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**Chair**

**Mr. Guy Lauzon**

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Wednesday, December 6, 2006

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

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

First, I'd like to welcome you to the Standing Committee on Official Languages. For those who don't know me, my name is Yvon Godin, and I'm the member for Acadie—Bathurst, a riding in northeastern New Brunswick.

I'd like to introduce the members of the committee. They are Sylvie Boucher, parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Official Languages and La Francophonie, and Steven Blaney, both members of the party in power; the Honourable Raymond Simard and Brian Murphy, both members of the Liberal Party, which is the official opposition. I am the member for the New Democratic Party. The Bloc québécois isn't represented here this evening because Paule Brunelle had to leave early to go back to Parliament.

It's really a pleasure for us to be in the Winnipeg region. As you're no doubt aware, the Official Languages Committee has been in existence for 25 years. The committee has decided to do a national tour to meet people in the regions. We thought it was important to go into the field to see what was being done there and to meet with people. People don't always have the opportunity to travel to Ottawa to attend the committee's proceedings. We feel they're more comfortable talking to us when we're one their home ground than when they come to meet us in Ottawa.

I can tell you that the committee's tour has been profitable. The purpose of the tour was to hear organizations and people tell us about the 2003 Action Plan for Official Languages. Where does the plan stand? Has it been beneficial? How could it be improved? Do you have any recommendations to make in the areas of health, immigration or other official languages fields, such as the one represented by the Fédération des associations de juristes d'expression française de common law, which is here today?

Here's how we'll be proceeding. You each have a period of five minutes to make your presentation. You might say that five minutes isn't very much, but, as you'll see, with questions, that five minutes will be much longer. We're somewhat familiar with the official languages situation, but the purpose of the meeting is to ask you questions and then to prepare a report that we'll table in Parliament so that it can take a position on it.

Sylviane Lanthier has just arrived. We had planned to meet until 10:00 p.m., but I believe people will agree to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

I've received a note stating that Michel Tétreault has to leave at 8:00 p.m. To give him a chance to speak, I invite members who have questions to ask him to do so once he has made his presentation. You have five minutes, and the members will also have five minutes to ask their questions and hear the answers.

We'll start with Charles Gagné, who is President of the Conseil communautaire en santé du Manitoba.

**Mr. Charles Gagné (President, Conseil communautaire en santé du Manitoba):** Thank you very much, Mr. Godin.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Chair, committee members. Thank you for agreeing to meet with us this evening so that we can tell you a little about the Conseil communautaire en santé and about certain recent initiatives taken in Manitoba with the support of the Société Santé en français, which is located in Ottawa, and Health Canada.

In 2004, the Conseil communautaire en santé was recognized by the provincial government as the official voice of the Francophone community on health and social services. The mandate of the Conseil communautaire en santé, or CCS, is to promote access to quality French-language services in the areas of health and social services; to develop and promote the Franco-Manitoban community's vision of access to French-language services to the government bodies and organizations concerned; to propose, introduce and implement or support various strategies for the Franco-Manitoban community's vision for access to French-language health and social services to be implemented by the government bodies and organizations concerned.

Our board of directors consists of people who are partners, of various people responsible for health, whether it be health professionals, representatives of health institutions, representatives of the regional health authorities or people from the community. In other words, like Société Santé en français, the CCS considers itself a partner of the provincial government, the regional health authorities and social service agencies for the purpose of advancing the cause of health in French.

It is this cooperative approach that has made possible, here at home, six actual projects that are improving access, on a sustainable basis, to quality services in French for our Franco-Manitoban population. With funding from the Primary Health Care Transition Fund, these projects are real proof that, together, we are improving access to quality French-language services in the areas of health and social services. Let me say a few words on each of those projects to illustrate my remarks.

The first project is called Cancer and cancer prevention: toward services for Francophones, because there were few French-language services in this area. The purpose of this project is to put in place cancer prevention and treatment services and programs for the urban and rural Francophone population.

The second project is the project for primary health centres in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Saint-Claude and Montcalm, which are three rural Manitoban communities, and its purpose is to introduce a health centre that will deliver bilingual health services for the residents of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes and surrounding areas. Construction of the centre is part of a broader project designed to improve access to health care services for Francophones in the region, which includes establishing satellite centres in the communities of Saint-Claude and Saint-Jean-Baptiste, as well as the introduction of a mobile multidisciplinary team that will serve the three locations.

The third project, which is the Francophone component of the provincial Health Links/Info Santé Call Centre, is one of the promising projects. The introduction of the Francophone component of a telephone health information service provides access to a nurse practitioner and health information 24 hours a day.

The purpose of the fourth project, the coordination of health services in Saint-Laurent, is to put in place a coordination model for improving access to primary health services for the Francophone Métis of Saint-Laurent. Saint-Laurent is the largest Francophone Métis community in Manitoba which is just next door to western Canada. This work has been assigned to a bilingual nurse who is part of a team already providing services.

The fifth project that I would like to mention is planning and development of a primary health services model for the Saint-Boniface region. The purpose of the project is essentially to create a health and social services delivery model adapted to the Francophones of Winnipeg and to develop a plan to respond more effectively to needs for premises, programs and services at the Saint-Boniface Health Centre.

• (1910)

I'd like to mention one final project, the French-language primary health network. The idea here is to establish community health centres in two areas with large numbers of Francophones. These centres will enable the clientele of southeastern Manitoba to obtain primary health services in French, including health promotion and disease prevention services.

It is clear to us that these six achievements would not have been possible without investment by Health Canada and the support of Société Santé en français, two major institutions or organizations for the introduction of these services. We hope we'll be able to obtain your committee's support so that we can continue the work of improving services in our Francophone communities. As you can see, we've made an excellent start over the past two years, but it's only a start.

We're ready to answer your questions.

• (1915)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Gagné. We'll continue with Sylviane Lanthier.

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier (Director and Editor in Chief, *La Liberté*):** Thank you. I filed a document for you that we're going to distribute to you after the meeting, if I understood correctly. I'm going to read it to you so that everyone has the information.

First of all, thank you for inviting me to be with you today. Thanks in advance as well for your attention to my presentation, the purpose of which is to prove three points: first, that *La Liberté* is an essential instrument necessary to maintaining the community's vitality; second, that the newspaper is facing specific challenges to its ability to continue carrying out its mission; third, that the federal government can play a larger role in supporting papers like *La Liberté* in their development efforts.

I said that *La Liberté* was an essential instrument in maintaining vitality. The presence of a French-language newspaper in a minority community is virtually a barometer of its vitality. The more self-sufficient a community is in a number of respects, the more it is able to have one or more newspapers serving it in French.

In Canada, the minority press situation is complex and diversified, but, in all cases, the existence of a newspaper is seen as an essential tool to the development of that community.

In Manitoba, the French-language newspaper is called *La Liberté*. It was founded in 1913. Since 1970, it's been published by Presse-Ouest Limitée, with a seven-person board of directors. Presse-Ouest itself is a private company and a subsidiary of Société franco-manitobaine. So this is an arrangement that has made the newspaper a real private for-profit company, but with a strong community affiliation. *La Liberté* is, in all respects, the newspaper of the Franco-Manitoban community, and the mission of its staff is to produce the best possible newspaper every week, thus providing the best service to that community. Our goal is to establish the best balance among all the aspects of the management of a newspaper in order to offer our clientele a high-quality product. *La Liberté* has a staff of seven persons, plus two people who work on special projects. We also publish the *Journal des jeunes* 10 times a year.

A survey conducted in May by the CROP firm of Montreal showed how important the newspaper is for the Francophone community: for example, when asked how important the newspaper was for the Francophones of their region, readers rated its importance 9.3 out of 10. It also appears from that survey that the readership of *La Liberté* is faithful and committed to its newspaper, that it reads it every week and spends an average of 31 minutes doing so. More than 90 percent said the newspaper's various headlines interested them. More than 90 percent of readers thus tell us they read the news concerning Manitoba, concerning Francophones, cultural news, etc. But the survey also shows that that readership gets very little news in French. Manitoba Francophones watch more English-language television, listen to more English-language radio, read more English-language books and surf the Internet more in English than they do in French. There are obvious reasons for this behaviour that are directly related to the influence of the society in which they live. However, this finding shows how the community newspaper is even more important. The paper is a genuine and essential link with French-language culture and, in certain cases, is the only link these people have left. *La Liberté* is thus a privileged way for them to get informed in French and a window on their own community life.

Readers read *La Liberté* the way you gather news about family members. That's true because, last week, I was at the home of one of our advertising clients, who told me he had looked through the paper and seen pictures of 14 people he knew. That's what people do when they read a newspaper like ours.

