plan when it was introduced. We were simply too small, without the capacity to approach Ottawa with the information, the applications, and the support to follow through and deliver from the action plan. Our own local infrastructure was just too thin. We believe that we've made significant progress in moving ahead in the direction of building a stronger infrastructure to be able to make better use of some of those resources, and we certainly hope to do so in the future.

The second point I'd like to make is that when there is a program of that nature, it would be extremely constructive, from my perspective, if there were some kind of dialogue with the community prior to implementation of the program, because we would find the whole program a lot easier to access if (a) we had some preliminary knowledge of it, and (b) we had indicated some of the particular priorities that we wanted to see in it that perhaps might have been acceptable to the policy-makers.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** If I heard you well, what you said is you may need some core funding to be able to manage the application form and all those things, and maybe also a little bit of money to be able to do some lobbying to make sure your situation is well known in Ottawa.

**Mr. Peter Riordon:** Lobbying is another issue, and I agree it is an area that we have been quite weak in, primarily I guess for lack of resources. But it's not only lobbying. I would hope that when the government creates a committee that is looking at adopting a new policy, or even after the policy is adopted, a rules and regulations, or

whatever, committee can be created that would consult with the community representatives and say, how can this program be best organized to work for you? We didn't have that consultation. The program landed on us like a huge stone, and we just couldn't deal with it initially, just in terms of the numbers.

•(1130)

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** My experience as president of VEQ, as I said before, is mainly through one ministry, PCH, or Canadian Heritage. As our president, Martin Murphy, in Montreal keeps saying at all of our meetings, the reality is that through Canadian Heritage you're looking at an envelope of about \$33 million for the support of minority language communities. The other reality is that \$30 million of that \$33 million goes to the francophone organizations outside Quebec and only \$3 million goes to the anglophone organizations in Quebec. And the numbers are comparable: 950,000 people versus just under 1 million people. We agree the reality is that the needs of those small franco organizations everywhere in Canada are obviously many times more significant, because we have a lot more in terms of institutions in Quebec. But we don't all live on the Island of Montreal, and it's in those small communities where...

So funding has improved. Our core grants have improved a little bit; we get more money to do projects with youth, newcomers, and social events to build vitality. And yet ten times seems a lot. Maybe it's not going to have to be split in half, but maybe in one ministry, for example, there's a little balancing that is needed.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Or funding should be increased to give you a better share.

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** Exactly. But the trouble when you say that is you don't want to make it look as though you have to take it from what's being done outside Quebec.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Ms. Boucher will speak next.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Good morning, gentlemen. I'm pleased you're here today to tell us about the challenges facing the anglophone community in Quebec. We have come here to find out what people are thinking.

Your association works in Quebec City, Mr. Donnelly. Since I am from the Quebec City region myself, I am well aware that Quebec is not a very bilingual city.

What is the most important issue facing your organization in the Quebec City region?

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** Communication. There are 15,000 anglophones living in a region with a population of 700,000. We have a weekly anglophone newspaper called *The Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph*, which is very helpful to the community. The problem is reaching people. When individuals, particularly anglophones, arrive in the Quebec City region, we need to know that they are there and we need to let them know that we have something to offer them that could be helpful.

We now have our website on the Internet. Knowing that someone is there is a great help to people. We organize special evening activities. We organized one last week at which 12 newcomers came to talk about their experience in Quebec City. The task is difficult because there are not many anglophones and because they are scattered over quite a large region. The anglophone community where I grew up was concentrated downtown, in St. Patrick Parish and on Lockwell Street. Now the anglophones live throughout the region. We know they are there. When we meet them at meetings where there are 10 or 15 people, such as the ones we had in the last few months, they tell us they know that the VEQ exists. They think our efforts to preserve institutions are important. They are not taking advantage of them at the moment, but they know this work is important. It takes an effort, but it also takes money, because we need time and people to get this work done.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** My next question is to both of you.

Minorities face many challenges. We know that, we have talked about it and we have heard it throughout our travels. We are taking notes.

What is your greatest achievement to date?

How did you go about achieving it? Could this give us some ideas for future projects that anglophone communities could undertake?

• (1135)

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** You're referring to our organization in Quebec City?

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I'm talking about both.

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** The VEQ has been around for 25 years. To some extent, it is now taken for granted. I was a member of the board from 1983 to 1986, and I have now been back for three or four years. I am the president at the moment.