We're lucky to have the support of our readers, but we're also in a precarious position, because the conditions in which we produce the paper are getting tougher from year to year. Maintaining the paper's tradition of excellence requires an ever greater effort. *La Liberté* is facing the same challenges as the majority newspapers, or the dailies, that is to say greater competition for the advertising market, constant changes in the technologies with which we produce the paper, the presence of the Internet, ongoing expenses for technological updating, the need to plan intelligent marketing strategies to preserve and expand our markets, increasing difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, increasing difficulty remaining competitive in the job market. When we go to conferences and occasionally meet people who publish newspapers like ours, but for majority groups, that is to say Anglophones who publish weekly or daily newspapers, they talk about exactly the same concerns as ours. The difference is that, in dealing with these problems like everyone else, we have fewer resources. The following seem to be the most strategic areas for securing the newspaper's future, and we want to address them over the next few years.

There are human resources and staff training. *La Liberté* doesn't have the financial resources to be competitive in the job market. We have significant staff turnover.

- (1920)

For example, the starting salary for a journalist has increased by barely \$2,000 since 1990, whereas the cost of living has risen sharply.

*La Liberté* doesn't have the necessary financial flexibility to provide regular and adequate annual pay increases or to hire more staff.

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

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** We also have problems with revenue sources, technological innovation and knowledge of the industry. We also have to address other issues, how to keep our youth readership, in particular. These are issues of interest to us to which we have to find answers.

What role can the federal government play in helping newspapers like ours? As you very well know, we can tell you—and we often do—about the federal government's advertising expenses and the fact that we not only want placements, we especially want fair placements when government agencies plan their campaigns. I could also tell you about the Publications Assistance Program. In fact, Canada Post is threatening to cancel this program, which could result in an additional bill of \$25,000 in postage for *La Liberté*.

In addition, the federal government is making other programs available to certain sectors of the communications industry, such as television and magazines, for which a fund exists. Perhaps equivalents of these programs could be found to assist the minority Francophone press. Currently, there are no government programs tailor-made for the Francophone press, to support its development, in

areas, for example, such as assistance for human resources, operations, or a technological adjustment fund. Perhaps the government should try to see how it could assist the development of a press that is necessary for the vitality of the communities.

Thank you.

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

Now we'll hear from Louise Aucoin, President of the Fédération des associations de juristes d'expression française de common law.

**Ms. Louise Aucoin (President, Federation of Associations of French-speaking Jurists of Common Law):** Good evening, Mr. Chair and gentlemen members of the committee.

My name is Louise Aucoin, and I am the President of the Fédération des associations de juristes d'expression française de common law, the FAJEF. I'm here this evening with Régnald Rémillard, our Executive Director here in Winnipeg.

FAJEF represents seven associations of French-speaking jurists representing nearly 1,200 jurists. FAJEF promotes and defends the language rights of the Francophone minority in the administration of justice in Canada. We sincerely thank you for inviting us to testify before your committee on the impact of the 2003 Action Plan for Official Languages and our expectations of the federal government with regard to the future.

FAJEF firmly believes that the action plan has had real and positive results in the justice sector. To start with, provincial and federal stakeholders are more aware of the importance of access to justice in French. Through briefs, meetings and presentations, FAJEF and its network has increased the awareness of stakeholders such as the RCMP and other police departments, legal aid services, provincial ministries of justice and the federal department of justice of the issue of French in the justice sector. Works remains to be done, of course, but the question of access to justice has a distinctly higher profile and is definitely being discussed more now than in 2002.

FAJEF and its network have also made Francophone and Acadian leaders and members of the general public, as well as major association stakeholders such as the Canadian Bar Association and the Public Legal Association of Canada, aware of the importance of access to justice in French.

The action plan has had the following results: a revitalization of FAJEF and its network; the appointment of a number of bilingual judges; legal training is now offered in French in a number of regions of Canada; legal work instruments are now being prepared in French for practitioners; the promotion of careers in law and justice; the promotion of legal services in French to Francophone litigants; more legal popularization in French and significant networking with Anglophone and Quebec legal associations such as Éducaloi.

In addition, Quebec's new policy on Canadian Francophonie has stated that justice is a new target sector.

We believe that this progress, which we consider significant, would not have been achieved without the action plan. FAJEF and its network want to take advantage of the momentum created by the plan in the justice sector. For this reason, we will now tell you about our expectations of the Government of Canada for the future.

We want the federal government to comply with Part VII of the new Official Languages Act, specifically the two-part commitment stated in section 41.

The first component of that commitment is to enhance the vitality of the Anglophone and Francophone minorities and to support their development, while the second component is to foster the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society. By promoting and normalizing the use of French in the justice sector in Canada and in the Francophone communities, FAJEF and its network are contributing to the two components of the federal government's commitment.

How can the federal government manage to meet that commitment or, as we say in the legal community, take positive measures to that effect?

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First, by granting adequate funding so that we and our partners can continue to contribute to the development of the Francophone communities and to enhance the recognition and use of French in Canadian society as a whole in the justice sector. Second, by restoring funding for the Court Challenges Program. Surprise, surprise!

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I almost felt like saying: "Oh, oh, Familiprix!", but instead I'll say: "Oh, oh, the Conservative cuts!"

Sorry, I couldn't help myself. Continue.

**Ms. Louise Aucoin:** The facts show that this is an essential tool for fully carrying out both components of the federal government's commitment under the Official Languages Act, including in the justice sector.

Those are my comments. I'll be pleased to answer your questions.

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

Now we'll hear from Michel Tétreault from the Hôpital général Saint-Boniface.

**Dr. Michel Tétreault (President and CEO, St-Boniface General Hospital):** Thank you, Mr. Chair and gentlemen members of the committee.

I wear more than one hat in this city, including that of President and CEO of the Hôpital général Saint-Boniface and that of Assistant to the Executive Director of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority with regard to French-language services for the entire Winnipeg region. I won't go back to 1871 and tell you that the Hôpital Saint-Boniface was the first hospital established west of Ontario. It was originally a four-bed hospital in a Francophone community, of course. It subsequently developed, but it was not until 1989-1990 that it officially received a mandate to provide French-language services to the population of Saint-Boniface and Saint-Vital. It was also the main hospital for Manitoba Francophones who went to it.

In 1999, when the Regional Health Authority was created, the hospital was officially given a mandate to actively offer French-language services to the Francophones of Winnipeg, particularly those of Saint-Boniface and Saint-Vital. The strategy used by the regional health authority was to target primary services in the Francophone community and in places like the Winnipeg Children's Hospital, which was the only hospital providing services for children in the city. The hospital was designated potentially bilingual at that time.

Since 2001, we've had a French-language services coordinator for the Winnipeg region. She has her office at the Hôpital général Saint-Boniface. However, it wasn't until 2006 that resources were available to support that person, including a second coordinator and secretarial assistance. During that period, that is in the past six years, there have been some achievements, a new general policy on French-language services, the designation of bilingual positions, recruitment, communications and translation. In addition, we now have access to a resource centre that is part of the Conseil communauté en santé.

Bilingual signage and new public education material have been developed to a certain degree, but definitely not to a point that makes us proud. In our last annual report, we note that the City of Winnipeg has 500 designated bilingual positions. That figure may seem large, but it must be kept in mind that 27,000 people work in health in the Winnipeg region. So we're talking about a little more than one percent.

In the past five years, we've been working in close cooperation with the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface and the Consortium national de formation en santé to develop training for Francophone physicians as well as nursing and health care aid programs. Over the past few years, this partnership has produced some 20 nursing graduates a year. Three doctors, who have already graduated from medical school, are currently taking family medicine residencies.

This year, eight doctors are in training, in unusual circumstances. Some are studying in English at the University of Manitoba, others at the University of Ottawa. In addition, two doctors are in training at the University of Sherbrooke. We've calculated that roughly 14 would have to be trained each year for us to be able to hope, within 20 or 25 years, to provide half of the frontline medical services required, that is in family medicine. We've made good progress, but it's barely enough to offset departures.

We've managed to establish certain services. Our objective, which seems a distant one, is to actively offer services to the public when they present for service. A report by a committee chaired by Judge Chartier has designated specific areas where an attempt should be made to increase active offer. The Hôpital général Saint-Boniface is preparing, after 15 years of efforts, to designate bilingual positions in sectors such as emergency medicine, obstetrics, maternity and geriatrics. In this last sector, it should not be forgotten that the Francophone population is aging.

This is a battle in a minority setting such as ours.

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We're nevertheless facing major challenges, particularly in recruitment and retention.

It's one thing to offer training, but quite another to get people to enroll in a strongly minority setting. In addition, competition is generally tough across the country for getting into universities and among graduates. It isn't uncommon for people with French-language training to be highly sought after and recruited by sectors that aren't bilingual.

Keeping the people we manage to train is a challenge. Getting Francophones or bilinguals in a minority setting into a relatively new health training program is another. Some schools nearby have been established for a number of years. Once these people have graduated—which Mr. Gagné talked about—all the organizations that offer services pick them up. So there's very strong competition among us for the few people we train.

Unfortunately, we're not having a lot of success recruiting people outside the province, attracting bilingual people here to Manitoba. We haven't done very well in that regard.

Obviously it's hard for us to be more attractive than others because our collective agreements in the health field are so rigid that it's very difficult to offer financial or other incentives.

I've already mentioned the efforts that have been made to get people to enroll in training programs. We must continue putting the emphasis on that. The health strategy adopted in Winnipeg is also to go after candidates from immersion schools. Within 10 years, there will probably be as many Manitoban francophiles coming out of immersion—that is Anglophones who have studied in French—as so-called old stock Francophones.

As regards federal government support, what would we like? First, of course, we would like the government to continue the efforts it's been making for the past five to seven years. A few years ago, when we started focusing on medical training, we thought that success in the first year would be to have a doctor or student do an internship. We were at that stage.

Now we have eight doctors in training, three post-doctoral physicians in training and some 17 doctors who did internships this year. So that's progress, but it's very tenuous.

How can we add to that? We must continue promoting bilingualism. I'm originally from Montreal, and I've been here for five years. Bilingualism programs have been so successful that being bilingual is now considered sexy in the Winnipeg community, whereas that wasn't at all the case a few years ago. So these efforts must continue.

If we could get some support, assistance for the people we send for training outside the province, because we don't always have the capacity to take them in at the university or college level here, if we could get incentive programs to ensure that they come back to their community to practice their profession, and if we could have programs designed to encourage young Francophones or bilinguals to go into the health field, that would be good.

I'll stop there, Mr. Chair.

• (1935)

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

I forgot to say something at the outset, and I apologize. I wanted to thank you sincerely for adjusting to our agenda. As you know, that's important for us.

Tomorrow, we and all the political parties will be called back to Parliament. I'm sure you know why. A very important vote will be held at 3:00 p.m., and we want to be there to discharge our responsibility.

On behalf of the committee, I sincerely want to thank you for travelling here this evening and for changing your plans. It was undoubtedly not easy for all of you; we very much appreciate that. We want to say thanks, and I wanted to do that before I forgot.

Mr. Simard, go ahead, please.

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

I too would like to thank you for travelling here this evening.

I'm going to start by discussing health. In all the provinces we've visited, we've seen an infrastructure created with very little money: \$119 million over five years. That's not considered a very big amount. However, we've seen that, if the Action Plan for Official Languages, the Dion Plan, has had any success, it's indeed been in the health field.

However, there's one thing we haven't discussed: that's the leverage effect. I don't know whether Mr. Gagné is aware of that. It was said that, in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, for example, they were going to create a health centre for which the community raised some \$1.2 million. So the communities have gotten involved, and the provinces have also invested money.

The plan has invested \$751 million, but it could leverage \$2 or \$3 billion. Could you tell me a little about that?

• (1940)

**Mr. Charles Gagné:** Thank you, Mr. Simard.

The project you refer to, the one in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, is a good example of a federal contribution that snowballed. Not only did it make it possible to develop a project, but it also received significant support from the province—because health is nevertheless a provincial jurisdiction—which led the community to make a fairly large investment in it. So this is a partnership involving three parties, which we hadn't previously seen, at least at the same level.

The federal investment—it has to be considered an investment—has undoubtedly had a multiplier effect. The figure of 50¢ per dollar was mentioned. In some instances, you could almost state 25¢ per dollar. You could multiply every 25¢ that the federal government invests by two or three. That's a sign of greater acceptance of the Francophone phenomenon by the province and also of a sufficient commitment by the community to establish French-language health services. The community mainly makes a commitment to primary health; it's very consistent in primary health. That's a very good example. We could cite a number of other examples in this area.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** In addition, wherever we've travelled, people have told us that this was just a start. The infrastructure has been put in place, but I imagine it's still quite fragile. It's only been in place for three years. Perhaps we could start preparing the next action plan for the next five years. How should it be improved, and where should the funds be invested? Are other health centres needed? Should those we've put in place be changed? Where should we make commitments?

**Mr. Charles Gagné:** That's a tough question because, in one sense, that means making a certain choice among services, which are all... I'm thinking of the demand for resources, and when you talk about French-language services...

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** We're thinking of training, for example.

**Mr. Charles Gagné:** There's no doubt in our mind that, if there were two basic pillars, the first would be manpower training. First of all, if there isn't any labour force capable of working in French, or both languages, that's ready to serve Francophone communities, that makes no sense.

The other important pillar is primary health care services. We have to find new ways of delivering health care services in communities that have lost services as a result of system centralization—what's called regionalization—or that have never known any other primary health services than those based on the physician.

How do you bring in other professionals, multidisciplinary teams? The community has to be organized like services or the offer of services have to be organized so that bilingual teams are accessible to the bilingual communities. One of the projects often talked about is the project involving mobile teams or a fairly large regional authority, especially in rural areas, where bilingual teams essentially have a mandate to serve bilingual communities. So resources are needed for that.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Do I have any time left, Mr. Chair?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin): You have 30 seconds.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Ms. Lanthier, one of the sectors not really addressed in the Action Plan for Official Languages is communications.

I think that, if we've heard any concerns and issues expressed over the past two or three years, they're about this sector. It seems to me that one of the sectors that should really be addressed when the next plan is drafted is yours.

In addition, we saw the extent to which the lockout at Radio-Canada last summer affected us. We had no service in French. Could you briefly tell us about the importance of this sector and how it affects people living in a minority setting?

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** I believe that if there weren't any communications in French, the community wouldn't see itself reflected anywhere. The majority media don't cover matters of interest to Francophones or what they do. If you read the *Winnipeg Free Press*, if you look at the English-language television networks or if you listen to English-language radio, you won't hear about the people from Saint-Pierre-Jolys or Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.

As a result, we heard about the official opening of the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes health centre one week before the first sod was

turned, and we've been monitoring this file for a long time. People won't find that in other newspapers. The community media obviously play an essential role. People see themselves reflected back home and don't see themselves elsewhere.

It's true that the communications sector is one of the major forgotten sectors of the Dion Plan. When you talk about the support the federal government can provide to newspapers—and I'm only talking about newspapers because that's what I know best—we're generally talking about advertising. However, the government buys advertising in all the media. There's no specific support for the development of a Francophone minority press. The same is true of the Publications Assistance Program. In view of the millions of dollars this program generates, very little money is paid to the minority press. The same is true of the Canada Magazine Fund. There's millions of dollars to help Canadian magazines, but no money is paid to the newspapers of the minority Francophone press.

If it wants to include communications in the next plan for official languages or in any initiative whatever, the federal government must set an objective of supporting the Francophone minority press. Everything has to be done, because nothing's happening at the moment.

• (1945)

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

Mrs. Boucher.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoulu, CPC):** I'd like to thank you for being here. Perhaps you've been a bit stuck, as we have moreover, but we very much appreciate being here.

This is an important committee, which is travelling for the first time in 25 years. As a result of this tour, I'm realizing that, when people come to see us at our offices in Ottawa, it's one thing, whereas, when we're in the middle of the action, it's another. It's different when you see things in the field.

Mr. Robert, we haven't heard from you yet. I think it's important to hear from everyone.

As you know, I represent the government party. I'd like to know what solution you can suggest to our government for the short or long term to develop the viability of the official language communities here, particularly the Francophone communities.

**Mr. Léo Robert (Director General, Conseil communauté en santé du Manitoba):** Thank you very much.

Mr. Chair, how much time do I have to answer the question?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** That depends on the time members take to ask their questions, because they have a total of five minutes.

**Mr. Léo Robert:** I think the federal government can help the minority communities in two or three areas.

First, health hasn't been developed at all. Authorities have really started to concern themselves with French-language services elsewhere than in our hospital only two or three years ago. In view of the fact that there has been very little investment in the past two years, the Conseil Communauté en santé has essentially developed three service delivery models for the rural communities.



First there are community access centres like the one in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes that we were talking about earlier. Second, there is the telehealth program. We're installing equipment to connect the Francophone communities to the telehealth network for the first time. This has never been seen before back home. We were going to hook up small Anglophone villages near us, but we weren't reaching the Francophones.

With a little money from the projects of the FASSP, the primary health care adjustment fund, we could hook up eight Francophone communities in one year.

The third model is the mobile team's model, as Mr. Gagné mentioned earlier. These teams consist of four or five health professionals who travel from village to village to serve the communities in the rural regions.

Lastly, we'd like to develop other models, but there are start-up costs.

The second area, as Mr. Simard mentioned, is communications. I hope Mr. Boucher will mention it as well when he testifies because it's an area that's in serious trouble in our community. Pardon me, Sylviane, but with all due respect to *La Liberté*, I feel that Francophones don't have access to the communication services they need.