We have to meet with people and to find out exactly what they expect of us. We receive grants. We work hard, it takes a lot of effort to reach people to find out who they are, particularly this year. But we are pleased, because the responses we are getting show that we should keep on doing what we have been doing. It is important to work with young people and with newcomers, and to hold social events. Community vitality is very important.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Thank you.

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** I do not know whether Peter can talk about the activities of the Quebec Community Groups Network.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Mr. Riordon.

**Mr. Peter Riordon:** Of course. We celebrate a lot of small successes. One of them that comes to mind was setting up a group of motivated volunteers who are prepared to take charge of the future: a group with both feet firmly on the ground. However, we need more, and we still need help. There is a strong desire to succeed, and that gives hope for the future.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you.

Mr. André.

**Mr. Guy André:** Good morning again.

I would like to come back to some of the concepts that were raised earlier. As you know, we francophones are in the majority in

Quebec, but in the minority throughout Canada, and increasingly in the minority throughout the world. Consequently, the whole struggle to preserve our culture becomes important in order to preserve our language. We therefore introduced legislation to protect our language and culture, while continuing to show respect for the anglophone minority. That is a very important dynamic at the moment.

I come back to the fact that people are leaving. As we said earlier, francophones were under tremendous pressure to learn the country's second official languages, because of our international relations and our trade. In the business world, in my region of Louiseville, for example, in the furniture and textile industries, business is conducted in English. So there is a great deal of pressure for people to learn English. Is there enough pressure on anglophones to learn French?

It is said that young anglophone workers between the ages of 30 and 50 are leaving. They go elsewhere because English is the language of business. So there is an attraction to business. They think that in order to succeed, they have to go to Ontario or to one of the other provinces. I think that is part of the problem. Is there a way of applying more pressure to get the anglophone community more interested in French? It is true that some learn French; I do know that there are a considerable number of bilingual individuals. Are there any other ways of stopping this exodus? What can be done to keep anglophones in Quebec? You want to keep your young people, and that is right: it is quite reasonable to fight to keep our young people in our community. At the same time there is a growing need for people who speak both languages.

I would like to hear your views on this.

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** We always come back to the same thing: the vitality of the community. It is very important for francophones and mainly for anglophones, in our region. We tend to look to young people. Everyone knows that.

• (1140)

**Mr. Guy André:** But there is less pressure on anglophones to learn French. Would you agree?

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** Yes, to some extent. I completely agree with their willingness, with their plans to go look elsewhere and go study elsewhere. I hope that, when they leave, they do so with a desire to return. But at the moment, they leave to go—they are not thinking about coming back. Perhaps if we could get them to think about it, some of them might come back. But they would need to have a future, and jobs. A francophone who leaves and who is bilingual when he or she returns from obtaining a university education elsewhere would be ready to work in English or French. Anglophones in Quebec are already bilingual. The vast majority of anglophones are bilingual. They are able to work. But there has to be a community to receive them.

**Mr. Guy André:** The sense of belonging is less strong. The jobs are there, but they have less of a sense of belonging.

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** That's right. To my mind, that is an important consideration.

**Mr. Peter Riordon:** Unilingual anglophones are generally no longer around. There are a few left, but not many. The English-speaking community has recognized that speaking French is essential. We applaud that. It's extraordinary—there is an advantage for everyone who speaks two or more languages.

However, we are talking not only about language but also culture. The city of Sherbrooke was founded and built by anglophones. The Eastern Townships were also built by anglophones. But what is happening today? The names are being changed, historic names that meant something, like the names of some founders. Those names are being scrapped and replaced by the names of Quebec politicians.

Is this a good way to encourage a country's culture to flourish? We might well ask that question. You can scratch the names off street signs, but you cannot change history. The history is still there, and there comes a time where people start to ask the right questions, like: Why are these names being changed? I believe that culture is essential to every individual. It's not only a question of language, but also a question of the culture associated with the language. That is what we wish to maintain.

However, I should add that it is undoubtedly easier for a young anglophone to move to another part of Canada or to another part of the world, since English is understood almost everywhere. Moreover, young anglophones probably have family in Calgary or Vancouver, making things even easier. Air Canada takes advantage of that, because Quebec anglophones travel a great deal to visit family members in other parts of the country.