The third area is support—and I hesitate to say it—for Francophones asserting the rights that follow from provincial and federal statutes. Those statutes aren't always complied with, and when they are implemented, people rely entirely on the interpretation the governments make of them. That's where we're in trouble. Had it not been for the Court Challenges Program, we probably wouldn't be here today.

Thank you very much for your question.

• (1950)

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** You're welcome. We're here to move things forward. I thank you.

Ms. Aucoin, I'll ask you virtually the same question, but at another level.

We've heard about the Court Challenges Program, but we haven't seen a lot of jurists during our trip.

Can you explain to me your work in the field? How do we go about moving matters forward? If someone like Mr. Robert needed your services, how far could that go for a jurist?

**Ms. Louise Aucoin:** First, I have to say that I'm a bit surprised that you haven't heard from a lot of jurists.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** People have talked a lot about court challenges, but we haven't met a lot of jurists.

**Ms. Louise Aucoin:** Perhaps I'm wrong, but I believe that the jurists that I meet in the various associations of French-language jurists are very committed in the various communities, whether it be through representative organizations or other groups. I think that's a great help in defining rights and explaining them to people. That...

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** We do as well, but I can tell you that we haven't seen a lot.

You're a jurist. When you help a population develop—we must have called on your services, asked you what should be done in such and such a situation, because I think you're one of the pillars of development—what exactly is the approach you take?

**Mr. Rénaud Rémillard (Executive Director, Federation of Associations of French-speaking Jurists of Common Law):** Jurists take action in two areas: first, assistance for the development of language rights, that is to say finding the necessary tools to make progress in this area, but also in the justice community, and a distinction must be drawn between the two.

The justice community comprises the police departments, the right to appear before the courts, such as the Court of Queen's Bench or the Provincial Court, and also commissions. In certain provinces, there are administrative law commissions that handle leasing issues and that kind of thing. People often have to appear after losing their driver's licences, if they want to challenge the decision. That's done in this context.

There's also the entire matter of legal information. The members of our communities live under the rule of law, as we very well know, and they therefore need information, on matters such as divorce, for example. It's not so much that a person needs a divorce, but he or she generally needs legal information. Immigration is another area: we've made presentations and offered workshops on immigration. We've intervened to provide support in other sectors. For example, we can enable people to gain a better understanding of medical instructions through presentations. The associations of jurists in each of the provinces do a lot of this kind of work. They really work in close cooperation with other sectors, but the justice community is a sector in itself: the courts, the police departments, legal aid. If you refer to the Criminal Code, there's the entire matter of criminal trials. In other provinces, that goes beyond criminal matters.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you. We've really gone beyond the scheduled time.

My question is for Mr. Tétreault. A little earlier you talked about the training that's given in Sherbrooke and Ottawa. In Francophone minority regions—we're used to calling those regions that, but we are Francophones recognized by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms—this type of training isn't given because it's much too costly. Should special programs be created to assist the regions that are located far from the major centres where medical or other training is given?

• (1955)

**Dr. Michel Tétreault:** Obviously, when a young person decides to take medical training in French rather than in English in Manitoba, that person has to bear much greater expense if he or she goes to Ottawa or Sherbrooke. That person can't live in the family home, for example. Recognition of that fact would definitely help encourage applications from people who want to go to study elsewhere.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** There are programs to attract doctors to the regions, but there could also be programs to enable young people to go and learn medicine outside the regions.

**Dr. Michel Tétreault:** Indeed, that works both ways. They should be sent elsewhere to learn, but afterwards they should also be brought back to the regions. Back home, we've made a lot of efforts to stay in contact with these people. We periodically invite them to do internships at the hospital where, for example, we try to find them summer jobs. If they're from Manitoba, they can come and work at our research centre during the summer. That enables them to stay interested in our institution. It also enables us to talk to them about prospects, about how we can open doors for them when they come back.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** As regards jurists, I'd like to provide some supplementary information. In the east, they were invited, but they didn't appear. The jurists were there in Vancouver.

In addition, the federation's national office is in Winnipeg, and we knew we'd have the opportunity to meet you here. So I don't think jurists have forgotten. They're aware of our work.

Earlier you talked about the RCMP. In the 2003 action plan—I said this a number of times in committee in Ottawa—there's \$750,000 to be invested in aid for the communities. However, every time Francophones outside Quebec appear in court to assert their rights, the government appeals. The government agreed to pass Bill S-3, which, in particular, amended section 41 of Part VII of the Official Languages Act. It provides all these tools, but, if a citizen uses them and wins, the government appeals the case. Don't you think that happens too often?

That's what happened in Quebec in the case of the food inspectors, who the government wanted to transfer from Shippagan to Dieppe, and in the case of the RCMP, where it was prepared to go to the Supreme Court to challenge the fact that it was a federal responsibility. Can the RCMP conceivably not be a federal responsibility? I'm also thinking of the electoral boundaries of the riding of Acadie—Bathurst, where the government wanted to take part of Allardville and attach it to the riding of Miramichi. Once again, there was a challenge, but we convinced them not to challenge the issue because it was shortly before the election.

There have been challenges in all areas. I'd like to have your opinion on that subject.

**Ms. Louise Aucoin:** Obviously, if we have rights and we can't ensure they are respected, we're stuck in a bad position. In other words, if we hadn't had the Court Challenges Program, in all the examples that you have cited, Mr. Godin, the communities wouldn't have had the means to have their rights respected. If we have rights and can't have them respected, that's quite unfortunate.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I'll give you another example of a case in New Brunswick. We had to go to court because the RCMP had given a Francophone woman from Tracadie-Sheila a traffic ticket in English. That case went to the Supreme Court. That's crazy.

Someone here is reminding us that the Liberals were in power at that time.

But do you agree with me, as Mr. Robert said so well, that the act isn't being complied with? There's a lack of political will.

● (2000)

**Mr. Régnald Rémillard:** You're hitting on a very important point. Challenges are an extremely important tool for community development. We want to make demands. We all know the history of Francophones outside Quebec over the past 100 years or so. Since the Charter was passed, since section 23, we've been able to get our own schools. Before that, we didn't have any schools. We have them now because we were able to appear in the courts and win our cases. It is an absolutely essential tool for the communities' development to be able to go to court and to demand that the obligations set out in the act be met.

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

Mr. Murphy.

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I come from New Brunswick. We have a very strong Acadian community, which has a great deal of vitality. We're discussing the vitality of the official language minority communities, and we've seen a lot of situations this week. That impresses me a great deal, because this is the first time I've visited the Francophone communities in the west.

This afternoon, we visited a bilingual service centre for the three levels of government. We don't have that in New Brunswick. I tip my hat to this community. I also have to hail Mr. Simard's work. It's outstanding.

Everything's working well here in Winnipeg, but sometimes there are deficiencies or problems at the various levels of government—the federal, provincial and municipal governments—and at the various agencies and commissions, and we therefore need tools. The Court Challenges Program was one of the very important tools.

After Christmas, another committee of which I am a member, the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, will be meeting. Mr. Vic Toews will be there to explain why that program has been cancelled. You've previously said that you were opposed to that decision. That's obvious from the evidence we've heard during this trip. I imagine Mr. Toews will have something positive to say on how things will turn out. Do you have any solutions or suggestions to offer him? Do you have any to offer us to help the cause of the Francophone minority communities? That could be a lot more powers for Mr. Fraser, another mediation office, perhaps an awareness program for the levels of government. I don't exactly know. In one sense, there are no limits. Do you have any suggestions to make?

**Ms. Louise Aucoin:** We've begun to think about it because we believe we need an expanded program. Your mediation suggestion is extremely interesting. We need to rethink the structure and we have extremely significant needs. In talking with other jurists, we thought that we could propose a new, different program that would meet other, even more significant needs. Expanding the program would be something new. It's definitely done a good job in equality and linguistic terms, but new needs are being felt.

We've started to think about how to give it a new purpose. That would meet the needs of the communities. I think that's important. Do you want to add something?

• (2005)

**Mr. Régnald Rémillard:** Access to justice in French has always been FAJEF's core principle. That's our starting point. Our principle is not to reduce access to justice. For a jurist, that's an essential point. We see that constitutional rights are extremely important. Having access to the courts to defend our constitutional rights is a core principle. Talk to jurists and you'll see that there's a consensus on that among virtually all of them. That's the very core of Canadian citizenship. Instead of reducing Canada's Court Challenges Program—which, as you know, has two components—we should instead be adding other components or expanding the program, make it a program that provides more general access to justice in constitutional areas.

So this principle could be extended and expanded and could become more general than it is now. The core principle is access to justice on constitutional issues. It's very important to have access to justice. There are a lot of questions to consider, but that could also enable the Francophone communities, which are entitled to equality, and other groups or communities that have different interpretations and different interests to appear before the courts, and to be able to do so.

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

**Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also belong to the Francophone community which is unfortunately a bit isolated: that's the Quebec community. Mr. Rémillard, you said in your address that the entire history of the country's Francophone minorities was known. That's quite the contrary. I admit that this tour has enabled me to open up to the reality of the minorities, even though we sensed that reality in Ottawa, as part of the committee proceedings that I attended. In Winnipeg, in the Saint-Boniface area—whose architecture reminds me of that of Saint-Hyacinthe—that reality has been somewhat concealed, which has resulted in barriers and a certain lack of understanding.

Ms. Aucoin, you said that one of the purposes of Bill S-3, which amended section 41 of the Official Languages Act, was to promote the use of French. As a Quebecker and Canadian, I'd like to thank you for helping to build the Canadian identity through linguistic duality. We're often less aware of that fact in Quebec because we don't have to fight for our schools. I have a great deal of admiration because, through certain demands, you've managed to create a school system, which is fundamentally important for a community. Ultimately, I've made more of a comment.

Through its action plan, the federal government has made the communities responsible for promoting linguistic duality. Wouldn't it be more up to the Canadian government to ensure that the official languages are national languages, as was said this morning in Regina? The Canadian government should therefore not only give you that responsibility, but also play a more active role.

I'd like to have Ms. Aucoin's comments on that point.

**Ms. Louise Aucoin:** We definitely want to work in partnership with the various departments to help the government, if we have the

means to do so. We have to be given the chance to work together, because we know our communities well.

**Mr. Steven Blaney:** In more concrete terms, the Action Plan for Official Languages provided \$150 million and the support program, approximately \$300 million a year. Has FAJEF benefited from the action plan as such?

• (2010)

**Ms. Louise Aucoin:** Yes. It's really made vitality possible...

**Mr. Steven Blaney:** We're gradually heading toward 2008, and the action plan will expire. How do you see the next step? I suppose we should engage in a planning exercise. Do you anticipate continuity or changes in the action plan, particularly in your...

**Mr. Régnald Rémillard:** A number of associations of French-language jurists have been in existence for a long time, including Ontario's, AJEFO, which has been around for nearly 25 years. Five years ago, the network of associations of French-language jurists was operating on a much smaller scale because it had very few resources. The action plan has given it increased vitality and made it possible to retain people and attract people interested in access to justice, rights advocacy and moving things forward. That was much less the case before the action plan.

Financial resources will be necessary in order to move on to the second level. We've increased awareness through, among other things, a practitioner's guide, which was considered a priority. I don't want to go into all the details. We've gotten to a certain level, and if we stop, we'll fall back. What we want is to move on to the next stage.

We've made progress, jumps of two or three stages, but, if we can make another jump over the next five years, we'll be able to reach a high level of development in the administration of justice, which will benefit all Francophone communities in Canadian society.

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

Do you want to make a brief comment?

**Mr. Léo Robert:** Yes, I'd like to add something.

I'm not speaking on behalf of the CCS, but as a Francophone who lives here, in the field. As a Francophone, I'm tired of being treated like a problem for all governments. I'm tired of being a problem; I want to be a solution. I want to become part of the solution.

We could take advantage of the plan's extension, if it is extended—which I very much hope—to really create an attitude. We want to work with the community, with Francophones. Who is in a better position than we are to know our own needs? We also want to be treated like normal people, like adults who can contribute to the solution. We have a major contribution to make. Listen to us.

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

Now, as regards the newspaper *La Liberté*, you said you were going to lose at least \$25,000 with Canada Post. That's a lot for a small newspaper.

Is it a provincial paper or only a Winnipeg paper?

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** *La Liberté* is a paper with a provincial mandate; it has circulation of 6,000 copies. Half of our readers are in Winnipeg, and the other half are scattered across Manitoba. For us, Canada Post is the only possible way to distribute the paper.

When we say \$25,000, Mr. Godin, that's based on the PAP's \$100,000 contribution to *La Liberté* in 2004. So, if one-quarter was withdrawn, because that's the share of the sub-agreement with Canada Post that was withdrawn from the program, that means that \$25,000 in additional postage would have to be paid for the newspaper. That's an enormous amount for us.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** In Sudbury, there was... I don't remember the name of the newspaper.

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** It was *Le Voyageur*.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** *Le Voyageur*, yes.

The newspaper's officers told us that they had an agreement with Collège Boréal to ensure that young Francophones read their newspaper and got used to it for the future. In a sense, that's one way of [*Inaudible—Editor*].

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** We already have that type of agreement.  
• (2015)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** You have that too?

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** Yes, we already have that. We have an agreement with the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine. Every week, we offer two pages of content on students' activities in the schools. We call that the “Dans nos écoles” pages. That automatically enables all the families that have children in a French school to subscribe. That's been in place in our paper for four or five years.

The paper is also investing a great deal in this project. Our agreement with the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine doesn't come close to covering costs, and we're very much aware of that.

We also have the *Journal des jeunes*, a monthly publication inserted in the paper that's intended for young people and provides news written in a way that young people can read. The *Journal des jeunes* has subscribers. It's distributed by mail outside the province, and we have customers scattered across Canada: teachers subscribe to it and use it as a basis for their teaching.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** If we said we could understand why Canada Post had given money to a company like *Maclean's* magazine or other companies, that wouldn't be right because those publications are able to survive on their own.

Would you say there should be special Canada Post programs, particularly for the communities that need a newspaper in their language?

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** I can't speak for *Maclean's* because I don't know its budget.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I can't speak for *Maclean's* either, but that simply appeals to...

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** The Francophone minority newspapers, whether or not they're for profit—because there are both kinds—definitely aren't in enormous markets that enable them to make enormous amounts of money. We're not making millions of dollars

in profits every year. Financial flexibility is generally quite small, and those of us that have to be distributed by Canada Post Corporation, since that's the only solution, definitely need distribution support.

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

Mr. Gagné, I don't know whether you can answer this question. We saw that, in Edmonton, for example, a health system had been put in place to help people who didn't speak the other language. They had translators. Do you have any here?

**Mr. Charles Gagné:** Yes.

First, at Hôpital général Saint-Boniface, where there is a language bank, they do simultaneous translation in some 60 languages in one year. That's somewhat a reflection of the nature of Winnipeg.

However, we note that, with heightened immigration, a lot of old stock Franco-Manitobans are functionally very bilingual. If they go to an emergency room or health service and don't get service in French, the health service obviously takes precedence and their conversation will essentially be conducted in English.

A lot of immigrants don't speak English. In health situations, their presence in the community creates a demand that we weren't really experiencing perhaps five years ago.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** What kind of programs have you put in place to assist new immigrants arriving in Canada?

**Mr. Charles Gagné:** That field isn't part of my expertise, but the Société franco-manitobaine and the Province of Manitoba have signed partnership agreements to take in Francophones.

I don't know whether anyone's a little more familiar with the question. Daniel Boucher could definitely tell you more about that.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** All right. He'll be coming soon.

**Mr. Charles Gagné:** If there's one way to integrate Francophone newcomers to Manitoba, it's definitely in the healthy field. In the institutions where I work, a large segment of the labour force consists of newcomers who speak French, which francizes our community and adds a somewhat distinctive feel.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** One comment comes to mind. If you can translate 60 languages, perhaps you can help us promote Canada's two official languages. We're only asking for two.

Mr. Simard.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to point out the presence of the representatives of the Commissioner of Official Languages and Canadian Heritage employees. We're privileged in Manitoba. These people really take their responsibilities to heart. We haven't really talked about the role that government officials play in this matter. So I'd like to point out their presence this evening because I think it's important.

Mr. Robert, earlier you talked about...

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

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** No, it's very important. Perhaps it's the same elsewhere, but we are particularly privileged here.

In Saskatchewan, this morning, one of the witnesses said that French was not a national language, a Canadian language. The Fransaskois are lost in the midst of all the other languages. French is only one of the 30 languages spoken in Saskatchewan.

Even though 85 percent of Canadians think that bilingualism is a distinctive feature of Canada and 79 percent of people outside Canada find that makes our country appealing, we don't promote bilingualism a great deal.

You asked that you be considered as allies, because you know that bilingualism is an issue. The government doesn't talk a lot about bilingualism and doesn't really promote it. Could you comment on that state of affairs? Have you seen the advertisement on television that talks about the benefit of knowing two languages in Canada? We don't talk about it and we're guilty of that because we've been in government for 13 years. This isn't a subject we discuss a lot.

● (2020)

**Mr. Léo Robert:** I'm going to make a comment, if I may. Saskatchewan has two characteristics that distinguish it from Manitoba. Fortunately, our Francophone community is relatively grouped together. As you very well know, Mr. Simard, there are two major Francophone centres in the southeast and in Saint-Boniface. Saint-Lazare, for example, is a remote and isolated village, but the people there stick together. In Saskatchewan, Francophones are somewhat scattered across the province and have trouble grouping together, so that pride in the language is declining. They're starting to take the easy road, the less complicated road. That's partly because of the fact that they're scattered and because they haven't found ways to network, as we've done in our remote communities.