There are questions we need to ask. Is Canada better served? Is Quebec better served by the presence of a well-developed and dynamic English-speaking community? I would say yes. It is of benefit to everyone. Francophones in Quebec regularly ask us to speak to them in English. When we walk into a store, we are asked to speak English. People want to learn English. We also want English taught in schools. English is being taught earlier in schools in the province, and that is a good thing.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you.

Mr. Petit.

**Mr. Daniel Petit:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is for Robert Donnelly.

First of all, I am originally from the Quebec City region, as you are. As a child of a linguistic intermarriage, I saw the establishment of the Jeffery Hale Hospital for anglophones in the region. My wife gave birth to our children there. As you see, I know how it works.

However, one thing struck me a few moments ago in your answer to Mr. D'Amours' and Mr. André's questions about the exodus. As you know, in the Quebec City region, we have very small and well-structured English-speaking communities, like Shannon, which is close to my riding and CFB Valcartier.

You talked about a number of ways, including jobs, that would help keep our young people here. You listed a number of reasons and criteria.

But let's not forget that older people left Quebec as well. That has intrigued me. In my riding, there were older people, not young people, with names like Cooper and Grantham who left the Quebec City region. They were educated people, and well off. Some were even teachers like you.

In your view, why are those older people leaving my region, even though we have good services? I'm not criticizing the services. Is it because the action plan put in place several years ago—I am a new

member of Parliament—is deficient in some ways? Does it have gaps? Do you see a gap that you could point out to us? As the parliamentary secretary was saying earlier, we might have forgotten something.

• (1145)

**Mr. Peter Riordon:** People are moving to Calgary.

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** We prefer older people who go to Florida but stay only two or three months and come back to Quebec for the rest of the year. That's important, because they are there when our activities take place.

We organized a social activity a couple of weeks ago to celebrate a series of events including the departure of Karen Macdonald, owner of the *Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph*, an English newspaper. She is leaving to join *Global Television* in Montreal, but the newspaper will remain and continue in more or less the same style. At the event, there were many older people I hadn't seen for several years. They might have been there because of Karen Macdonald's departure, but they do like to go out, see one another and communicate.

About a dozen years ago, people were leaving Quebec for political reasons. Politics have played a role in the exodus. In some cases, parents have children living in different cities, perhaps in the United States, and wanted to move closer to them. There are many reasons why people have left.

We did not visit 1,000 older people, perhaps because we were afraid we would not find enough to conduct the study properly. We visited 1,000 younger people, because it was easier. Though we recognized the feeling of belonging they expressed when we talked to them, their community's vitality was still the most important thing. That's what they talked to us about.

However, I still don't have an answer to why they leave. Many continue to leave for Ottawa, Toronto and elsewhere. If we occasionally ask them why, they say that it's just for a change. Sometimes, they want to move to an English-speaking province. That does happen.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you. That concludes our meeting in Sherbrooke. It has been a great pleasure to be here with you.

[English]

It was a pleasure to be here with you.

Mr. Riordon will want to say—

**Mr. Peter Riordon:** Mr. Chair, with your indulgence, Mr. Lemieux asked a question that was not answered.

Could I please have a moment?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I'll give you a moment.

**Mr. Peter Riordon:** Thank you very much.

The question related to what could be done to encourage anglophones to live in Quebec, either by not leaving or by coming to Quebec.

I would strongly encourage a group within the federal government and any partners it seeks to choose, but specifically including the Quebec Community Groups Network, to create some kind of a forum where we could discuss this and where specific recommendations could be brought forward. I think that is an extremely important question, and I sincerely hope that it will be positively addressed.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Riordon, for that answer.

For sure it will be noted. As we said, we are going across the country to meet with you people right here in the field.

This afternoon we're going to visit Bishop's University. It will be very good for us and will help us write the report to be presented to the Parliament of Canada.

Again I'd like to thank you, the witnesses.

I'd like to thank our translators, our technician, and the people here helping us at the desk.

We want to wish you a very good day, and we hope to see you soon.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Donnelly:** Mr. Chairman, may I conclude with a comment on the QCGN? I wouldn't want to put this question to everyone here:

[*English*]

Who has ever heard of QCGN before this morning? I wouldn't want to ask.

[*Translation*]

Peter mentioned it. It's a \$3 million-initiative. We are reorganizing everything. In fact, we have just hired a new director general. We are going to hire a communications director, and a community development director. That will happen over the next few weeks.

We hope that, at our next meeting—next year or in two years—everybody will know exactly what the QCGN does.

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you. Merci.

The meeting is adjourned.

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