A little earlier we talked about health services and three pilot projects, three service delivery models that we've established. We've started working with Saskatchewan to export and apply those models to the Francophone communities of that province. We're only just started talks, but these projects could make a major contribution to restoring the Francophones' pride in their language. There are few opportunities to get together and speak French in Saskatchewan. I've worked with the school board there. So I know a little about what a village school with 12 students is. There aren't a lot of Francophones in the village.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Thank you. Witnesses have often told us that they wear two or three hats and that volunteers are exhausted.

We haven't talked about succession, which is an important factor. I hope the Action Plan for Official Languages will be renewed. The plan could provide for succession funding because there aren't a lot of young people at our meetings. In fact, we've seen no young people during our tour. We invited some, but they didn't come. Can you comment?

We see you have incredible turnover in all sectors, in the administration of justice and health care, for example. Could funding be provided to ensure a succession in the communities?

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** This is an example in the communications field. Most of the papers in the APF network, the Agence de presse francophone, are in the same situation, that is to say that there's significant staff turnover. In the communications field, we're experiencing exactly what the health people described earlier, that is to say problems training people here and recruiting them in their

community so that they can work there. Currently, there isn't a French-language communications training program in Manitoba at the post-college level. There isn't any in the west, which means that all journalists recruited by *La Liberté* or other media are often people who come from Quebec, or are people who don't know the community. Or else they have to be trained when they come here.

So we've taken the bull by the horns, in cooperation with the community radio station and an organization called the Cercle de presse francophone. We've introduced an initiative called Action média, which is designed to train young people in communications, young people at the secondary level, as well as college and university students. We've organized journalism camps. We help the young people who produce the student newspaper and who work at the student radio station at the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface to acquire tools so that they can do the work in a more professional manner and understand what that consists of.

One of our main mandates is to train Francophone leaders, since young journalists are people who are more interested in their community. Our mission isn't to train them at school, but rather outside school. We ask them to cover actual events, we publish their reports and we broadcast them on radio. We train young people and we publish their writings in *La Liberté*, telling them that it has to be good in order for it to be published.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** How do you pay for that?

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** Right now, we're taking the money out of the Francofonds initiative funding, the Canadian Heritage funding that was invested in the communities...

● (2025)

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** A foundation.

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** ...for youth initiatives. We also get money under the Dion Plan which is paid to the province for the education sector. One of the things limiting us in the Dion Plan right now is that, in education, the emphasis is largely placed on immersion schools. These programs are presented in the immersion schools, but we're given no grants to do it in the French schools. That's a bit of a problem. If we had something in the communications field that could enable us to develop a succession training component as well, perhaps we could avoid having to go through the education sector and thus have greater flexibility.

Our program is important, and we're implementing it across the west right now, with very few resources. That's one of the solutions we've found to meet our own needs and to create leadership.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you. Now we'll hear from Ms. Boucher.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** There's a lot of talk about challenges. We've heard a lot about that during the trip. I've had the opportunity to make both trips, to meet the people in the east and the people in the west, and I've learned a lot during these trips. All witnesses have talked about the challenges facing them in their various areas of activity. I'd like to know your achievements. You've carried out projects, you've built an entire world with virtually nothing, and I tip my hat to you because it's been tough.

I'd like to know what your greatest achievement is and how we can extend it to other areas of activity in the Francophone community. What has been your greatest achievement and what solutions would you propose in order to build on those achievements? Mr. Robert.

**Mr. Léo Robert:** I'm biased because I have training in education and I'm a former executive director of a school board here in Manitoba.

I think our greatest achievements are our school system and the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface. To build on that, we'd like to start sooner, before students even enter our school system, because, when they do, sometimes it's already too late. If it's already too late, a lot of our Francophones don't choose our system because of that. Our greatest achievements, in my view, are the Franco-Manitoban education sector, the university college, the occupational technical school and everything related to the college. To build on that, we have to start sooner. I think you build a society based on education and at the grassroots level. In my opinion, it would be that. I don't know whether other people have different opinions.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Mr. Gagné, can you also answer the question?

**Mr. Charles Gagné:** In health, despite the challenges, people are definitely much more accepting and find it more normal that health services are delivered in French. I'd even go so far as to say that the community's expectations exceed our ability to meet them. That may be caused by a lack of a labour force or by a labour force that's poorly distributed over the positions where it's required. It may also be as a result of the importance the community attaches to health services in French as a result of the aging population and to youth, particularly where a mother or father are involved.

Circumstances nevertheless show that what we're currently doing won't be enough. However, our organization will definitely be able to achieve the desired level, so that, in 10 years, we'll also be able to mention the health system as one of our major achievements, as Mr. Robert did for the DSFM.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Do I have any time left?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Yes, you have some left.

**Ms. Sylvie Boucher:** Ms. Aucoin, would you like to answer as well?

**Ms. Louise Aucoin:** We now have two Francophone law schools, one at the University of Moncton and the other at the University of Ottawa. There are now jurists who have studied common law in French. Now we're at the stage where all the networking goes through FAJEF and the associations of jurists. I think that's extremely important. So training is now available, and we are networked. So I believe we need tools.

As for young people, every summer, a law camp is organized for high school students at the University of Moncton. In recent summers, young people from other provinces have attended the camp. So we're engaged in popularization with youths of 13 and 14. It's fascinating to hear them debate language rights.

We've achieved great things. Much remains to be done, but these are solid achievements.

● (2030)

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** I come from Quebec, and I arrived in Manitoba in 1990. I've been here for 17 years, and I work in journalism and community development, in one way or another. In my opinion, the greatest achievement I've seen in the past 17 years is that so many things and so many projects have been carried out in all areas that Manitoba Francophones are now seen as a value-added. The majority no longer sees them as tiresome troublemakers that they especially don't want to hear about because when they talk, it's to complain.

So I believe that Francophones are now seen as people who are achieving success and who have a contribution to make. That's perhaps one of the biggest achievements I've observed in 17 years. In 1990, when I arrived, Francophones were still experiencing the after-effects of the language crisis of the early 1980s. We're no longer feeling those after-effects, and I believe that view is really out of date. Léo may not agree with me.

Do you agree with me? If Léo agrees with me, then it's right.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Someone told us — and I also told the committee about this — that we had changed their attitude.

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** Yes, that's true. The attitude has changed. I believe that, for someone who comes from elsewhere...

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

**Ms. Sylviane Lanthier:** What I'm going to say is important.

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

**Ms. Sylviane Lanthier:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Godin.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I'd like to welcome the Société franco-manitobaine and its representatives, Daniel Boucher and Mr. Diallo. I won't try to pronounce your name.

You'll have five minutes to make your presentation, and then we'll ask you some questions. The meeting will end at 9:00 p.m. As I said at the outset, the committee apologizes for changing the timetable. We thank you for being so flexible. As you know, we go back to Ottawa tomorrow for a special vote that will be held at 3:00 p.m., an important vote for the Canadian nation. With that, I turn the floor over to Mr. Boucher.

**Mr. Daniel Boucher (President and Executive Director, Société franco-manitobaine):** Thank you, Mr. Godin. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen members. It is a great pleasure for us to be here this evening. We are in a bit of a hurry, and we'll try to improvise here. That's natural for us because we do it often.

I'm sure that the speakers who preceded us presented the community and its issues, which are very important. Our organization, the Société franco-manitobaine, is one of its voices. I'm here this evening with the chair of the board of directors, Mr. Ibrahima Diallo, who was elected approximately a month ago. He's recently taken up the position, but he will definitely be able to answer your questions, if you have any.

I was to be here with Ms. Bintou Sacko, who is responsible for the community intake service. I could talk for five hours, but I only have five minutes. So I'll talk about Francophone immigration to Manitoba, which is a major success thanks to a strategy called *Agrandir l'espace francophone*. In 2001, we adopted that strategy, which targeted five different clienteles, in particular the immigrant community. It's designed to increase the number of Francophone immigrants to Manitoba. Last year, Manitoba took in slightly more than 300 Francophone immigrants. That's a lot, if you compare that figure to the number we took in four or five years ago, and we intend to go even further.

Our goal is a minimum of 700 immigrants a year, and I believe we're going to achieve that objective at some point. We've set ourselves the following objective: an average of 700 immigrants a year for the next 20 years. At first, it will be a bit slow, but I believe we'll be exceeding that number in a few years. The community is very well organized to take in increasing numbers of Francophone immigrants. We're also working with the province of Manitoba, which is a world leader in immigration. This year, the province aims to take in 10,000 immigrants. That figure has nearly been achieved, and, in the last Throne Speech, a new objective was set, that of taking in 20,000 persons by 2011. We want to maintain the same percentage of Francophones and ensure that there are Francophones immigrating to Manitoba. We are a welcoming land and we're proud of what we're doing.

It's not easy in a number of respects, and we need the federal government to be one of our partners in our initiative, *Agrandir l'espace francophone*. We need the federal government. It has to be a partner of the province so that we have the necessary resources to recruit people and ensure they stay here. We know very well that a community such as ours is well positioned to retain them because it's very welcoming. On the other hand, we know that people's first impression is very important. When people arrive here from another country, whether it be in Africa, the countries of the Maghreb, France, Belgium or any Francophone country, the first impression, the first week, the first two weeks are the ones that count the most. We don't want to lose those people because we aren't well structured. We feel we have the outline of a very good structure, but we still have a lot of work to do and we need the support of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and we obviously still need the support of the Province of Manitoba.

This is a priority issue for us. We want the federal government to understand us on this subject because it's important for us to preserve linguistic duality. We need significant figures in our provinces. For us, immigration is one of the means at our disposal, and it's obviously one of the strategies we have adopted. We wanted to focus on that this evening, but our strategy *Agrandir l'espace francophone* is much broader and concerns all kinds of clienteles. Francophone immigration is a priority for us, and we hope that you'll pass the message on to the Government of Canada that it must give us the necessary resources to ensure that linguistic duality contributes to vitality and development across Canada. Our community has been here for a long time and doesn't intend to go elsewhere. We'll be here for a long time.

Thank you very much.

● (2035)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Thank you, Mr. Boucher. I appreciate what you say. We Acadians have been here for 402 years. Quebec will only be celebrating in two years. I say that for anyone who wants to hear it.

Mr. Boucher, I thought you said that you needed federal government support. A little earlier, Mr. Robert said he was fed up with being seen as a beggar, that that was a false image, and that, in his view, Francophones should be recognized for what they are.

Perhaps we don't read section 43 of the Official Languages Act enough or remind the government of it often enough. That section states:

43. (1) The Minister of Canadian Heritage shall take such measures as that Minister considers appropriate to advance the quality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society and... may take measures to

That means a lot of things. I don't want to read it in full, but simply to state a brief reminder. It also states: (a) enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and support and assist their development;

We shouldn't have to feel like beggars: an act states what the government must do. However, I agree with you, Mr. Robert: we get tired of constantly requesting.

It also states: (b) encourage and support the learning of English and French in Canada;

(c) foster and acceptance and appreciation of both English and French by members of the public;

I think that's consistent with Ms. Lanthier's remarks. She mentioned that the newspaper *La Liberté* is doing the government's job, which doesn't prevent the government from implementing \$25,000 in cuts. You're experiencing these cuts as a result of the sponsorship scandal. It's the minority sectors such as newspapers and community radio that are the subject of these cuts.

This isn't a statement; it's an act. It's no longer Bill S-3: we now have an act. What would you like to suggest to the government through the Standing Committee on Official Languages, which has a mandate to report to Parliament and to act as a watchdog? Mr. Simard has been on the Standing Committee on Official Languages with me for some time. We are the guardians of the Official Languages Act. We report directly to Parliament on the concerns of the communities.

● (2040)

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** You really want to attack a question of this kind?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** You have two minutes, Mr. Boucher.

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** I'm going to start answering, and my chair can continue, if he wishes.

Every time we've been asked to prove ourselves and to be supported, we've succeeded. What we want are conditions and resources that will enable us to prove ourselves. We're not asking anyone to do the work for us or to give us any kind of favour. We're seeking the resources that will enable us to enforce the act and to achieve the vitality of our communities. The vitality of our communities is being done by the communities. If it's to be done this way, the communities must have the necessary tools.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** Yes, but that involves amounts of money. Pardon me for speaking so bluntly, but it's not acceptable for you to have French-language schools that you've won through court challenges or for you to buy schools that others have closed in order to build better ones. Parents wonder where they'll send their children. I don't think you're being supported in that case.

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** You're absolutely right. Terrible things have happened.

Our job is, first, to ensure that those kinds of things don't reoccur and, second, to be a partner in success and a partner when it comes to finding solutions.

We're not asking the government to do our job. We'll do it because we're near the community. We're asking the government to support us so that we can make sure we no longer suffer these injustices or problems like the ones you just pointed out, because we're regressing at that point. But our communities can't afford to regress.

The government must understand that we can't regress one inch. That's a problem for communities like ours.

Give us the opportunity to advance and we'll advance, but certain actions, sometimes taken by governments, force us backward. When we regress, we need time to come back and we lose what we've acquired. When we lose what we've acquired, it's a major loss for the community, and we often can't get it back. It's lost forever.

We're requesting support for what we have, that we be assisted in growing and developing, and that we be provided with the tools to continue. That's what we're asking for.

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

Now it's Mr. Murphy's turn.

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** I'll pass my turn to Mr. Simard.

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

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** I want to thank my colleague Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Boucher, thank you for being here. I know you had your first monthly meeting after the annual meeting.

You obviously decided that immigration was one of the ways to avoid regressing. If we don't want to regress, we have to invite people here, to expand the Francophone space, as you said.

I remember that \$9 million was provided under the plan for the immigration program. That's not a lot. I remember that there was a lot of money for government staff, and I think there remains \$60,000 per province per year. That's not a lot.

Are you actively recruiting, first of all? Second, you mentioned programs with the province. Does the province consult you to

determine who you want to bring in, for example, and from what countries?

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** There is a provincial program, and we're making strategic choices for the province. We're facilitating Francophone immigration. I can't say we're being consulted, but, in the cases we've handled, the province has helped us bring in immigrants to Canada as quickly as possible. The government has reduced waiting times. In Manitoba, the waiting period is three to six months, which is absolutely impossible in other provinces: it's not feasible. That's one of the things that we're doing with the province for immigrants. Our partnership with the province is mainly in this area, and we're working in very close cooperation with its representatives in that regard.

● (2045)

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Earlier it was said that there was really no one in the government actively promoting the two official languages, bilingualism. We're a bilingual country, but we don't talk about that a lot.

This may be a fairly difficult question, but I'd like to know whether you think that the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages could play a more proactive role in this regard. It seems to me it already has a structure in place and staff in all the provinces. I suppose that the role it plays depends on the mandate the Prime Minister gives it. It seems to me that the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages has people in place who could play this proactive role. What do you think about that?

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** I think the current mandate is a bit limiting. It's not easy to do it. However, we have always felt that the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages was an extremely important tool in promoting linguistic duality. The present Commissioner, like his predecessors, is someone who brings people together, a person who can make everyone understand the realities of the various communities. He's in a perfect position to do that.

We believe he should play a greater role in this regard. The Commissioner's watchdog role is important, but we feel that his mandate isn't limited to that. It's important to promote linguistic duality across Canada, and I think the Office of the Commissioner is in a very good position to do that.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** What are you doing to prepare for the succession or Francophone leadership? We hear about that virtually everywhere. We always see the same people at the table, exhausted people who wear two or three hats. What are you doing here in Manitoba to prepare for the Francophone succession?

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** A number of young people have gotten involved in the Société franco-manitobaine, and in all the organizations, moreover. That's good news: young people are getting more involved. We encourage young people by, for example, appointing them to boards of directors that are considered adult boards of directors. These people are adults, but they say they're young. So we appoint them to boards of directors made up of people who have more experience, and they can thus acquire experience. We also try to work with them to ensure that a certain amount of leadership is passed on.

I also think that youth have a lot of things to teach us. That does us good.



**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Thank you very much.

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

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** Rénald, does the funding allocated to the administration of justice include funds for lawyer training? We talked about possible trials at Saint-Pierre-Jolys and in bilingual service centres. If we create an active offer, will there be funding for training or not? If we create a need, Francophone judges will be necessary. However, it's always been said that it is difficult to have Francophone judges appointed.

**Mr. Rénald Rémillard:** The various organizations may put forward training projects, but there's no dedicated training budget. I don't know of a lot of training projects, except for legal training in French.

**Hon. Raymond Simard:** If we reinvested in justice, where should the funding be allocated?

**Mr. Rénald Rémillard:** Awareness and tools have been identified as priorities because, in concrete terms, jurists who want to work in French need tools, models, interpretation services and so on. All these tools are very important.

Obviously, the justice sector is a bit similar to the health sector in that there are a lot of stakeholders and various departments of justice. It's important that the governments and stakeholders—legal aid, for example—make their contribution. This is a sector where awareness plays a major role because it encourages all stakeholders to play their role in the administration of justice. There is also the matter of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which, as we know, plays a key role across the country. We're observing distinctly greater awareness on this point.

• (2050)

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

Mr. Blaney, over to you.

**Mr. Steven Blaney:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Mr. Diallo. Thank you for being here as well, Mr. Boucher.

I'd like to give you the opportunity to speak by asking you a fairly open question, since we're coming to the end of the tour. I'd like to know how you view the Franco-Manitoban community today and how you see it in 20 years. If you have any comments to pass on to us, I'd like to know them.

**Mr. Ibrahima Diallo (Vice-President, Administrative council, Société franco-manitobaine):** Thank you very much.

I must say that I'm not a newcomer, because I've been living here for 22 years. I've been a professor at the university and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and Business Administration for six years. Since my arrival in 1984, I've seen the make-up of this community change, and in an extremely positive way, because the identity markers of 25 years ago have changed. I think that's as a result of the contribution of the people that come from various backgrounds and have chosen to settle in Manitoba.

Manitoba has become a land of attraction. Francophones who come from elsewhere also want to settle in this kind of region to ensure a future for their children. That was my selling argument

when I went overseas to sell my institution, the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface. I told people to come to Manitoba because they could continue studying in French and, at the same time, live in an Anglophone setting, which would make them perfectly bilingual. In many cases, people want to settle in Manitoba because they want their children to become bilingual.

Immigrants have understood that linguistic duality is an extraordinary asset. Moreover, immigrants have changed the linguistic dynamic of our institutions. It's thanks to immigrants that we increasingly hear French spoken in the corridors of the university college. There are also people who come from the immersion system. That creates a new dynamic and a new type of wealth. The initiatives taken by the communities should be supported.

First there has to be a change in attitude before we get there, and I think that's on the right track. It's not for no reason that I'm here today: I may be the tree that hides the forest. There are lots of talented people asking only to serve Canada, to settle here, to raise their families here and to find niches in order to provide the required assets in this environment.

**Mr. Steven Blaney:** I've only recently become a member of this committee, and I may not have spoken clearly.

**Mr. Ibrahima Diallo:** I was very recently appointed chair of the board of directors of the Société franco-manitobaine, this past October. I was previously a member of the board in 1988-1989, during the great debate on Meech Lake, and I've come back to my first love.

**Mr. Steven Blaney:** Correct me if I'm wrong, but I sense that the Franco-Manitoban community has achieved a degree of maturity. It still has to fight, of course, but are there still threats and has there been progress? You seem to have a certain confidence in the future. Can you tell us about that?

**Mr. Ibrahima Diallo:** I have confidence in the future because, if you look at what's happening in all the communities outside Quebec, you'll see that Manitoba is well positioned.

In the document that you have, we talk about openness and expanding the space. That doesn't simply mean bringing in immigrants; it's also other things, but the immigration component is part of that. We have to go after people in the immersion schools. At the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, 30 percent of students come from the immersion schools and want to continue working in French.

There are francophiles, and we also have to recruit them. There are Anglophone francophiles who like speaking French: that's an asset. There are unilingual Anglophones who are sympathetic to Francophones: that's another asset. I'm saying we have to work all the angles. That's the spirit behind this idea of expanding the Francophone space. It's an asset for Canada.

We're talking about a bilingual country. I come from a country where they speak five, six, seven or 10 languages. I speak five. We're talking about bilingualism and the fact that we're unable to live in one language and understand the other. I think we also have a lot to contribute in this regard.

Incidentally, I would point out that French isn't my mother tongue; I learned it at school along with many others. However, we understand this duality, this dimension that enables us to live in this atmosphere in which we can understand each other. It's an asset that we're providing. In the corridors of the college, I hear Bambara being spoken, but I figure the common denominator in all that is La Francophonie. Everyone has that in common.

• (2055)

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

Let's take immigration to Manitoba, for example. I know that we're trying to do the same thing in New Brunswick, but, if we recruited 10,000 persons, we'd have to give them jobs. In northeastern New Brunswick, in part of the Acadian region, 7,000 persons are native to Mr. Murphy's region. If we want to recruit immigrants, we'll have to bring them in from Moncton and take them back home. There's a demand and that helps us attract people.

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** I think that's part of the provincial strategy. They've targeted markets and this strategy is very much based on employment for immigrants.

Jobs are obviously a concern for us. One of our challenges is that a lot of Francophone immigrants who come here don't speak English. One of the first things that we have to do—and this is a bit ironic—is to ensure that they learn English so that they can work, in some cases. However, we're trying to put a welcoming structure in place that will ensure they choose to live in the community and send their children to French school, and so on. A lot of Francophones work in English: that's a fact.

If we stopped at the obstacles, challenges and all those things, we wouldn't increase immigration. Our task is to address these issues, to ensure that we make the right choices, to ensure that these people have jobs in one of the official languages, that they make the right choices in order to live in the community and that they stay there.

One of our biggest challenges is housing. We want to work with the federal government on this issue as well. Housing is a very big problem in Saint-Boniface, where most of the Francophones live. They have to go and live in Anglophone neighbourhoods. That's a problem we're addressing. The key to success is not to be afraid and to act.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** If we focus on Francophone immigration, we see that Quebec has made it so that Immigration-Québec is present in a lot of places in the world and seeks to attract Francophones. I accept that. It isn't Quebec's mandate to attract immigrants to Manitoba or New Brunswick. However, perhaps we're missing the boat if we want Francophones to go to the rest of the country.

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** Absolutely. I've gone to a few embassies and I can tell you that the Francophone community outside Quebec is unknown. Even the provinces often have trouble making themselves known.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** What are you suggesting?

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** We should be working with the embassies to ensure that Canada is promoted as it is. We should be talking

about the provinces, about the realities of the Francophone communities, about New Brunswick, Manitoba, and so on.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** That's a federal responsibility.

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** That's correct. In fact, it's a major problem.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** We should be telling the rest of the world that there are Francophones across Canada.

**Mr. Daniel Boucher:** Absolutely.

Roughly eight years ago, I went to the Canadian embassy in Rabat, Morocco, and a federal public servant asked me why a Francophone would want to go and live in Manitoba. I told him that I was 42 years old and that I was born in Manitoba. He couldn't believe what he was hearing.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I belong to the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association. At one time, the French who came to Quebec only went to Montreal or Quebec City. Now all association members want to go elsewhere in the country. Last year, we went to meet with the members of the British Columbia Francophone organizations in Victoria. We even observed that a lot of Asians were learning French. They now want to visit the rest of the country because they know that there are Francophones across Canada.

Are there any other questions or comments?

• (2100)

**Mrs. Sylviane Lanthier:** Mr. Godin, I'm going to make an advertisement here.

For those who don't know, I've brought copies of *La Liberté* for them to read. I'm not authorized to distribute them officially because my newspaper isn't bilingual.

I'd also like to immortalize your western tour in pictures. I don't know how you'd like to go about doing that. You could stay there and I could take pictures, or I could get you together and take a group photo.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** We could do it after the committee adjourns, as a group or otherwise. I don't know any politician who doesn't like having his picture taken, except for Sylvie.

Mr. Blaney.

**Mr. Steven Blaney:** I'd like to thank the witnesses and take this opportunity to thank Mr. Godin, who has chaired the committee during our western tour. He's done his work with a great deal of passion. I think that his presence here isn't unrelated to our own because he's one of the people behind this tour.

On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I want to thank him for his dedication to the Francophone cause.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I'd like to tell you why I let myself go earlier.

Since this is our last meeting, we've had decided to try not to raise the question of the Court Challenges Program. But I knew it would come up again. Mr. Murphy said that, if the question wasn't raised, we'd ask it ourselves. It came up by itself.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** You have a great sense of humour. I had to laugh at it because that's part of the business. We've done the two trips, and everyone's talked to us about it. I expected we'd talk about it here. In fact, I thought I'd be surprised if no one talked about it.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** I thought you were going to ask the question yourself.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I wouldn't have gone that far.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Yvon Godin):** On behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank the witnesses who agreed to change the times of their appearances. As I said in the middle of the meeting, we had changed our agenda.

I'd also like to thank the staff who have assisted us during the meetings, the interpreters, the staff at the console and on logistics, the analyst and the clerks. For the record, I'd also like to thank our Ottawa employees. Samy Agha called the people to make the program changes. He had to make some incredible efforts. I'd like to thank you, Samy. We also want to thank our interpreters, who have tolerated us. That's very much appreciated, especially on the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Chairing the meetings was a pleasure for me, both in the east and western regions of the country. I've been a member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages since 1998. The fact that we went to see people in the field and that we got Parliament's support to do that was very significant.

I'd also like to thank the officials who were present this evening, the official languages representatives and the officials from Canadian Heritage, as well as the lady from the Manitoba Interdepartmental Network of Official Languages Coordinators.

Our mandate for this trip ends here in Manitoba, but the mission isn't finished. On December 12 and 14, we'll be holding meetings in Ottawa. We'll draft a report and table it in the House of Commons in order to advance the cause of Canada's official languages.

And so I say to you thank you, good evening and have a good week.

The meeting is adjourned.

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